

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
113th Congress Disclosure Form
As required by and provided for in House Rule XI, clause 2(g) and
the Rules of the Committee on Natural Resources

Oversight hearing on *“The Past, Present and Future of the Federal Helium Program”*
And a legislative hearing on:

HR 527 (Hastings, R-WA, Markey, D-MA, Flores R-TX and Holt D-NJ),
“Responsible Helium Administration and Stewardship Act.”

February 14, 2013

For Individuals:

1. Name: Gary W. Page, President of Helium & Balloons Across America
2. Address: 12615 Steele Creek Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28273
3. Email Address: [Information redacted for privacy]
4. Phone Number: (877) 4-HELIUM = work # [Information redacted for privacy] = cell #

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For Witnesses Representing Organizations:

1. Name:
2. Name of Organization(s) You are Representing at the Hearing:
3. Business Address:
4. Business Email Address:
5. Business Phone Number:

For all Witnesses

Name/Organization **Gary W. Page, President of Helium & Balloons Across America (HABAA)** _____
Title/Date of Hearing: Oversight hearing on “The Past, Present and Future of the Federal Helium Program”
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a. Any training or educational certificates, diplomas or degrees or other educational experiences that are relevant to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.

With 32 years of experience in the distribution of balloons and helium, I was among a small club to launch a newly-patented balloon (called Mylar) into a thriving new industry. HABAA was probably the first company to place balloons into grocery stores and drug stores for the retail sale of balloons. HABAA was also the largest distributor of helium to the balloon market for many years, to support the sale of our product line. Feeling the growing pains, I helped start what has evolved into the IBA (International Balloon Association) to address common problems and help consolidate our industry.

b. Any professional licenses, certifications, or affiliations held that are relevant to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.

For many years, Helium & Balloons Across America (HABAA) was the “Strategic Partner” to Airgas in the distribution of helium to the balloon market, and was endorsed by Peter McCausland, CEO. Airgas was growing and much more decentralized and did not yet have their arms around the world of balloons, so they worked cooperatively with us to advance their helium sales.

c. Any employment, occupation, ownership in a firm or business, or work-related experiences that relate to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.

I began our company, based on Christian principles, in my home in 1980, and my wife and I are still the only stockholders. Within a few years we had moved four times to increasingly larger facilities and more employees. We operated under several trade names through the years, and currently are known as, Helium & Balloons Across America (HABAA), a name and purpose which speaks to who we are, what we do, and where we do it. We have always been considered a “market-maker” and leader in our industry.

d. Any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) from the Department of the Interior (and/or other agencies invited) that you have received in the current year and previous four years, including the source and the amount of each grant or contract.

None.

e. A list of all lawsuits or petitions filed by you against the federal government in the current year and the previous four years, giving the name of the lawsuit or petition, the subject matter of the lawsuit or petition, and the federal statutes under which the lawsuits or petitions were filed.

None.

f. A list of all federal lawsuits filed against you by the federal government in the current year and the previous four years, giving the name of the lawsuit, the subject matter of the lawsuit, and the federal statutes under which the lawsuits were filed.

None.

g. Any other information you wish to convey that might aid the Members of the Committee to better understand the context of your testimony.

I have already stated that Helium & Balloons Across America (HABAA) is considered a leader in helium distribution in the balloon industry. We have always been willing to take the risks to advance selling helium in our marketplace—and invested heavily in cylinders, trucks, filling stations, tractor trailers, a Super Jumbo tube trailer, technology, and other infrastructure and personnel to operate a first-class helium distribution operation. In 2006, helium to the balloon industry was shaken to the core as prices escalated dramatically every few months, and product availability and allocations did not allow our business to grow beyond a percentage of last year’s numbers. Upon investigation, I determined that there was not a shortage of helium, but rather a shortage of refined product because a small group was exporting for higher profits overseas and leaving American industries wondering if they were going to be able to prosper their businesses.

In my study of the problem, I discovered a proven helium refinement technology called Nitrotec, that worked perfectly even though the company failed due to a serious stroke of the owner and major cheerleader of the company. I located a Nitrotec unit which was being taken off line in Texas, since the helium supply had been exhausted, and purchased it. It was my conviction that this unit was the key to the helium shortages our industry was feeling. My plan was to add it to the BLM pipeline system to finally provide helium gas to the public as an end product. Liquid helium costs too much to refine pure enough and cold enough to convert the gas (naturally occurring) into liquid that does not want to stay liquid but wants to turn back to gas. I have also tried to take volumes of helium directly from the BLM pipeline, but have been blocked.

The past five (5) years have been a marathon to achieve that goal and which brings me before the committee on Valentine’s Day—the biggest balloon sales day of the year!

Witnesses Representing Organizations

Name/Organization

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h. Any offices, elected positions, or representational capacity held in the organization(s) on whose behalf you are testifying.

i. Any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) from the Department of the Interior (and /or other agencies invited) that were received in the current year and previous four years by the organization(s) you represent at this hearing, including the source and amount of each grant or contract for each of the organization(s).

j. A list of all lawsuits or petitions filed by the organization(s) you represent at the hearing against the federal government in the current year and the previous four years, giving the name of the lawsuit or petition, the subject matter of the lawsuit or petition, and the federal statutes under which the lawsuits or petitions were filed for each of the organization(s).

k. A list of all federal lawsuits filed against the organization(s) you represent at the hearing by the federal government in the current year and the previous four years, giving the name of the lawsuit, the subject matter of the lawsuit, and the federal statutes under which the lawsuits were filed.

l. For tax-exempt organizations and non-profit organizations, copies of the three most recent public IRS Form 990s (including Form 990-PF, Form 990-N, and Form 990-EZ) for each of the organization(s) you represent at the hearing (not including any contributor names and addresses or any information withheld from public inspection by the Secretary of the Treasury under 26 U.S.C. 6104)).