

HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO

Form 4

August 02, 2005

**FORM 4****UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20549**

OMB APPROVAL

OMB  
Number: 3235-0287Expires: January 31,  
2005Estimated average  
burden hours per  
response... 0.5Check this box  
if no longer  
subject to  
Section 16.  
Form 4 or  
Form 5  
obligations  
may continue.  
See Instruction  
1(b).**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF  
SECURITIES**Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934,  
Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section  
30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

(Print or Type Responses)

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person \*  
**KARNES JOHN H JR**

(Last) (First) (Middle)

**THE HOUSTON EXPLORATION  
COMPANY, 1100 LOUISIANA,  
SUITE 2000**

(Street)

**HOUSTON, TX 77002-5215**

(City) (State) (Zip)

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading  
Symbol**HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO  
[THX]**3. Date of Earliest Transaction  
(Month/Day/Year)**08/01/2005**4. If Amendment, Date Original  
Filed(Month/Day/Year)5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to  
Issuer

(Check all applicable)

☐ Director ☐ 10% Owner  
☒ Officer (give title below) ☐ Other (specify below)**Sr. VP and CFO**6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check  
Applicable Line)☒ Form filed by One Reporting Person  
☐ Form filed by More than One Reporting  
Person**Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned**

1. Title of Security (Instr. 3)	2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year)	3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8)	4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)	5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4)	6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)	7. Nature of Ownership Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)
common stock (\$0.01 par value)	08/01/2005		S	8,693 D	\$ 56.7998	17,892	D
common stock (\$0.01 par value)	08/01/2005		S	3,307 D	\$ 56.7998	17,892	D

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

**Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB control number.**

SEC 1474  
(9-02)

**Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned**  
(e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3)	2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year)	4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8)	5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4, and 5)	6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year)	7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities (Instr. 3 and 4)
employee stock options (right to buy)	\$ 30.23	08/01/2005		X	8,693	11/18/2003 <sup>(1)</sup> 11/18/2012 <sup>(1)</sup>	common stock 8,693
employee stock options (right to buy)	\$ 30.23	08/01/2005		X	3,307	11/18/2003 <sup>(1)</sup> 11/18/2012 <sup>(1)</sup>	common stock 3,307

## Reporting Owners

Reporting Owner Name / Address	Relationships			
	Director	10% Owner	Officer	Other
KARNES JOHN H JR THE HOUSTON EXPLORATION COMPANY 1100 LOUISIANA, SUITE 2000 HOUSTON, TX 77002-5215			Sr. VP and CFO	

## Signatures

/s/ John H.  
Karnes 08/02/2005

\*\*Signature of  
Reporting Person

Date

## Explanation of Responses:

- \* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, *see* Instruction 4(b)(v).
- \*\* Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. *See* 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).
- (1) Employee stock options vest in five equal annual installments beginning on the first anniversary of the grant date and expire 10 years from the grant.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, *see* Instruction 6 for procedure.

Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number.