

HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO  
Form 8-K  
April 17, 2006

---

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):

April 17, 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))



**Top of the Form**

**Item 7.01 Regulation FD Disclosure.**

A copy of the letter dated April 17, 2006 from the Houston Exploration Company (the "Company") to JANA Partners LLC is being furnished pursuant to Regulation FD as Exhibit 99.1 to this Current Report on Form 8-K. The information in the letter shall not be deemed to be "filed" for the purpose of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or otherwise subject to the liability of that section. Further, the letter shall not be deemed to be incorporated by reference into the Company's filings under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, except as set forth with respect thereto in any such filing.

In addition, the letter contains statements intended as "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act. All statements other than statements of historical fact included in the letter are forward- looking statements and reflect the Company's current expectations and are based on current available information and numerous assumptions. Important factors that could cause actual results to materially differ from the Company's current expectations include, among others, the business outlook, the ability to complete the previously announced divestiture of the company's offshore assets, and other risks and factors inherent in the exploration for and production of natural gas and crude oil discussed in the Company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including the company's annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2005. The Company assumes no responsibility to update any of the information referenced in the letter.

**Item 9.01 Financial Statements and Exhibits.**

(c) Exhibits

99.1 Letter dated April 17, 2006 from The Houston Exploration Company to JANA Partners LLC.

**Top of the Form**

**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.

The Houston Exploration Company

*April 17, 2006*

By: */s/ James F. Westmoreland*

---

*Name: James F. Westmoreland*

*Title: Vice President and Chief Accounting Officer*

---

**Top of the Form**

Exhibit Index

<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
99.1	Letter dated April 17, 2006 from The Houston Exploration Company to JANA Partners LLC.