

HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO

Form 8-K

February 05, 2004

**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): February 5, 2004

**THE HOUSTON EXPLORATION COMPANY**

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

**Delaware**  
(State or other jurisdiction  
of incorporation)

**001-11899**  
(Commission File Number)

**22-2674487**  
(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)

**1100 Louisiana, Suite 2000**  
**Houston, Texas**  
(Address of principal executive  
offices)

**77002-5215**  
(Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: **(713) 830-6800**

**Not Applicable**  
(Former name or former address, if changed since last report)

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Item 7. Financial Statements, Pro Forma Financial Information and Exhibits.

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SIGNATURE

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Press Release issued on February 5, 2004

**Item 7. Financial Statements, Pro Forma Financial Information and Exhibits.**

(c) Exhibits

99.1 Press release issued by The Houston Exploration Company on February 5, 2004.

**Item 12. Results of Operations and Financial Condition.**

On February 5, 2004, we issued a press release with respect to our financial and operational results for the fourth quarter and full year ended December 31, 2003. The press release is furnished as Exhibit 99.1 to this Current Report and incorporated by reference herein.

The information furnished pursuant to this Item 12, including Exhibit 99.1, shall not be deemed to be filed for the purposes of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, and will not be incorporated by reference into any registration statement filed under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, unless specifically identified therein as being incorporated therein by reference.



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<b>Exhibits</b>	<b>Description</b>
*99.1	Press release issued by The Houston Exploration Company on February 5, 2004.

\* Filed herewith.