Haynes Boone Wins Federal Court Dismissal of Patent Claims Against Downing Wellhead

By Tiffany Cooke, Dylan Freeman, Lee F. Johnston, Russ Emerson, Alan N. Herda, Scott Jarratt, Jason W. Whitney, Dirk Bernhardt | August 6, 2025

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A Texas federal court sided with Haynes Boone and dismissed all patent infringement claims against Downing Wellhead Equipment, ruling that competitor Intelligent Wellhead Systems' (IWS) wellhead control patents cover abstract ideas ineligible for patent protection.

U.S. District Judge J. Campbell Barker granted Downing's motion to dismiss in *Intelligent Wellhead Systems, Inc. v. Downing Wellhead Equipment, LLC*, finding that IWS's U.S. Patent Nos. 11,274,520 and 11,608,708 failed to claim patentable subject matter.

Judge Barker determined the claims merely automate manual processes using generic computers.

"The technology automates actions that could be performed by two workers on walkie-talkies, where one worker keeps a well control mechanism locked until receiving a 'confirmatory' all-clear signal from the other worker," Barker wrote. "Simply limiting the field of use of the abstract idea to a particular existing technological environment does not render the claims any less abstract."

The win follows four IPR wins on behalf of Downing against IWS, including a June clean sweep at the U.S. Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB), where all 38 claims of a key continuous pumping fracking technology patent were upheld against IWS challenges.

"This ruling is a tremendous validation for Downing Wellhead," Haynes Boone IP Litigation Partner Tiffany Cooke said. "It demonstrates the importance of challenging weak patents that attempt to monopolize basic operational concepts rather than protect genuine technological innovation."

The companies also remain engaged in related litigation in a Colorado federal court, where Downing is asserting its own patents against IWS.

Third-year Associate Dylan Freeman delivered the oral argument for Downing at the July 11 motion to dismiss hearing as part of the firm's effort to support next-generation legal talent.

Along with Cooke and Freeman, the Haynes Boone trial team included Partners Lee Johnston, Russ Emerson, Alan Herda and Scott Jarratt, as well as Counsel Jason Whitney and Associates Andrew Drott and Dirk Bernhardt.

Downing Wellhead Equipment, headquartered in Oklahoma City, develops pressure-control technologies for hydraulic fracturing operations. The company's innovations focus on continuous pumping systems that reduce equipment transition times and minimize personnel exposure during oil and gas extraction.

Haynes Boone's Patent Trials Practice Group is renowned for its work protecting clients' patents and challenging others' patent claims before the USPTO, including in *inter partes* review, post-grant

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