

HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO  
Form 8-K  
June 27, 2006

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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):

June 26, 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))



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**Item 7.01 Regulation FD Disclosure.**

Today The Houston Exploration Company (the "Company") issued a press release announcing that its Board of Directors has authorized the exploration of a broad range of strategic alternatives to further enhance shareholder value and has determined that the unsolicited acquisition proposal made by JANA Partners LLC is not in the best interest of its shareholders. The press release is furnished as Exhibit 99.1 to this Current Report and incorporated by reference herein. The information in the press release 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 press release 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.

**Item 9.01 Financial Statements and Exhibits.**

(c) Exhibits

99.1 Press release dated June 26, 2006 announcing the Board of Directors' authorization of the exploration of alternatives to further enhance shareholder value and the Board's determination that JANA's unsolicited acquisition proposal is not in the best interest of shareholders.

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**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

*June 26, 2006*

*By: /s/ James F. Westmoreland*

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*Name: James F. Westmoreland*

*Title: Vice President and Chief Accounting Officer*

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Exhibit Index

<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
99.1	Press release dated June 26, 2006 announcing the Board of Directors' authorization of the exploration of alternatives to further enhance shareholder value and the Board's determination that JANA's unsolicited acquisition proposal is not in the best interest of shareholders.