

BRAD ILES, 39

CEO, Brazos Midstream Holdings LLC,
Fort Worth, Texas



In just two years, the team and business of Brazos Midstream Holdings LLC are growing. “We are willing to go the extra mile to deliver the highest level of service,” Brad Iles said of the company, which provides gathering systems, compressor stations and liquids handling services to Delaware Basin producers.

Brazos now has more than 30 employees, up from its 2015 start with four founding partners. In the pursuit of that best-in-class service, it also operates a 60 MMcf/d natural gas processing plant, several new compressor stations and approximately 250 miles of gas gathering pipelines.

What’s more, growth is beating the clock.

“We also put into operation 35 miles of crude oil gathering pipelines and two crude storage terminals with a combined capacity of 50 Mbbl. We are constructing a second gas processing plant which will increase our total operated capacity in the Delaware to 260 MMcf/d by January 2018, a full month ahead of schedule.”

Iles is convinced Brazos Midstream has filled a specific need, even as other midstream service providers work in the Delaware. The company is poised for future success there. “With over 200,000 acres dedicated to the Brazos system and multiple productive zones in and around our area of operation, we expect drilling activity and volume growth to remain strong for years to come.”

Advice for young professionals: “Invest the time and energy early on in your career to learn the business from the bottom up, and don’t be afraid to ask questions. This will pay dividends for you down the road.”

Iles himself spent a lot of time traveling in his early career years with Crosstex Energy (now EnLink Midstream LLC). As a field engineer, he traveled often for work on assets in Oklahoma, Mississippi and Louisiana. At the time, “it was difficult to be gone as much as I was because I had a young family, but I felt it was important to understand how the midstream business worked at a micro-level.”

On oil and gas: “It’s an industry that encourages and rewards hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit.”

His own foray into starting a business impacted his character and drive to succeed. “Leaving my job and friends to start a new company in late 2014 was a life-changing event for me. I am an engineer by degree, and also think like one, so taking big risks doesn’t necessarily come naturally—especially with a wife and four children to provide for. That said, during those early days, I learned a lot about myself and where my identity is found.”

He said this venture was his major career milestone, one he reached sooner than planned. He credits his work experience at Crosstex for earlier leadership opportunities. Leadership “is best demonstrated through humility and service to others. Leadership creates an environment where folks feel empowered to voice their opinions and provide input on strategic decisions.”

Teamwork: He said the drive of leaders to boost the confidence and capability of employees has paid off in the creation of an entrepreneurial culture at Brazos. “We want all our employees to have a passion for what we do, to enjoy the people we work with, and feel empowered to think and act like owners of the business. I believe these are goals that we desire in our careers.”

But Brazos did not get where it is today without first experiencing challenges. Iles said these included “a collapse in oil prices,” and added that “despite all the headwinds, we assembled a talented team of professionals and built a profitable midstream business in the most economic basin in the country.”

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