

Formal Biography

Jay Kalbas serves as Director of the Kansas Geological Survey, State Geologist of Kansas, and Professor of Geology at the University of Kansas. He earned his Ph.D. in Geology and Geophysics from Purdue University in 2006 before beginning a 16-year career at ExxonMobil, where he served in progressively senior roles, ultimately leading international offshore exploration and development joint ventures as Atlantic Operations Manager. He subsequently led subsurface development for ExxonMobil's flagship Guyana projects — directing appraisal drilling strategy and integrated development planning for resource bases exceeding ten billion barrels, supported by capital programs in the tens of billions of dollars.

In 2022, he returned to public service to lead the Kansas Geological Survey, where he oversees geologic framework development and resource assessment programs serving a broad range of public and private stakeholders across energy development, groundwater management, subsurface storage, critical mineral assessment, and public health. Under his leadership, the Survey has materially expanded its research portfolio and funding base, securing more than \$35 million of new funding between 2024 and 2026 to launch new programs in airborne electromagnetic surveying for groundwater delineation, subsurface energy storage evaluation, and statewide groundwater quality monitoring. His role extends to statutory advisory and policy functions; in 2026, he served on a National Petroleum Council subcommittee commissioned by the U.S. Secretary of Energy to report to Congress on the economic and national security implications of subsurface resource assessment. This breadth of experience — spanning academic research, large-scale industry operations, and public-sector leadership — positions him as an authoritative voice on energy security, subsurface resource stewardship, and the science underpinning long-term development decisions.