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## How energy-related companies can keep legal costs low in a downturn

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Six-year-low crude oil prices have meant concessions and lower prices for services in the field, but not necessarily in the courtroom.

Downturns are a busy time for lawyers, who are dealing with increased litigation and transactions that can be costly.

Still, Corey Wehmeyer with the San Antonio-based boutique energy law firm Santoyo Moore Wehmeyer P.C. said there are ways to save on legal expenses.

Wehmeyer said it's better to get attorneys involved early and that companies expecting a legal fight should work out a budget with their law firms.

A client can request a budget from its law firm to get cost estimates for legal services – including items such as depositions, summary judgments, expert witnesses and going to trial.

“Thoughtful planning at the front end of a case is always appropriate,” Wehmeyer said.

With the greatest expense in litigation coming from discovery,



Corey Wehmeyer is with San Antonio-based boutique energy law firm Santoyo Moore Wehmeyer P.C..

Wehmeyer said having a proper email destruction and retention policy saves time and money and eliminates the need to hire a third-party company to retrieve deleted items.

Although lawsuits are adversarial and emotional, Wehmeyer said letting attorneys from both sides agree on simple things like deadlines and hearing dates saves money.

“It often streamlines the process and gets the case to trial more quickly,” he said.

Despite increased litigation and transactions, Wehmeyer said energy companies can expect savings in some areas of the legal sector such as title work.

With less new drilling out the field, Wehmeyer said many law firms have lowered their rates for title work and related services.