

HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO  
Form 8-K  
September 22, 2006

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UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report (Date of Earliest Event Reported):

September 19, 2006

The Houston Exploration Company

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware

001-11899

22-2674487

(State or other jurisdiction  
of incorporation)

(Commission  
File Number)

(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)

1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 2000, Houston,  
Texas

77002-5215

(Address of principal executive offices)

(Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code:

713-830-6800

Not Applicable

Former name or former address, if changed since last report

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions:

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))



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**Item 1.01 Entry into a Material Definitive Agreement.**

On September 19, 2006, the Board of Directors of The Houston Exploration Company (the "Company") approved a discretionary bonus in the amount of \$100,000 for Jeffrey B. Sherrick, the Company's Senior Vice President – Corporate Development. The discretionary bonus was awarded to Mr. Sherrick in recognition of his significant contribution to completing earlier this year the divestiture of substantially all of the Company's offshore Gulf of Mexico assets as part of the Company's strategic restructuring announced in November 2005. As previously announced, the Company is exploring a broad range of strategic alternatives to further enhance shareholder value.

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**SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

*September 22, 2006*

The Houston Exploration Company

By: */s/ James F. Westmoreland*

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*Name: James F. Westmoreland*

*Title: Vice President and Chief Accounting Officer*