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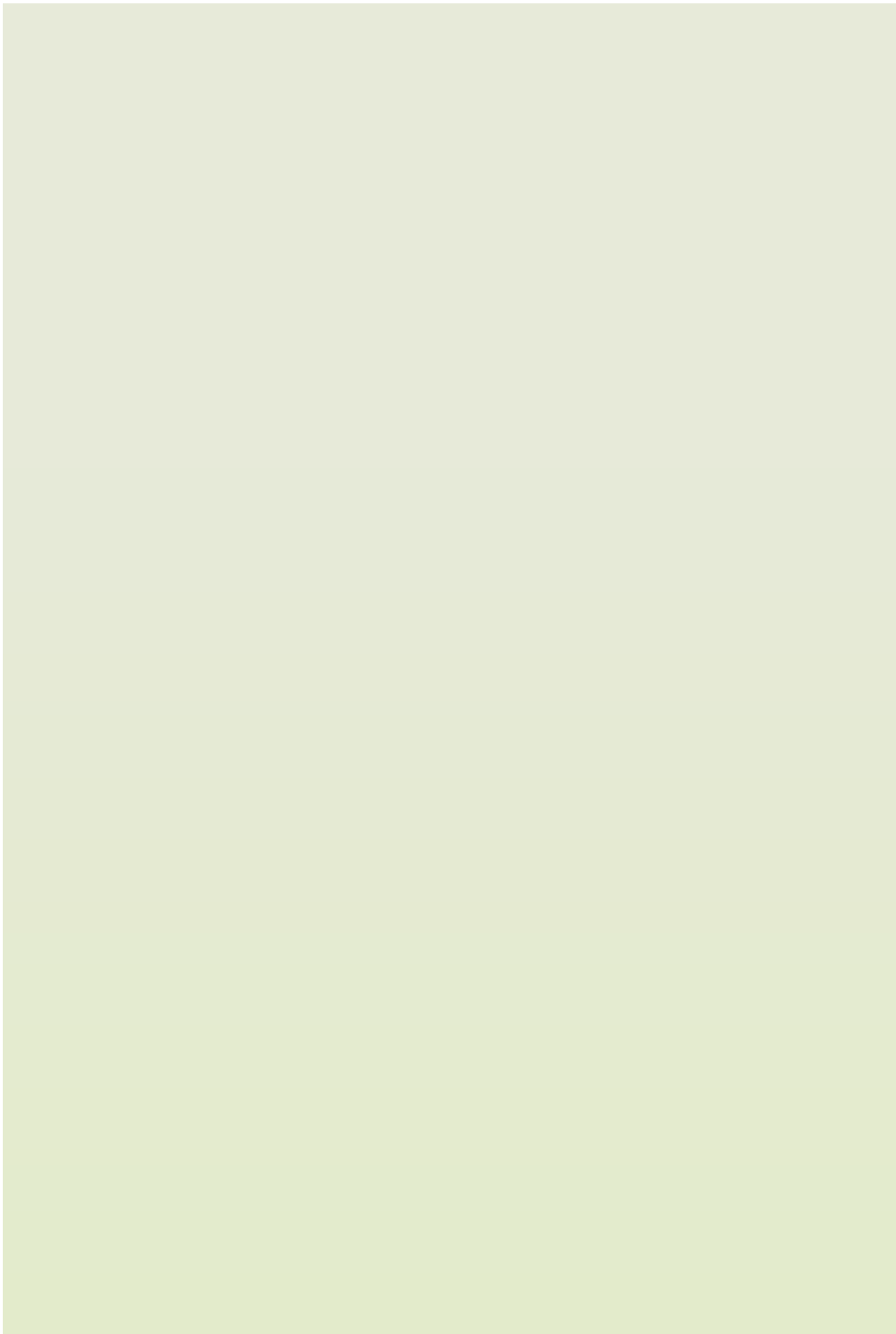
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 1938 Outperforms
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10 Who Affected Energy Most in 2007

By David Lee Smith December 31, 2007

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Time magazine has its Person of the Year, a mantle it recently bestowed on Russian President Vladimir Putin. And since energy was the top-performing sector for the year, and I'm convinced this will remain the overall most important group for many years to come, I think it's only fitting that we Fools recognize the 10 folks who most affected energy and energy investments -- for better and for worse -- in 2007.

Ben Bernanke: The Federal Reserve chairman did his part to keep interest rates down, especially in the second half of the year, which is obviously not a bad thing. By doing so, however, he likely played a role in the steep hike in crude prices that characterized 2007.

George W. Bush: Our world may well be headed into difficult times precipitated by a global crude oil shortage. I'm therefore forced to wonder why a president raised in the nation's foremost energy state has provided so little [meaningful leadership](#) on this crucial subject.

Hugo Chavez: Venezuela's president pushed his Socialist agenda -- in the process, going toe to toe with many of the West's major oil companies. His shenanigans would be less important were he not

presiding over the fourth-largest supplier of crude oil and refined product to the bottomless pit that is the United States of America.

Andrew Gould: Schlumberger's (NYSE: SLB) chairman and CEO simply runs a superb company and frequently provides helpful analyses of the macro issues in the world of energy. It also hasn't hurt that his company's shares rose nearly 60% on the year.

Dave Lesar: In establishing a headquarters in Dubai, Halliburton's (NYSE: HAL) CEO shined a light on the increasing importance of the Eastern Hemisphere as the undeniable new center of the energy world.

Robert Long: By combining his Transocean (NYSE: RIG) with its fellow offshore drilling contractor GlobalSantaFe, Long has established a new paradigm for this increasingly important portion of the oilfield services group. Watch for other contractors to follow suit in 2008 and beyond.

Nancy Pelosi: Madam Speaker oversaw the passage of the House's version of the 2007 energy bill. And while the initial efforts in that version to tax several of the biggest oil companies into oblivion were ultimately jettisoned, its push to radically increase ethanol usage was ultimately maintained. Someday we'll know whether doing so was for better or for worse.

Vladimir Putin: As several major oil companies discovered, Russia's president demonstrated his affection for playing hardball during his last year in office. And since he's been rumored to be the next chairman of Gazprom, his country's massive natural gas company, Putin's expanding role in world energy isn't likely to subside any time soon.

Rex Tillerson: The CEO of ExxonMobil (NYSE: XOM), and earlier a key member of the Exxon team that successfully developed Sakhalin-1, displayed his pique during the year at the strong-arm tactics of Putin, Chavez, and the powers that be in Kazakhstan. Would that more of the Western companies adopted Tillerson's "enough is enough" mentality.

T. Boone Pickens: But my personal vote for Energy Personality of the Year goes to the founder of Mesa Petroleum/Dallas-based fund manager, T. Boone Pickens. Mr. Pickens, who is approaching octogenarian status, has demonstrated that big bucks can be made from sensible energy investments. But perhaps more importantly, he's roamed the world trumpeting his message that the world's ability to produce hydrocarbons is likely finite, a phenomenon that could lead to major international disruptions in the years ahead. It is my fervent hope that my Foolish friends will take both of his messages to heart.

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Fool contributor David Lee Smith doesn't own a single share of any of the companies mentioned above, but he does welcome your questions and comments. The Motley Fool has a disclosure policy.

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