

Sherrick Jeffrey B  
Form 4  
October 26, 2006

**FORM 4**

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

OMB APPROVAL

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Check 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 \*  
Sherrick Jeffrey B

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol  
HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO  
[THX]

5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer

(Check all applicable)

(Last) (First) (Middle)

3. Date of Earliest Transaction  
(Month/Day/Year)

\_\_\_\_ Director \_\_\_\_\_ 10% Owner  
 Officer (give title below) \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify below)  
Sr. V.P. Corporate Development

THE HOUSTON EXPLORATION COMPANY, 1100 LOUISIANA ST., SUITE 2000

(Street)

4. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)

6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)  
 Form filed by One Reporting Person  
 Form filed by More than One Reporting Person

HOUSTON, TX 77002

(City) (State) (Zip)

**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 (Instr. 4)
			Code	V	Amount	(A) or (D)	Price
common stock (\$0.01 par value) <sup>(1)</sup>	10/24/2006		A		3,800	A	\$ 55.5
common stock (\$0.01 par value)					275	I	custodial account

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.

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(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)	\$ 55.5	10/24/2006		A	10,400	10/24/2007 <sup>(2)</sup> 10/24/2017 <sup>(2)</sup>	common stock 10,

## Reporting Owners

**Reporting Owner Name / Address**

**Relationships**

Director 10% Owner Officer Other

Sherrick Jeffrey B  
THE HOUSTON EXPLORATION COMPANY  
1100 LOUISIANA ST., SUITE 2000  
HOUSTON, TX 77002

Sr. V.P. Corporate Development

## Signatures

/s/ Jeffrey B. Sherrick 10/26/2006

\*\*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).  
Restricted shares were granted pursuant to the Company's Amended and Restated 2004 Long-Term Incentive Plan, and are restricted  
(1) from sale or transfer until fully vested. Shares fully vest and restrictions are terminated at the end of three years from the grant date as set forth in the award agreement.  
Employee Stock Options were granted pursuant to the Company's Amended and Restated 2004 Long-Term Incentive Plan, and vest in  
(2) annual 1/3 increments beginning on the first anniversary of the date of grant and expire 10 years from the date of grant, as set forth in the award agreement.

## Edgar Filing: Sherrick Jeffrey B - Form 4

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