

**E**xxon Mobil Corp. recently bucked the corporate trend toward inclusivity and nondiscrimination, but how do other oil companies fare when it comes to gay equality?

Of the nine companies examined here, three are doing well, but the others still have some work to do.

According to most experts, companies can do five things to show support for gay and lesbian employees and recognition of gay and lesbian consumers: Companies should have a nondiscrimination statement that specifically includes sexual orientation; offer domestic partner benefits; include gay and lesbian issues in diversity training; contribute to gay, lesbian and AIDS-related charities; and have a gay and lesbian employee group.

Chevron Corp. and Shell Oil Co. are the only companies in the industry that gave progressive answers to all five of the benchmarking questions asked for this article.

San Francisco-based Chevron was the first oil company to offer domestic partner benefits and to have a nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation. The nondiscrimination policy took effect in 1993; the benefits were made available in 1997 to same-sex and opposite-sex partners.

Chevron is the nation's No. 3 integrated oil company, behind Exxon Mobil and Texaco. Chevron runs 8,000 gas stations and employs about 40,000 people.

Susan Guerrero, co-chair of the company's gay and lesbian employee group, says she considers the company to be gay-friendly, although the atmosphere for gay men and lesbians varies by department.

"Within Chevron, the overall company has very open and accepting policies, but that filters down to individual attitudes," she explains.

The company's charitable donations to gay and lesbian causes are mostly in the San Francisco Bay area, where the company is headquartered.

Houston-based Shell Oil, now part of Royal Dutch/Shell Group, has had a nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation since 1996. It began offering domestic partner benefits in 1998.

Diversity training is still somewhat spotty, but sexual orientation is included when the training is offered, says Rick Schroder, a diversity consultant for the company and one of the co-founders of Shell's gay and lesbian employee group.

Shell's contributions have helped to fund the Lesbian Health Initiative; the Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays national organization; the Greater Houston Gay and Lesbian

## OF PUMPS AND POLICIES

**Filling the tank with gay-friendly gas won't make the car run better, but it may pump up your pride** by Gip Plaster

Chamber of Commerce; and other gay and lesbian causes.

Shell has participated in Houston's AIDS Walk and has sponsored gay pride events in Atlanta. In 1998, Shell received a corporate citizen award from the Human Rights Campaign, a national gay and lesbian political group.

"The attitude is one of inclusion," Schroder says. "Shell's policy is to value all people. We're making progress in that area."

A third company that has led the way on gay and lesbian issues is in transition, but its progressive policies will likely be maintained.

The 1999 merger of British Petroleum and Amoco created BP Amoco, a London-based company that is among the top integrated oil companies in the world.

The company, which owns more than 28,000 service stations worldwide, is also looking to buy the Atlantic Richfield Co.

The former Amoco's policies included domestic partner benefits and a nondiscrimination statement that mentions sexual orientation. The merged company plans to continue those policies, according to spokesman Hugh DePland.

Diversity training that includes gay and lesbian issues is also likely to continue, he adds.

Amoco had a gay and lesbian employee group, but attempts to contact the group failed. DePland says he is not sure if it has remained active since the merger.

While not leaders in the industry, Texaco Inc. and Sunoco Inc. have some progressive policies in place.

Texaco, based in White Plains, N.Y., is the nation's No. 2 integrated oil company and sells fuel at 38,000 gas stations worldwide. Its almost 25,000 employees are protected by a nondiscrimination

policy that includes sexual orientation, but domestic partner benefits are not offered.

The 11,000-employee Sunoco operates about 3,700 gas stations in 17 states, mostly in the Northeast, under the Ultra Service Center and APlus names.

Sunoco is not a full-service oil company like Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Shell, BP Amoco and Texaco. Instead, the Philadelphia-based company is the nation's No. 3 refiner and marketer of oil products.

Sunoco does not offer domestic partner ben-

The former Exxon Corp. has long maintained that it does not discriminate based on sexual orientation but has refused to include the phrase in its nondiscrimination policy. The company instead includes only the categories required by federal law.

The merger allows former Mobil employees who were already receiving domestic partner benefits to keep them, but it leaves former Exxon employees and former Mobil employees who had not already signed up ineligible for the benefits.

While some gay rights activists consider the rescission a slap in the face, Exxon Mobil spokesman Tom Cirigliano sees it differently.

"This isn't a political issue. This isn't a gay issue. It's a matter of personal rights," he says. "We believe that there is only one criterion we can apply throughout the world: Is it a legally recognized partnership?"

Tosco Corp., based in Stamford, Conn., is the only company contacted for this article that refused to answer specific questions. Spokeswoman Julie Igo says the company does not discuss human resources policies with anyone other than employees.

A leader in the oil refining and marketing industry and No. 2 in convenience stores (behind 7-Eleven), Tosco owns Circle K. It operates 2,400 company-controlled gas stations and convenience stores and another 2,600 under license from BP, 76 and Exxon, giving it a presence in 36 states.

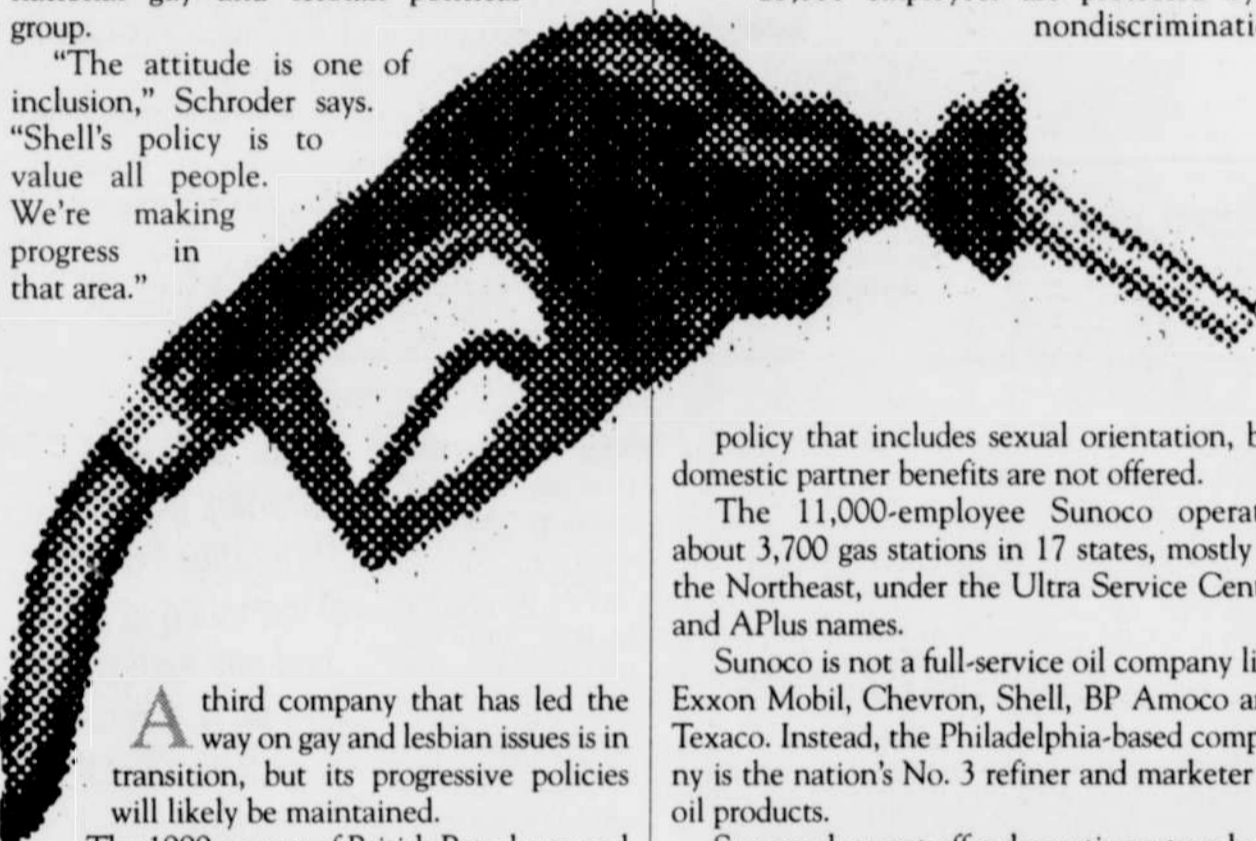
CITGO Petroleum Corp. and Ultramar Diamond Shamrock Corp. do not have good news to report on any of the five benchmarks.

CITGO spokesman Kent Young notes that the company, which employees 5,000 people, does not operate any of the stations that bear its name. All 15,000 of its outlets are independently-owned franchises. Some 1,900 of those are 7-Eleven stores.

Ultramar Diamond Shamrock, based in San Antonio, Texas, is No. 2 in the oil refining and marketing business and operates 5,300 gas stations and convenience stores in the United States and Canada under the Diamond Shamrock, Total, Ultramar and Beacon brand names. It employs 24,000 people.

Spokeswoman Jodie Carlson says the company complies with all laws regarding nondiscrimination, noting that sexual orientation is not a class protected by law.

■ GIP PLASTER is a Texas-based reporter who often covers gay and lesbian consumer issues.



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efits, says spokeswoman Shannon Breuer, but the company's nondiscrimination policy and diversity training include sexual orientation.

Irving, Texas-based Exxon Mobil Corp. strikes out on all five counts.

The company, formed by the merger of Exxon and Mobil in November, decided to keep Exxon's nondiscrimination and benefits policies rather than adopt Mobil's practices, which protected gay men and lesbians from employment discrimination and provided domestic partner benefits.

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