

# PETROLEUM NEWS

A L A S K A



"There were so many politicians on the platform that there were not enough promises to go around."

—RONALD REAGAN, FEB. 6, 1984

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Week of February 17, 2002



Tourism B.C.

Environmental groups have hinted that ending the drilling bans for offshore British Columbia, pictured here, could result in a series of legal actions.

## Canada ready to lift moratorium on British Columbia offshore

The Canadian government, in a surprising move, has offered to negotiate the removal of its 30-year ban on oil and gas exploration of British Columbia's offshore, but got an equally surprising low-key response from the province and industry.

Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal, less than a month after being named to the energy portfolio, said Feb. 11 he would be open to development of the potentially prolific Queen Charlotte Basin.

"If the province feels it wants to lift its own moratorium on offshore drilling, then it can request that the federal government do the same," he said. "Once B.C. makes that request, we'll do the consultations."

### Federal policy change

That was a clear retreat from the long-standing federal policy of opposing offshore activity and put Dhaliwal at odds with Environment Minister David Anderson. Both ministers represent

see MORATORIUM page A15

## Knowles introduces legislation for railroad bonds to finance Alaska Highway gas pipeline

Calling an Alaska Highway natural gas pipeline a "national interest" project, Alaska Gov. Tony Knowles sent the Legislature bills Feb. 12 to authorize the Alaska Railroad Corp. to issue up to \$17 billion in tax-exempt bonds to finance the pipeline. (See story page 1.)

"Specifically," the governor said, "this bill says that building a gas pipeline is an essential purpose of the state and is critical to the state's health and welfare. And it also recognizes that a necessary and proper function of the Alaska Railroad is the ability to finance such facilities."

"In addition, the bill amends existing law to expand the railroad's powers to issue up to \$17 billion in bonds to finance the construction and maintenance of a gas line and related facilities for transporting natural gas from Alaska's North Slope.

see LEGISLATION page A12

### ARCTIC GAS

## Governor: Tax-exempting bond from railroad could help build gas pipeline

Conduit financing would provide tax-exempt benefit, but recourse would be against pipeline owners, not railroad: its assets and indebtedness would not be affected

By Kristen Nelson  
PNA Editor-in-Chief

Last year the governor's Alaska Highway Natural Gas Policy Council told the administration that innovative financing would help move a gas pipeline project forward.

This month Gov. Tony Knowles responded — with what he and the state's bond advisors are calling a "unique" opportunity — one that could lower financing costs by 2 percentage points, from 8-8.5 percent to 6-6.5 percent. (See related story in the Feb. 10 edition of PNA.)

Owners of the pipeline would save (in 2002 dollars) more than \$1 billion over the life of the pipeline because of the lower financing costs.

And the state would get an additional \$500 million over the life of the pipeline in higher severance taxes and royalties because of the lower transportation costs and higher well head value for North Slope natural gas.

### Stevens credited

This opportunity exists, Gov. Knowles told the policy council Feb. 7, because "when Congress approved the transfer of the Alaska Railroad from federal to state ownership in 1983, it granted the railroad corporation a unique ability to issue tax-



Gov. Tony Knowles

### Half-billion dollar benefit to state

Members of the governor's Alaska Highway Natural Gas Policy Council had a number of questions about the gasline financing proposal presented Feb. 7.

Jacob Adams asked how much of the gas line the Alaska Railroad Corp. tax-exempt bonds would cover.

Jeff Brown of Goldman Sachs said the estimate is 30 percent equity, 70 percent debt for the project, with equity coming from the private owners, and an estimate of \$17 billion for the total capital cost including the conditioning plant.

Mike Navarre asked if the tax-exempt financing could be used for North Slope infrastructure, as well as the pipeline itself.

Neil Slotnick, deputy commissioner of the

see BENEFIT page A13

exempt bonds to finance industrial development.

"This law gives a special exemption for the railroad that supercedes restrictions in today's IRS code. Since this exemption was enacted," he said, "Congress has again acted to specifically protect the ability of the railroad to issue such bonds. That was in the Tax Reform Act of 1986."

"The visionary behind both of those provisions is our own (U.S.) Sen. Ted Stevens, who foresaw

see BONDS page A12

### LAND & LEASING

## Oil and gas land speculators — parasites or propellants?

Roderick says speculators add to competition for leases, accelerating the pace of leasing and exploration; Boyd says some tie up valuable leases for years

By Steve Sutherlin  
PNA Managing Editor

Some say land speculators tie up valuable oil and gas leases and unduly occupy the courts and state agencies; others say speculators are a vital catalyst in Alaska's oil and gas lease market.

Naysayers argue the speculator doesn't add value to leases by exploring and developing it. Instead, they sell off interest in their leases in the form of working interests and production overrides.

Ken Boyd, former director of the Alaska Division of Oil and Gas, told PNA leases are expensive to explore and develop. Speculators buy leases with no "real intention" of shooting seismic or drilling,

reselling interest in their leases to "dentists in Florida."

Also, Boyd said, speculators don't buy enough leases to cover a prospective field: "A one-lease oilfield in Alaska is unlikely."

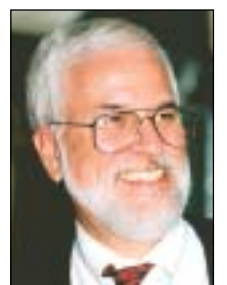
One of the worst effects of land speculation is that leases are tied up for years with no action, Boyd said.

"The state leases its land in good faith, with the expectation that the lease will be explored and developed," he said.

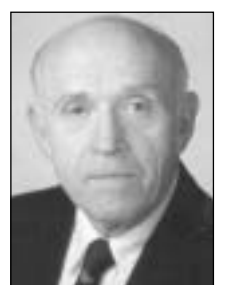
Speculators resort to various mechanisms to hang onto leases, including lawsuits, Boyd said.

But Boyd said the impact of land speculators is not entirely negative.

see SPECULATORS page A11



Ken Boyd



Jack Roderick

## INSIDE

Alaska Rig Report	2
Netricity hires Parsons	3
BP profits slip 46 percent	5
Oil company earnings chart	6
State defends royalty-in-kind gas sale	9
Rokeberg offers changes for royalty incentives	7

# Alaska Rig Report

The Alaska Rig Report as of 2/14/02, active drilling companies only listed.

Contractor/ Rig Type	Rig No.	Field/Platform	Field Operator
North Slope			
<b>Doyon Drilling Inc.</b>			
Dreco 1250 UE	D14 (SCR/TD)	Prudhoe Bay (Niakuk)	BP
Sky Top Brewster NE-12	15 (SCR/TD)	Stacked/Endicott Is.	Available
Dreco 1000 UE	16 (SCR)	Prudhoe Bay	BP
Dreco D2000 UEDB	19 (SCR/TD)	Alpine	Phillips
OIME 2000	141 (SCR/TD)	Tarn (Going to NPR-A)	Phillips
<b>Nabors Alaska Drilling</b>			
Trans-ocean rig	CDR-1(CT)	Stacked/Prudhoe Bay	Available
Dreco 1000UE	2-ES(SCR)	Prudhoe Bay	BP
Mid-Continent U36A	3-S(CT)	Prudhoe Bay	BP
Oilwell 700-E	4-ES(SCR)	Milne Point	BP
Dreco 1000UE	9-ES(SCR/TD)	Prudhoe Bay	BP
Oilwell 2000 Hercules	14E (SCR)	NPR-A	Anadarko
Oilwell 2000 Hercules	16E (SCR/TD)	NPR-A	Phillips
Oilwell 2000	17E (SCR/TD)	Stacked/Pt. McIntyre	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist-2	18-E(SCR)	Stacked/Deadhorse	Pending/Phillips
OIME 1000	19E (SCR)	Meltwater	Phillips
Emsco Electro-hoist Varco TDS3	22-E(SCR/TD)	Stacked/Milne Point	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist-2 Canrig 1050E	27-E(SCR/TD)	Milne Point	BP
Emsco Electro-hoist-2	28-E(SCR)	Stacked/Deadhorse	Available
Oilwell 2000	33-E(SCR/TD)	Northstar Island	BP
OIME 2000	245E (SCR/TD)	Stacked/Kuparuk	Phillips
<b>Nordic/Calista Services</b>			
Superior 700UE/attached to Schlumberger CT Unit 7	1 (SCR/CT)	Prudhoe Bay	BP
Superior 700UE	2 (SCR)	Stacked/Kuparuk	Pending/BP
Ideco 900	3 (SCR/TD)	Kuparuk	Phillips
Cook Inlet Basin-Onshore			
<b>Kuukpik/H &amp; R Drilling</b>			
Rigmasters 850	9	Pearl #1 (Ninilchick)	Unocal
<b>Marathon (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contractor)</b>			
Taylor Rig	Glacier Rig 1	Kenai Gas Field KBU44-6	Marathon
<b>Inlet Drilling Alaska/Cooper Construction</b>			
Kremco 750	CC-1	Stacked/Tyonek	Available
<b>Nabors Alaska Drilling</b>			
National	154	Stacked/Kenai	Available
Wilson 120	158	Stacked/Beluga	Available
National 110-UE	160 (SCR)	Stacked/Kenai	Available
Continental Emsco E3000	273	Anchor Pt. (Cosmopolitan)	Phillips
Cook Inlet Basin-Offshore			
<b>XTO Energy (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contractor)</b>			
National 1320	XTO-A	Idle/Mid. Grd. Shoal	XTO Energy
National 110	XTO-C	Mid. Grd. Shoal, Plat. C	XTO Energy
<b>Nabors Alaska Drilling</b>			
IDECO 2100E	429 (SCR)	Osprey Platform	Forest Oil
<b>Unocal (Nabors Alaska Drilling labor contractor)</b>			
Oilwell 2000E	51	Idle/Steelhead Platform	Unocal
National 1320UE	54	Idle/Grayling Platform	Unocal
National 1320UE	55	Idle/Grayling Platform	Unocal
Oilwell 860	56	Monopod Platform	Unocal
Drawworks Removed	57	Idle/Granite Pt. Platform	Unocal
National 1320UE	58A	Idle/King Salmon Platform	Unocal
Drawworks Removed	58B	Idle/Granite Pt. Plat.	Unocal
OIME SD8M	60	Idle/Bruce Platform	Unocal
National 1320UE	76	Idle/Dolly Varden Plat.	Unocal
National 1320UE	77	Idle/Dolly Varden Plat.	Unocal
Ideco 2100E	428	Stacked/Baker Platform	Available
Bering Sea-Port Clarence			
<b>Fairweather</b>			
Dreco 147	SDC	Stacked/Port Clarence	AEC
Mackenzie Delta-Onshore			
<b>Akita Equatak</b>			
Rigmaster P400	15	Mallik 4L-38	Japex et al
Rigmaster E-1500	60(SCR/TD)	Stacked/Swimming Pt.	Petro-Canada
Dreco 1250 UE	63(SCR/TD)	Tuk B-2	Devon ARL Corp.

TD = rigs equipped with top drive units WO = workover operations CT = coiled tubing operation  
SCR = electric rig

The Rig Report was prepared by Dan Wilcox

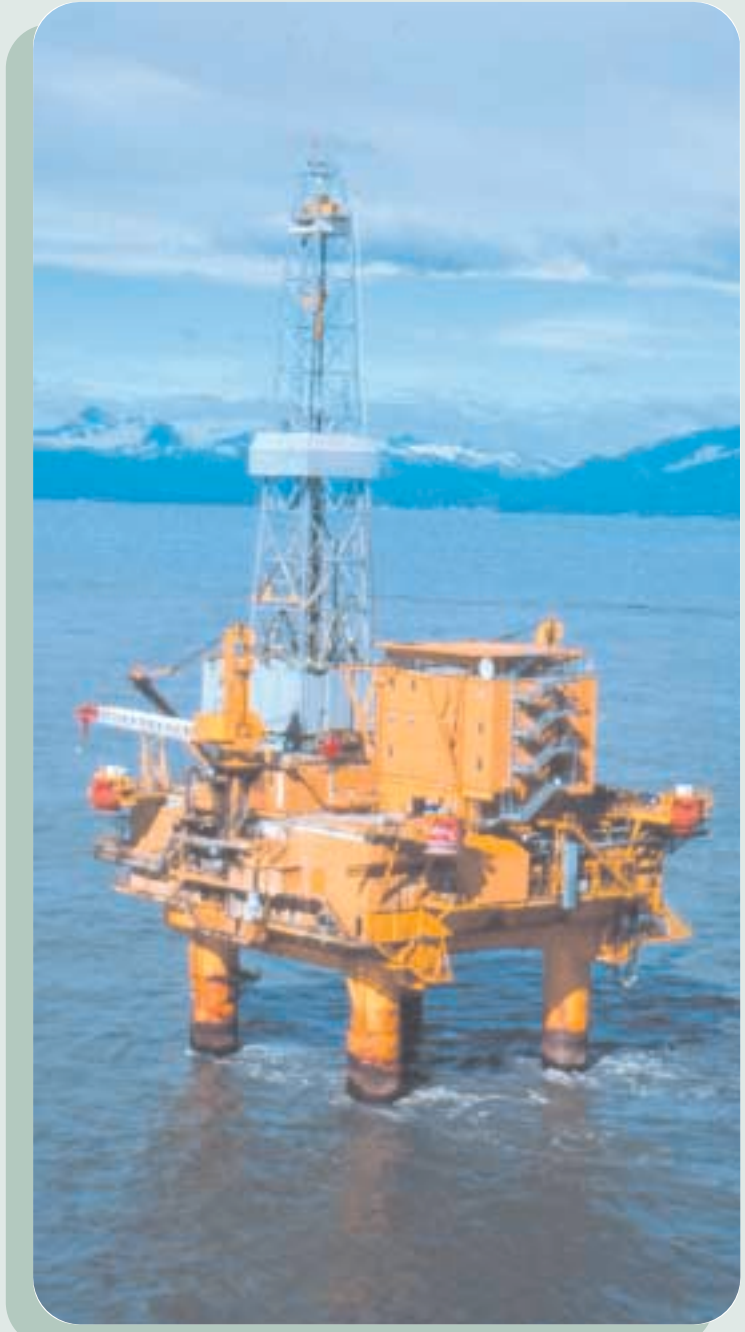


Photo courtesy Judy Patrick

## Rig startups expected in the next 6 months:

<b>Akita Equatak</b> Rig 60	startup expected March 2002 at Mackenzie Delta for Petro-Canada
<b>Fairweather</b> Rig SDC	Drilling unit to be moved to McCovey prospect in May 2002.
<b>Nordic/Calista Services</b> Rig 2	converting to a coil tubing rig in a JV with Dowell Schlumberger for BP. startup expected August 2002.
<b>Unocal</b> Rig 54 Rig 58A	startup expected March 2002 on Grayling Platform startup expected Feb. 2002 on King Salmon Platform

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# ARCTIC GAS

## Netricity hires Parsons for North Slope data center feasibility study

Netricity LLC has hired Parsons Engineering Inc. to study the economics and markets for a proposed \$1 billion data center on the North Slope. The study, which just got under way, will take about two months, Mike Caskey told PNA last week.

Caskey is vice president of Fidelity Exploration and Production Co., one of two partners in the venture.

The facility, commonly known as a server farm, would house a half million web-hosting servers in a 1 million-square-foot building, connected to clients and users by the fiber optic system that runs the length of the trans-Alaska pipeline. It would also include construction of a 400 megawatt, gas-fueled electric plant to power the center and an additional fiber optic line for back up.

Modular buildings to house the data center and power plant would be constructed in Anchorage or Nikiski, Netricity said.

Netricity is in negotiations with producers to buy natural gas from North Slope producers to power the facility. The center would use a maximum of 120 million cubic feet of natural gas per day.

"We are expecting gas prices from several owners soon," Caskey told PNA Feb. 8.

Fidelity Exploration and Production, a 75 percent partner in Netricity, is a subsidiary of MDU Resources Group, the parent company of Knife River Corp. which owns Alaska Basic Industries and Alaska Sand and Gravel.

Andex Resources LLC, a 25 percent partner in Netricity, is a partner in BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc.'s Slugger prospect on the North Slope. The Houston independent is also putting together a deal with Doyon Ltd. and the state of Alaska to explore and develop 538,000 acres in the Nenana Basin.

Billionaire financier George Soros is one of Andex's principal shareholders.

—Steve Sutherlin

**"We are expecting gas prices from several owners soon."**  
—Mike Caskey told PNA Feb. 8.

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## Index

<b>RIG REPORT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>ON DEADLINE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>FINANCE &amp; ECONOMY</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>ARCTIC GAS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>ADVERTISER INDEX</b> .....	<b>14</b>



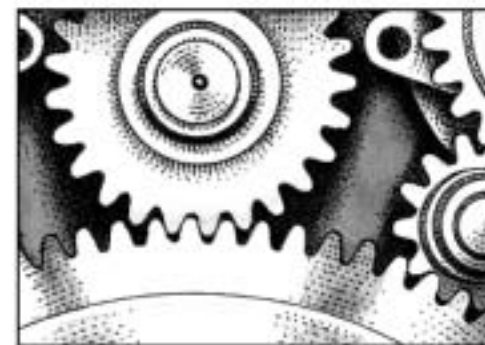
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## GOVERNMENT

### Knowles signs ANWR support bill

Gov. Tony Knowles signed House Bill 334 Feb. 12, providing \$1 million to Arctic Power and \$100,000 to the Village of Kaktovik.

"These needed funds will allow Arctic Power to continue its national efforts in support of responsible oil and gas exploration and development in ANWR," Knowles said in a statement. "This is particularly timely as Congress is currently scheduled to begin debating a national energy bill later this week. It also provides \$100,000 to help the village of Kaktovik host members of the media and others as they visit the refuge."

The governor's office said the Arctic Power funds were originally included in Knowles' fast-track supplemental budget along with marketing assistance for tourism and wild Alaska salmon. The governor reminded legislators of those requests as he signed the bill providing money to lobby to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

## PIPELINES & DOWNSTREAM

### Shooting led to event that moved pipeline; shift 150 miles from bullet hole wasn't detected for months

A pipeline shift near Pump Station 5 was a result of maneuvers to drain oil from the trans-Alaska oil pipeline after it was punctured by a bullet, according to engineers with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

While the 13-inch movement wasn't detected until four months after the bullet pierced the line on Oct. 4, the pipeline systems did their job, regulators agree.

Nine of the "honeycomb" anchors that absorb energy when the pipeline moves had to be replaced. The job took about six days.

"All of the movement systems that are on TAPS worked just great," said

Rhea DoBosh of the Joint Pipeline Office. "It moved, but the absorbers and saddles and all of the portions of the pipeline that are supposed to move worked well."

The delay in spotting the movement does raise some questions, however.

"Should some other major event have happened, could it have caused some damage?" she said regulators are wondering. "If it was that major, should it have been detected earlier? These are things we are asking, and looking at in depth."

The JPO, which includes federal and state regulators, has been looking at what level of surveillance is needed on the line, and this incident will be part of that larger review of "reliability centered maintenance," she said.

The pipe moved as a result of forces from oil moving upstream when engineers were getting ready to drain oil out of the northern part of the line in the wake of the bullet piercing, according to Mike Heatwole of Alyeska.

When five relief valves at Pump Station 5 were opened, the oil flow from the south reached a rate of more than 1.2 million barrels daily as it surged downhill toward check valve 50, which is about a mile south of Pump Station 5. The valve is designed to close when just such a reverse-flow situation occurs, and it did, halting the flow. The momentum of the oil pushed the valve and adjacent piping 13 inches, crushing the energy absorbers mounted on the anchors.

There was no damage to the pipe, and engineers weren't even aware of the incident until a ground surveillance crew on a routine inspection noticed it Jan. 4, Heatwole said.

Crews replaced the anchors and used hydraulic jacks to move the pipeline back into its regular position, he said.

—Allen Baker

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## FINANCE & ECONOMY

### Petro-Canada shows record earnings; fourth quarter hurt by Enron issues

Petro-Canada bucked a decline in fourth-quarter earnings to post record profits in 2001 of \$904 million (Canadian), slightly above 2000's C\$893 million.

For the fourth quarter, operating earnings were C\$71 million, less than a fourth of the C\$287 million a year earlier. Those earnings were also less than half of the C\$149 million the company made in 2001's third quarter. The fourth quarter was marked by a C\$15 million charge against earnings due to the bankruptcy filing of Enron Corp.

Production totaled 205,000 barrels of oil equivalent daily for the quarter, down from 211,000 a year earlier but up from the third quarter's 190,800.

Upstream profits were C\$52 million, compared with C\$244 million a year earlier. Downstream operations brought in C\$48 million, down from C\$66 million in 2000's fourth quarter.

Revenue for the quarter slid 39 percent to C\$1.77 billion, from C\$2.90 billion a year earlier. For the full year, revenues totaled C\$8.69 billion, a decline of 9 percent from C\$9.52 billion in 2000.

—Allen Baker

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**FINANCE & ECONOMY**

**MICHIGAN**

**Semco restructuring brings loss; Enstar parent exits engineering business**

Semco Energy Inc. showed a loss of \$5.4 million for the fourth quarter and \$6.4 million for the year as the parent of Enstar restructured its business.

Even before the write-offs, fourth-quarter profits for the Farmington Hills, Mich., company were reduced \$1.6 million by warmer than normal weather in Michigan and Alaska, where it sells natural gas for heating and other uses.

Net quarterly income from continuing operations was \$5.2 million, compared with a profit of \$12.4 million a year earlier. Operating income from gas distribution shrunk to \$19.6 million for the quarter, down 29 percent from \$27.8 in the final quarter of 2000. The construction services business showed a loss of \$3.9 million for the quarter, compared with a \$2.8 million profit a year ago.

Semco's restructuring charges include its decision to discontinue its engineering business, which triggered a \$6.1 million write-down.

Revenues dropped 7 percent for the quarter to \$132.5 million, from \$142.8 million a year earlier. For the year, revenues were up 9 percent to \$445.8 million.

—Allen Baker

■ L O N D O N

**BP profits slip 46 percent; London giant follows industry trend**

By Allen Baker  
PNA Contributing Writer

BP p.l.c reported sharply lower profits for the fourth quarter, in line with the industry pattern as prices pushed down earnings. London-based BP said its pro forma earnings for the quarter totaled \$2.2 billion, down 46 percent from the figure a year earlier. By comparison, fellow oil giant ExxonMobil showed a 49 percent profit decline.



John Browne, BP's chief executive

"General economic slowdown, and a sharp fall in oil and gas prices, certainly made for tough going," commented BP's chief executive, John Browne.

For the year, BP had profits of \$13.2 billion, down 7 percent from 2000's \$14.2 billion. That came despite an increase of nearly \$2.5 billion in capital spending, for a total of \$8.9 billion invested.

BP did lift more oil and gas in the quarter than a year ago.

Overall, 2001 production was up 5.5 percent from a year earlier (2 percent after adjusting for acquisitions), with the fourth-quarter results showing a 4 percent gain after adjusting for properties that were bought or sold.

Average daily liquids flow in the fourth quarter was 2,017,000 barrels, up 4 percent from a year ago and a 7 percent jump from the third quarter, when BP pumped 1,883,000 barrels each day.

Liquids production had been declining, but new oil from the offshore Northstar oil field in Alaska, as well as Girassol in Angola and Qinghangdao in China, helped the results. U.S. production was 3,621,000 barrels a day, up from 3,577,000 in the third quarter and 3,403,000 barrels a year ago.

Gas production up 13 percent

Gas production worldwide was 19,727 million cubic feet a day, up 13 percent from a year ago and 7 percent above the third quarter figure. U.S. production was down slightly, however, 8,094,000 million cubic feet daily, a decline of 1 percent from a year ago but a drop of 7 percent from the third quarter.

Overall, exploration and production activities gen-  
*see BP page A6*

■ W A S H I N G T O N , D . C .

**Oil prices likely to drift until second half of the year, energy watchdog says**

**International Energy Agency statistics suggest Russia not cooperating with OPEC's strategy to squeeze crude oil supplies**

By Bruce Stanley  
Associated Press Business Writer

Soft demand and a mild winter in major oil markets have offset the impact of cuts in crude production and kept prices for oil and refined products from rising, a respected survey said Feb. 8.

Due to conflicting market forces, pressure for a substantial increase in crude prices probably won't build until an incipient economic recovery picks up during the second half of the year, the International Energy Agency said.

In fact, prices might fall before then. IEA statistics suggest that Russia, the world's second-biggest oil producer, isn't cooperating with OPEC's strategy to squeeze crude supplies, and an OPEC official expressed fears Feb. 8 of a possible rupture in relations between Russia and the producers' cartel.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity from OPEC's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, said he didn't expect Russia's cooperation, such as it is, to last beyond March. OPEC is therefore likely to face a severe test this spring in trying to avoid a supply glut and even a damaging price war, he said.

Global demand for oil fell to 76.3 million barrels a day during the last quarter of 2001, down half a million barrels a day compared to the same three months of the previous year.

Average demand growth for the full year was the lowest since 1985, the agency said in its monthly oil market report.

The global economic slowdown was largely to blame, together with unseasonably warm weather in North America and parts of Europe.

*see PRICES page A6*

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## OIL COMPANY EARNINGS

Fourth Quarter 2001

4Q 2001 profits, % change from 4Q 2000  
 4Q revenues, % change from 4Q 2000,  
 4Q daily production, % change from 4Q 2000

		profits	%	revenues	%	production	%
Alberta Energy	AOG	—					
Agrium	AGU	—					
Anadarko	APC	-\$188	—	\$1,379	-41	529,000BOE	+9
BP	BP						
ChevronTexaco	CVX	-\$2,522	—	\$21,460	-33	2,014,000BBL/4,371MMCF	0/-1
Conoco	COC	\$127	-77	\$8,491	-18	891,000BOE	+32
Evergreen	EVG	—					
ExxonMobil	EOM	\$2,680	-49	\$47,300	-26	2,527,000BBL/11,373MMCF	-3/+1
Forest	FST	—					
Marathon	MRO	-\$1,074	—	\$6,846	-15	192,300BBL	-1
Murphy	MUR	\$28.8	-69	\$849	-33	70,687BBL	+7
Petro Canada	PCZ	C\$71	-75	C\$1,772	-39	205,000BOE	-3
Phillips	P	\$162	-78	\$10,000	+59	836,000BOE	0
Semco	SEN	-\$5.4	—	\$132.5	—	—	—
Tesoro	TSO	\$4.0	-84	\$1,279	-11	—	—
Unocal	UCL	-\$29	—	\$1,263	-55	497,000BOE	+5
Williams	WMB	—					
XTO	XTO	—					

Dollar figures in millions

BOE: barrels of oil equivalent  
 BBL: barrels of crude oil and condensate  
 MMCF: billions of cubic feet of natural gas

The fourth quarter information about the companies in the chart above are either included in news briefs and stories in this section of PNA or they were reported in the Feb. 3 or Feb. 10 issue of PNA.

continued from page A5

## PRICES

Prices firmed up somewhat

Members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries have tried to shore up weak crude prices by coordinating output cuts together with Russia and four other non-OPEC producers.

The cuts took effect Jan. 1 and shaved 510,000 barrels a day from world oil production, which slipped to 76.3 million barrels a day in January, the report said.

Although prices firmed up somewhat late last month, they stayed within the same broad range seen since November. The IEA said it doesn't foresee a major change in oil markets until a widely expected economic recovery picks up in the third quarter.

The Paris-based IEA is the energy watchdog for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a group of rich oil-importing nations.

Peter Gignoux, head of the petroleum desk at Salomon Smith Barney in London, agreed with the IEA that oil prices should remain relatively stable until demand recovers.

"I think prices are caught in a vice-like range," of \$18-\$22 a barrel for U.S. light, sweet crude, he said.

Crude oil for March delivery rose 54 cents to \$20.18 in afternoon trading Feb. 8 on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

OPEC members above quotas

The report noted that nine of the 10 OPEC countries that agreed to cut their oil production on Jan. 1 actually did so. However, even after reducing output, OPEC members still were pumping 6 percent, or 1.3 million barrels a day, above their new quotas.

The OPEC official in Vienna challenged the IEA's statistics but conceded that if they are correct, then OPEC is doing a disastrous job at managing its own production.

Gignoux argued that OPEC's limited success in decreasing output last month is impressive nonetheless. In a series of incremental cuts, the cartel has pared back its production by more than 3 million barrels a day since January 2001.

"This is an aggressive act by OPEC. They're cutting their own revenues," Gignoux said.

Some non-OPEC production up

Of the non-OPEC nations that went along with the group's strategy to trim supplies, only Norway and Mexico complied, the IEA said. Oman's output was unchanged in January, and Angola and Russia actually boosted production.

Russia increased its exports by about 500,000 barrels a day from December to January, instead of cutting its oil exports by 150,000 barrels a day as it told OPEC two months ago it would, the IEA said.

Russia was extremely reluctant to go along with OPEC's reduction plan in the first place. Russian oil companies and government officials have said publicly since then that they want to increase oil output this year, thereby "casting a cloud" over Russia's future cooperation with OPEC, the agency said. OPEC's secretary-general, Ali Rodriguez, hopes to visit Moscow for talks in the first week of March. The OPEC official in Vienna warned that prices could plunge if the two sides fail to reach an understanding about crude output. ♦

continued from page A5

## BP

erated \$2.4 billion in pro forma earnings for the quarter, just half of the figure a year ago.

Lower prices were the culprit, as they were across the industry. Crude brought an average of \$17.72 a barrel, down 37 percent from a year earlier. Gas sales grossed \$2.28 per thousand cubic feet, down 39 percent.

Refining and marketing added \$392 million in earnings for the quarter on a replacement cost basis, about half the \$792 million brought in a year ago. That segment showed a profit of \$1 billion in the third quarter before adjustments.

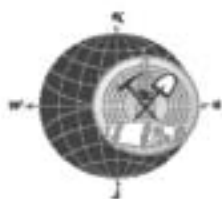
Refinery throughput was 2,847,000 barrels daily, an 8 percent decline from a year earlier as the company sold refineries in North Dakota and Utah to Tesoro Petroleum.

Operating loss from the chemicals business, on a replacement cost basis, came to \$67 million, an improvement from the \$82 million loss in the 2000 fourth quarter, but not from the profits of \$105 million from that segment in the third quarter of this year.

No big changes in 2002

As for 2002, chief executive Browne sees no big changes: "Demand for oil and gas is weaker than last year because of the global economy, a mild U.S. winter and reduced jet fuel demand following the events of 11 September," he noted in a statement.

"The crude oil market looks broadly balanced for the first half of 2002, if OPEC's latest round of quota reductions offset current demand weakness. Additional OPEC oil may be required in the second half of the year to balance the market if demand improves in line with an economic recovery," Browne said. ♦



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GOVERNMENT

■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

## Minerals Management Service director named

**Rejane 'Johnnie' Burton of Wyoming tapped to head MMS; varied background includes executive position with Casper oil and gas company**

By Petroleum News • Alaska

**R**ejane Medinger 'Johnnie' Burton of Wyoming has been named director of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service.

In announcing the appointment Feb. 7, Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton said: "Ms. Burton has the background and professional qualifications that are critical to this challenging position. Johnnie is the right person, at the right time, to lead this agency and the vital role it will play in helping the nation focus on its energy-related challenges."

Since 1995, Burton has served on the governor of Wyoming's cabinet as director of the Department of Revenue. From 1989-92 she was vice president of TCF Inc., an

oil and gas exploration company based in Casper, Wyo.

Prior to that, she was vice president of Dwights Energydata Inc., an information company specializing in oil and gas databases. Burton was also president and founder of Hotline Energy Reports Inc., which later merged with Dwights. Burton began her career in the oil and gas industry as an oil scout in Casper, Wyo., for Rinehart Oil News.

Burton was a member of the Wyoming State House of Representatives from



Rejane Medinger 'Johnnie' Burton

1982-1988.

"I am excited about leading the Minerals Management Service at this critical time," Burton said in a statement. "I look forward to the challenges of this very important position."

Born in French Algeria, Burton immigrated to the United States in 1963 and became an American citizen in 1968. In

1958, she completed the Baccalaureat de l'Enseignement Secondaire in Algiers. She completed the Licence-es-Lettres, English, Diplome d'Enseignement from the Universities of Algiers in Algeria and in Paris, France, in 1962. She earned a masters degree in 1974 from the University of Wyoming.

Burton has two grown children.

## JUNEAU

### Rokeberg proposes modification of royalty incentives for marginal fields

Rep. Norman Rokeberg, R-Anchorage, introduced a bill Feb. 8 allowing the Department of Natural Resources to modify the royalty for fields, or portions of fields, which are uneconomic.

"I think it's important that we have an incentive program in place in this state for the development of marginal oil and gas fields," Rokeberg said in a statement. "We don't need to leave oil in the ground in Alaska. It's important for our economy that we get as much production and revenue from our oil fields as we can."

Rokeberg said the state has had laws to encourage production from marginal oil and gas fields, and in 1995 the Legislature passed House Bill 207 to lower state oil royalties to encourage production, or to raise them when economic conditions warranted it. That law, he said, has been described as unusable, unintelligible and overly burdensome, and the only effort to seek such incentives in the past seven years was denied.

He said House Bill 394 provides modification of the state's royalty share on a sliding scale or other mechanism based on a change in the price of oil or gas and other relevant factors, including production rate, projected ultimate recovery, development costs and operating costs.

"Alaska needs to be able to compete in the global market", Rokeberg said. "Companies operating in Alaska are competing on a global basis for capital dollars to expand exploration and production and to keep operating in Alaska. When fields are uneconomic, we need to have a workable plan in place allowing for a reduction in the state's royalty share if that will keep a field in production or allow for development of a new field that might otherwise be uneconomic."

Rokeberg said no company or person encouraged him to introduce his legislative remedy. He said he has wanted to correct the problems created by HB 207 for years, to help the state better meet its financial obligations by encouraging the maximum use of known oil resources.

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GOVERNMENT

■ ANCHORAGE

# EPA Region 10 administrator tells Alaskans to support DEC

*The alternative, says John Iani, is the 800-pound gorilla from Seattle — wearing a blue blazer*

By Kristen Nelson  
PNA Editor-in-Chief

Support your local environmental regulator, John Iani told the Resource Development Council Feb. 7, because if you don't the EPA will have to come in to enforce statutes.

"And you don't want a guy with a blue blazer from Seattle telling you how to run your businesses. And so I'm here to preach for a strong DEC," said Iani, who began work Oct. 10 as administrator of EPA's Region 10 covering Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

"I'm happy to report that I don't have a prepared speech from Washington, D.C.," Iani said. There have been no "10 new commandments for Region 10" from EPA Administrator Christie Whitman. "And I don't think that's coming," Iani said.

Whitman, a former two-term governor of New Jersey, "understands that problems need to be solved at the local level," and that means, he said, at the state level.

No blue blazers

Iani said he thinks it is good news for Alaska "that Gov. Whitman is trying to push delegation to the state. ... You want — you should want — the state to take the lead on regulating the industry here."

That means the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

"I'll take the maybe unpopular position with some of you by saying it's short sighted to think about cutting out DEC or reducing DEC... don't forget that those statutes

require the federal government to come in and if you don't have DEC on the ground sort of making sure that environmental compliance is happening, EPA's going to come in."

The state needs a strong "environmental compliance body up to speed and running and you can't do that if you dramatically cut a budget for them," he said.

Iani said he thought some understood that, but "I think a lot think well, we'll just get rid of that roadblock."

"But, you know," he said: "Seattle's an 800-pound gorilla and you don't want to have to run into that roadblock because projects simply don't get done. And that's not a good result."

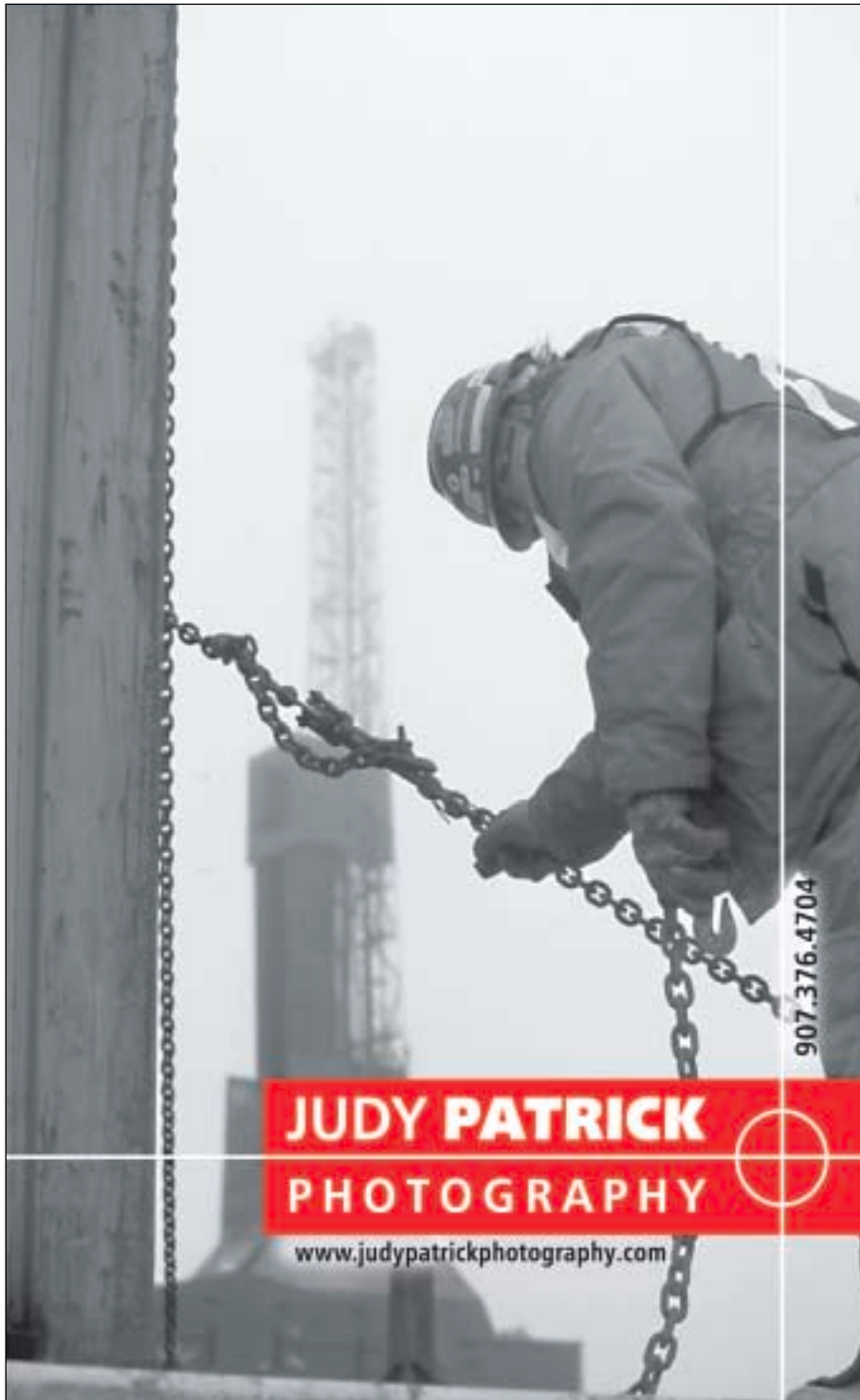
DEC, EPA cooperation

Iani said he believes in "a strong partnership with the states." EPA has expertise in a lot of areas that the state doesn't, he said, and the state has expertise in areas the EPA doesn't. DEC and EPA "have a pretty good partnership," he said: the agencies just spent two days planning and "prioritizing things between EPA and DEC."

One of the top priorities for EPA Region 10 is Alaska oil and gas, Iani said. And when Region 10 took their three priorities back to a national EPA meeting, they got a lot of support. Efficient permitting is a directive from the Bush administration, Iani said, and Region 10 will focus on trying to solve problems at the state level and streamline permitting for energy projects.

Iani also asked for priorities from Alaska industries: "The real priorities — don't give us a shopping list that has 40 or 50 items on it."

Iani, born and raised in Kodiak, worked as a legislative aide for Sen. Frank Murkowski and Congressman Don Young, practiced law, was president of the Pacific Seafood Processors Association and most recently was vice president for corporate affairs and general counsel for seafood producer UniSea Inc. ♦



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PEOPLE

## Whitehead named VP western slope

Phillips Alaska Inc. said Feb. 8 it has named A.J. "John" Whitehead vice president of the Western North Slope, an asset area that includes the Alpine oil field and any fields which might be developed in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.



John Whitehead

Whitehead replaces Ryan Lance, who was transferred to Houston to be the general manager of the company's Lower 48 and Canada assets.

Most recently Whitehead has been Phillips Alaska's vice president of human resources. He has 25 years of experience in the oil industry, including 15 years in Alaska.



# ARCTIC GAS

## CANADA

### Adviser touts economic benefits of pipeline

The Alberta-based petroleum industry has been urged to spread the word across Canada about the substantial economic benefits of a stand-alone Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline.

Robert Marshall, a senior pipeline adviser to the Alberta government, said the strong support from the North needs to be expanded into "support from the rest of Canada."

He told the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta the project would result in direct investment of C\$8.3 billion (US\$5.2 billion), mostly concentrated in the 2004-2006 period, although direct investment spending would extend through to 2029, stemming from long-range field development required in the Mackenzie Delta.

Marshall said the Northwest Territories, with its limited population of about 40,000, would "need a lot of help" in the provision of goods and services related to pipeline development, construction and operation.

A pipeline would open up alternative delivery means for Alberta E&P companies as well as providing natural gas liquids as feedstock for the province's petrochemical sector.

A study by Calgary-based Wright Mansell Research Ltd., presented by TransCanada PipeLines Ltd. to the Canadian government, calculated a Mackenzie Valley pipeline would pump C\$1.28 billion into Alberta's Gross Domestic Product from 2002 to 2034.

The single largest item of C\$434 million would occur during pipeline construction.

In addition, the study said the project would contribute C\$849 million in wages to Alberta laborers and C\$100 million to Alberta government revenues over a 32-year span.

see ADVISER page A10

■ J U N E A U

## State defends royalty-in-kind sale at House Oil and Gas Committee

By Kristen Nelson  
PNA Editor-in-Chief

Producers and explorers — companies with and without current gas reserves — argued their respective sides of whether or not the state should be holding a royalty-in-kind sale for its North Slope natural gas before the House Special Committee on Oil and Gas Feb. 5. (See Feb. 10 issue of PNA)

The state's Division of Oil and Gas defended the sale Feb. 5 and Feb. 7.

Division of Oil and Gas Director Mark Myers said access to facilities was crucial for the future well being of the state's oil and gas industry and a royalty-in-kind sale would give a shipper guaranteed gas so it could contract for space in an open season. Myers said the division disagrees with the producers' contention that access is not an issue and noted that bidders Chevron and Williams both had access concerns — Chevron for its Point Thomson gas and Williams for gas in its foothills prospects.



Mark Myers

### Some expansion

From the design specs the producers have proposed, they have 0.8 billion cubic feet to 1 bcf of expansion capacity that could be brought on with

additional compression, Myers said; that expansion capacity could be used to ship the state's royalty gas.

Bonnie Robson, deputy director of the division, told the committee that while the producers only objected to royalty-in-kind sales where the gas could be returned to the state and revert to royalty in value (gas which the producers must then ship and sell for the state), in fact the state is allowed by lease terms to switch on six months notice. If the producers want to end the state's ability to switch from in-kind to in-value, she said, they are asking for royalty relief from the state, and should be required to demonstrate that they have an economic need for such relief.

### Open season uncertain

Robson said the producers have said the royalty-in-kind sale was not needed because they did not plan to hold an open season in 2002. But that statement, she said, came within two weeks of one of the producers — she would not say which one — telling the state there could be an open season in the second quarter of 2002. And the pipeline consortium, she said, has indicated that they might hold an open season in 2002, so the state has no guarantee there won't be an open season in 2002.

Once the open season closes, she said, the decision between royalty-in-kind and royalty-in-value will have been made. If the state doesn't treat this as a now or never decision, Robson said, it may be

see SALE page A10

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## ■ CANADA

# Kakfwi warns door may close on aboriginal support

By Gary Park  
PNA Canadian Correspondent

Northwest Territories Premier Stephen Kakfwi has again turned up the heat on the Canadian government, warning that aboriginal backing of Arctic gas projects will evaporate unless his region gets C\$200 million in federal economic aid.

He said the Northwest Territories won't be "so openly supportive of large-scale development" without federal help to improve roads and money for skills training, social services and health programs.

"I don't want that to happen," he told reporters Feb. 5 as he continued his lobbying for funds to help transform the Northwest Territories into a region that is more friendly towards resource industries.

He said Northwest Territories residents

are unhappy that all royalties from the resource sector are channeled to the Canadian government, which funds about 75 percent of the Northwest Territories' budget.

"Most of the communities are in support of oil and gas and diamond mines and pipelines," Kakfwi said.

But there has to be evidence that the government is "not just sucking money out of here," otherwise it will be difficult to sustain the present positive aboriginal support for pipeline projects.

He said it's time for Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who has endorsed the concept of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline for 30 years, to give more tangible evidence of his position.

"When you hesitate, sometimes the door closes before you get off your butt and you lose your opportunity," he said. ♦

continued from page A9

## ADVISER

For all of Canada, Wright Mansell said GDP would grow by C\$40.8 billion to C\$77 billion, labor income would gain C\$8.2 billion and federal government revenues would grow between C\$6.1 billion

and C\$24.2 billion.

Jobs, Marshall said, would be spread through a multitude of sectors in Canada, including pipelines, oil and gas production services, manufacturing, construction, transportation, utilities, communications, wholesale and retail trade and business services.

—Gary Park

continued from page A9

## SALE

unable to sell royalty gas in-kind until 2020 or 2025, when space might be available in the line.

The producers have suggested the state

could get capacity in an expansion open season, but, Robson said, an expansion could be limited to companies already shipping, and if new companies were allowed to contract for space, the state could be limited to its royalty share of the expansion, perhaps one-eighth of 1 bcf. ♦

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**THE REST OF THE STORY**

*continued from page A1*  
**SPECULATORS**

"Speculators keep oil companies on their toes," Boyd said. "Speculation carries a stigma, but it's not always a bad thing."

A common strategy for speculators is to buy flank acreage, or acreage adjacent to other leases, Boyd said.

Frequently oil companies will overbuy to protect themselves and keep speculators

**"Speculators keep oil companies on their toes." —Ken Boyd, former director of the Alaska Division of Oil and Gas**

out. Over time the companies will drop excess leases. They just stop paying rent.

The extra leasing action is not necessarily a windfall for the state, Boyd said. The real money is in royalties which are paid on production.

But the state has earned in the neighborhood of \$2 billion over time on leases, he said.

"We can't sit around and wait for BP to decide where we're going to go next," said Jack Roderick, author of "Crude Dreams, A Personal History of Oil and Politics in Alaska."

"There will be a new wave of little guys; maybe we'll find a new basin."

Roderick said speculators add to the competition for leases which accelerates the pace of prospecting and leasing.

Roderick, who has been an oil and gas lease speculator himself, published the "Alaska Scouting Service," a periodic mimeographed report on oil and gas leasing activity, in the 1950s.

Roderick told PNA small investors and smaller companies have been the catalyst that helped launch the oil industry in Alaska.

In the early days, he said, leases were awarded by lottery rather than to the highest bidder. That structure encouraged the participation of small investors and required oil companies to deal with individual investors to obtain desired acreage.

Oil companies often recruited investors before a sale to enter the lottery for parcels the company wanted to obtain. If the small investors were successful, the oil company would develop the tract, and the investors would get a pre-arranged override on the oil or gas produced from the lease's wells.

The Alaska leasing program is forgiving of speculators, Boyd said. Leases are rela-

tively affordable. Often, the minimum bid is \$5 per acre. Speculators frequently bid in the \$5 per acre to \$10 per acre range.

The size of the lease parcels is small, with a three-mile by three-mile maximum size; a speculator can buy in relatively affordable chunks of 5,760 acres or less.

But leaseholders have ongoing expenses.

Following the initial bid, there is rent to pay. The rate is \$1 per acre for the first year, with an increase of 50 cents per acre each year until the rate reaches the maximum of \$3 per year.

"The lease is yours, generally speaking, for seven years," Boyd said.

When the leases expire, they go back to the state. It is impossible to extend leases now without doing some work, Boyd said. The lessee must explore or drill and eventually produce.

Speculators frequently buy on the edge of unitized fields. The speculator's gamble is that the lease interest can be sold for a profit.

Some buyers base their acquisitions on extensive research; some don't.

"Some buyers don't have any data at all, just a hope and a prayer," Boyd said.

Speculators often offer land to owners of adjacent leases, perhaps trying to hang onto

an override for themselves.

The override is interesting. It is a private arrangement, which is not tracked by the government, Boyd said.

While an award of a working interest is an assignment of interest in the lease that is recorded, the state has no interest in the cre-

ation of the overriding royalty interest. The state knows who the leaseholders are, but it doesn't know who holds overrides on the leases, or how many override deals are in place throughout the state. ♦

NEXT WEEK: PNA talks to oil and gas lease investors from Fairbanks.

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## THE REST OF THE STORY

continued from page A1

### BONDS

both the value of the railroad as an economic engine to our state and the need for it to have the means to fuel that engine," he said.

Knowles said the state has asked the producers to "take out their pencils and give this a close look." The railroad needs legislative authorization to issue the bonds, and Knowles said he is preparing a bill to send to the Legislature authorizing the bonding. (See story on page 4.)

#### Conduit financing

Neil Slotnick, deputy commission of the Department of Revenue, said the City of Valdez did this type of tax-exempt financing for the Valdez Marine Terminal in the 1970s. Valdez issued the bonds, he

said, but it did not put its own credit or assets at risk.

Instead, payment was guaranteed by the pipeline owners.

"It was merely conduit financing," Slotnick said.

Why can't the state do the same thing today that Valdez did in the 1970s? he asked.

The Tax Return Act of 1986 took this type of opportunity away from state and municipalities, with some exceptions, Slotnick said.

States can issue tax-exempt financing, called private activity, but that ability is very limited. "The state could not do tax-exempt financing for a project such as this one without a federal exception to the Internal Revenue Code," he said.

#### Revenue looked for advice

After the policy council issued its

report, recommending innovative financing, the Department of Revenue consulted with the experts it typically deals with, Slotnick said. Bond counsel Wohlforth, Vassar, Johnson & Brecht and investment banker Goldman Sachs brought the Alaska Railroad idea forward.

The administration knew about the exception the railroad had to issue tax-exempt bonds, Slotnick said, "but we were not aware of how broad it really was, and how unique it was."

Ken Vassar of Wohlforth, Vassar was retained to research the legislative history, and Goldman Sachs to advise the state on the economic structure of such a bond issue.

#### Provision unique

"This provision that exists in federal law for the issuance of tax-exempt bonds by the Alaska Railroad Corp. is unique," Vassar said. The Alaska Railroad Transfer Act includes one sentence — with no conditions attached — saying bonds issued by the Alaska Railroad Corp. are treated as though they were bonds issued by the state of Alaska for an essential government purpose, and are not treated as industrial development bonds or as private activity bonds, he said.

"If the railroad issues the bond, the bond is a tax-exempt governmental bond. This is a very unique provision," Vassar said. "There is no other entity in the state of Alaska, no other entity to my knowledge in the country, that has the ability to provide this financing for this project at this time with these kinds of bonds."

And there is no limit, no volume cap on this bonding ability, he said.

Before the Tax Reform Act of 1986 "there were a number of exemption provisions for bonds for special projects and special issuers," Vassar said, some inside the Internal Revenue code and some outside of the code. "It was the intention of

Congress when they passed the Tax Reform Act of 1986 to clean that up and to eliminate those provisions. But they left three exceptions. And one of these three exceptions was a specific reference to this sentence in the Alaska Railroad Transfer Act," Vassar said.

"The railroad is in the absolutely unique position to be able to issue tax-exempt bonds to provide financing for the entire pipeline through Alaska and into Canada and to provide that financing without ownership responsibility," he said.

#### Reduction in pipeline tariff

"What we're discussing here today may not be the whole answer, but it's a big part of the answer," Jeff Brown, vice president of Goldman Sachs, told the policy council Feb. 7. Using bonds issued by the railroad "will drop the interest rate... on the project by about 2 percent. And it's legal," he said.

"The tax-exempt finance could actually save in excess of a billion (dollars) present value or as much as 20 cents on the pipeline tariff or in the neighborhood of 10-12 cents per Mcf to the ultimate customer, the oil company. So that certainly is a big factor tipping the scales toward development of the project."

Companies owning the pipeline would borrow money from the railroad, which in turn would borrow money from the public, Brown said. The railroad corporation's credit would be protected because investors would only have recourse to the pipeline owners.

Because the interest rate would be lower with tax-exempt financing, pipeline owners will pay "in the area of \$120 million a year in terms of a lower annual mortgage cost," he said. That lowers the cost of transportation "in the area of 10-12 cents per thousand cubic feet... even after tax," Brown said. ♦

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continued from page A1

### LEGISLATION

"Finally, the bill also authorizes the railroad to negotiate with producers of natural gas on the bond issues.

"This bill complements other incentives that we have proposed to get the gasline project moving, such as federal accelerated depreciation and measures to reduce commodity risk."

#### What's in it for the railroad?

Participating in the governor's press conference from Anchorage, Alaska Railroad President Pat Gamble called the proposal "another in a series of great, bold moves that the state has taken in its history to further its economic development."

The railroad has had the opportunity to issue bonds, he said, but hasn't done so.

"I think that this is well within the railroad's mission," said Commissioner of Transportation and Public Facilities Joe Perkins, also the vice-chair of the railroad board. "What's good for the state is good for the railroad," Perkins said.

The governor was asked what's in it for the railroad.

"Any economic development in this state is going to be good for the railroad," Knowles said. Gamble agreed: "Once this pipeline starts to go, our experience with the oil pipeline indicated that the railroad was a very important part of moving major pieces of equipment up into the construction area. And then there's continuing sup-

port that will follow on from that," he said. The biggest impact would be during construction, but there would also be longer-term support, Gamble said.

"The revenue of the railroad pretty well depends on the economy of Alaska," said Perkins. If the state's economy is slow, he said, "we certainly see that impact on what we haul on the railroad."

#### IRS review?

Knowles was asked if this bonding proposal will be submitted for IRS review.

"We don't need permission from the IRS to do it," the governor said. "We feel that it's very clear... not only was it clear in the initial legislation (transferring the railroad to the state) but it was reaffirmed through the Tax Reform Act of 1986..."

Knowles did say the Internal Revenue Service may want to look into it.

"It's certainly their prerogative."

#### Action from producers expected

Asked if the tax-exempt bonds make a North Slope gas pipeline project pencil out, Knowles said "... when you put a billion-plus dollars on the table, it should not be just a small step: that's a big step towards making the project work.

"I am asking the producers to look at this, to give us a report in terms of how it affects the project. And what else needs to be done. And I fully expect this will begin some very productive conversations in that regard."

# THE REST OF THE STORY

continued from page A1

## BENEFIT

Department of Revenue, said the financing would cover "necessary aspects of a major transportation project" and would include gas conditioning on the North Slope.

Brian Davies asked if there was a geographic limit, and Brown said there were no geographic limits to the tax-exempt bonding: it could be used for the Canadian segment of the line as well as portions in Alaska.

Charlie Cole asked what the difference in interest rate would be.

Project financing is blended financing for a group of companies, Brown said, and the estimated difference in project financing will be about 2 percent. Project blended financing would be 8-8.5 percent, and tax-exempt financing 6-6.5 percent.

Cole asked about benefits to the state.

Slotnick said the half-billion dollar benefit to the state "would be in total taxes and royalties received if this project goes through. And it is an increase in the size of our taxes and royalties received as a result of the tax-exempt financing because by lowering the tariff on the transportation, it lowers the netback cost to the well head, which is what we use to calculate the royalties and severance taxes."

Cole asked about annual benefits to the state, and Slotnick said about \$60 million a year.

Esther Wunnicke asked for clarification on the requirement for bonding approval by the Legislature: why is that required if the railroad would really have no debt?

Brown said these are different types of debt: The railroad incurs debt for its trains and track, and if there is no payment on those bonds, the lender's recourse is against the railroad. Conduit financing is a different type of bond, "what you would call non-

recourse to the railroad," Brown said: "If this project doesn't pay, you go chase after the pipeline users and you don't bother the railroad..."

But both are technically bonds of the railroad, he said, so the Legislature has to authorize the issuance of the bonds, whether they are direct recourse to the railroad or the conduit financing which would be used for a gas pipeline.

Council member Carl Marrs, who is also a member of the Alaska Railroad board, said conduit bonding through the railroad for the gas pipeline wouldn't affect railroad bonding.

"However, we put \$12 billion in tax-exempt bonds on the table today, I think Congress would have a little problem with that for future bonding and it's something that we've got to understand up front going in.

"I think this provision that we have is unique... I think we'll have a problem keeping that exemption in the future."

Marrs said it thought conduit financing for a gas pipeline is "the highest and best use" of the railroad's tax-exempt bonding authority. "It will create a problem — and we've just got to understand that going in," he said.

Mike Navarre said he agreed with Marrs' assessment, but said the biggest benefit from that bonding will go to Lower 48 consumers and the federal government.

Council co-chair Frank Brown told PNA the same thing: "This proposal ... lowers financing, lowers the cost to build it, which translates directly into a lower tariff and benefits everybody in the state.

"But also, a gas line going to the Lower 48, the ultimate, the largest beneficiary of a gas line is the Lower 48 consumers... We lose that message from time to time," Brown said.

—Kristen Nelson



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## Companies involved in Alaska's oil and gas industry

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### A

Advancial Federal Credit Union .....A6  
 Air Logistics of Alaska .....A4  
 Alaska Airlines Cargo .....A10  
 Alaska Anvil  
 Alaska Diesel Electric  
 Alaska Industrial Hardware .....A5  
 Alaska Interstate Construction .....A4  
 Alaska Marine Lines .....A16  
 Alaska Railroad Corp.  
 Alaska Rubber & Supply  
 Alaska Steel  
 Alaska Stucco & Fire Proofing  
 Alaska Telecom  
 Alaska Tent & Tarp  
 Alaska Valve & Fitting  
 Alaska WalkFit Orthotics  
 Alaska West Express .....A16  
 Alliance, The  
 American Marine  
 Arctic Industrial & Automotive Supply  
 Arctic Slope Telephone Assoc.  
 Arctic Wire Rope & Supply  
 Army/Navy Store  
 ASCG Inspection, Inc. (AII)  
 Avalon Development

### B-F

Badger Productions  
 Baker Hughes Inteq  
 Baroid Drilling Fluids  
 Bearcom Wireless  
 Brooks Range Supply  
 Cal Worthington Ford  
 Cameron  
 Carlile Transportation Services .....A3  
 CCI  
 Central Trading Systems .....A11  
 Chulista Camp Services .....A6  
 Clarion Suites  
 Cleanaire Alaska  
 CN Aquatrain  
 Colville  
 Conam Construction  
 Continental Auto Group  
 Cook Inlet Tug & Barge  
 Crowley Alaska  
 Cruz Construction .....A5  
 Dowland - Bach Corp.  
 Doyon Drilling  
 Dura-Wrap Containments .....A7 & A15  
 Dynamic Capital Management  
 Eagle Enterprises  
 ENSR Alaska  
 Epoch Well Services  
 Era Aviation  
 Eurest Support Services  
 Executive Suite Hotel .....A10  
 F.A.T.S.  
 FMC Energy Systems  
 Flight Alaska dba Yute Air  
 Flowline Alaska  
 Forest Oil  
 Frontier Flying Service .....A12

### G-M

GBR Equipment  
 Golden North Van Lines  
 Golder Associates  
 Great Northwest .....A15  
 Hawthorne Suites  
 H.C. Price  
 Hilton Anchorage Hotel  
 Inspirations .....B3  
 IRF Group  
 Jackovich Industrial & Construction Supply  
 Jarraff Industries  
 Judy Patrick Photography .....A8  
 Kenai Aviation

ADVERTISER PAGE AD APPEARS

Kenworth Alaska  
 Kuukpik Arctic Catering  
 Kuukpik - Fairweather - Veritas  
 Kuukpik - LCMF  
 Lounsbury & Associates  
 Lynden Air Cargo .....A16  
 Lynden Air Freight .....A16  
 Lynden .....A16  
 Lynden International .....A16  
 Lynden Logistics .....A16  
 Lynden Transport .....A16  
 Lynx Enterprises  
 Managed Integrity Services (MIS)  
 Mapmakers of Alaska  
 Marathon Oil Co.  
 Mattracks  
 McLane Consulting Group  
 MI Swaco  
 Michael Baker Jr.  
 Montgomery Watson Harza .....B14  
 MT Housing

### N-P

Nabors Alaska Drilling .....A11  
 NANA/Colt Engineering  
 Nature Conservancy .....B5  
 N.C. Machinery  
 Neeser Construction  
 Nordic Calista Services  
 North Coast Electric Co.  
 North Star Terminal & Stevedore  
 Northern Air Cargo .....A11  
 Northern Lights/Lugger  
 Northern Testing Laboratories  
 Northern Transportation Co.  
 Offshore Divers .....A3  
 Oil and Gas Supply Co.  
 Pacific Alaska Forwarders  
 PDC/Harris Group  
 Peak Oilfield Service Co.  
 Penco  
 Petroleum Equipment & Services  
 Petrotechnical Resources of Alaska  
 PGS Onshore .....A9  
 Phillips Alaska  
 Pinkerton Security  
 PSI Environmental & Instrumentation

### Q-Z

QUADCO  
 Rolls Royce Energy Systems .....B24  
 R & R Scaffold Erectors  
 Schlumberger Oilfield Services  
 SECORP Industries  
 Security Aviation  
 Seekins Ford  
 Sensa  
 Snap-on Industrial  
 SOLOCO (DURA-BASE) .....A13  
 Sourdough Express .....A8  
 Span-Alaska Consolidators .....A7  
 STEELFAB  
 Testing Institute of Alaska  
 Thrifty Car Rental  
 TOTE  
 Totem Equipment & Supply  
 Udelhoven Oilfield Systems Services  
 Umiat Commercial  
 Unitech of Alaska  
 United Rentals  
 United Van Lines  
 URS  
 Vopak USA  
 Welding Services  
 WesternGeco  
 Wood Group (Alaska) .....A15  
 XTO Energy .....A2

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Dura-Wrap owners John and Cindy Hutchinson have been married for 14 years and have three daughters, ages 12, 9 and 6 who are avid readers. The Hutchinsons are members of the Alaska Support Industry Alliance, Wasilla Chamber of Commerce and the Alaska Boating Association.

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Laserson has been doing business in Russia since 1963, long before the fall of Communism. A former grain trader, he is based out of Huntington, New York. He recently returned from a trip to Moscow during which he set up contracts that allows for new satellite coverage during May, June and July of this year.

# THE REST OF THE STORY

*continued from page A1*  
**MORATORIUM**

British Columbia constituencies in the Canadian Parliament.

Preliminary estimates by the Geological Survey of Canada put recoverable reserves in the area at 10 billion barrels of oil and 26 trillion cubic feet of gas, although others have rated the gas potential at 43 trillion cubic feet and calculated the returns at C\$3 billion annually in direct production revenue and C\$15 billion in total downstream benefits. The federal ban was imposed in 1972 on crude oil tankers travelling through Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound from Valdez. A later federal order prohibited drilling for an indefinite period.

British Columbia extended the moratorium in 1982 with its own ban that included the Strait of Georgia between Vancouver Island and the mainland and Juan de Fuca Strait between the southern tip of Vancouver Island and the U.S. mainland.

The Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 only strengthened environmental opposition to offshore exploration and development.

Shortly after its election last May, the new Liberal government in British Columbia rejected proposals for a series of public meetings to assess opinion on the future of the offshore.

B.C. Energy Minister Richard Neufeld said the province did not have the patience for another 18 months of public consultation, insisting his government would move on the issue in an "expedited fashion."

While welcoming the first sign of a federal government willingness to review the bans, Neufeld said there would be no discussions until his government completes its review of the region.

The key is the report, expected to be released this month, from a government-appointed scientific panel that is trying to determine whether oil and gas resources can

be extracted in a way that is scientifically sound and environmentally responsible.

Even if those findings are positive, British Columbia will continue to move cautiously. Neufeld said. "The quickest way to kill any aspects of our offshore oil and gas exploration is to do things quickly," he said.

Petro-Canada, one of three major leaseholders in the basin, along with Shell Canada Ltd. and Chevron Canada Resources, would have no interest in pouring millions of dollars into its 6 million acres until the controversial issue of offshore development had been resolved by British Columbians, a spokesman said.

To that end, he said, Petro-Canada had set three prerequisites: All aboriginal land claims must be settled; all ecologically sensitive areas in the region must be identified and set aside; and an integrated federal-provincial regulatory regime must be in place.

Similarly, Pierre Alvarez, president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, whose member companies represent more than 90 percent of Canada's oil and gas output, said the industry is eager to access the offshore, but will stay at arm's length from the issue until the bans are lifted. However, he has noted that the petroleum industry has considerable scope to expand its activities in British Columbia, where it employs about 35,000 workers and generates C\$1.7 billion in provincial revenues.

Don Scott, mayor of Prince Rupert, said his community is hoping for a positive report from the government scientific panel.

"I would look forward to both governments saying they'll lift the moratoriums but, even if they do, it'll be a long time before any drilling is done," he told the Vancouver Province.

"I'm also hoping the First Nations and the provincial and federal governments will

be able to come to some sort of accord on offshore exploration so that things can move ahead."

But the divisions over the offshore remain deeply entrenched.

The David Suzuki Foundation, Sierra Club and Western Canada Wilderness

Committee worry that drilling, producing and transporting oil from the region will put the environment, a profitable seafood industry, marine life and coastal communities at risk.

They have hinted that ending the bans could result in a series of legal actions.



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# B

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Volume 7, No. 7  
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## Companies involved in Alaska's oil and gas industry

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Unitech of Alaska  
United Rentals  
United Van Lines  
URS  
Vopak USA  
Welding Services  
WesternGeco  
Wood Group (Alaska)  
XTO Energy

### Inside

- 9 Sensa putting fiber optics to good use in Alaska
- 11 Conam tackles a diverse range of projects
- 13 DURA-BASE transforms exploration planning in Arctic
- 17 Army Navy: Outfitting oil crews in high style

Photo by Judy Patrick

## About the cover

A CATCO Rolligon transports pieces of Nabors Rig 16E to a location in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska for exploration drilling for Phillips Alaska Inc. The entire rig was transported in 180 loads across the frozen tundra. The low tire pressure of the Rolligon allows for tundra travel without impacting the fragile ground. Photo by Judy Patrick.

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Photo courtesy of Totem Ocean Trailer Express

**SAN DIEGO** — This is the latest photo of Totem Ocean Trailer Express' new Orca class vessel, the *Midnight Sun*, under construction at National Steel and Shipbuilding Co., Nassco, in San Diego, Calif. This is a shot from the new cranes looking down at the aft end of the ship taken on Feb. 6. Visible in the photo are the *Midnight Sun*'s four main diesel engines, one auxiliary diesel engine, propulsion and service transformers, and the service switchboard. Also notice the port and starboard stern castings are in place. Upon completion of the *Midnight Sun* in July 2002 and a second Orca class vessel, the *North Star*, approximately six months later, Nassco will begin construction of BP's new Alaska class double-hulled tankers.

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# Sensa putting fiber optics to good use: well monitoring in Alaska

**A subsidiary of Schlumberger, Sensa is well-positioned to install and service its proven permanent optical monitor systems**

By Steve Starskey  
PNA Contributing Writer

Sensor Highway Ltd. has big plans for Alaska. The company, known as Sensa, is eyeing the state as a new market for its services. In November the English firm, which provides fiber optic sensing technologies and applications in oil and gas wells, became a fully owned subsidiary of Schlumberger Oilfield Services, a business segment of Paris-based Schlumberger Ltd.

Sensa will operate from Schlumberger's facilities in Alaska, according to David Smith, Sensa manager for North America.

"We're talking to clients in Alaska and they're very interested," Smith said. "Given the current energy security situation, Alaska is in a strategic position and we want to be a part of it. We think Alaska has a very stable future."



"Optical fiber technology is poised to make an impact in the oil and gas industry much as it did in the telecommunications industry."

Today the primary function of Sensa's fiber optic systems is providing a temperature profile along the entire length of a fiber optic cable for up to 18 miles yielding valuable information regarding the inflow performance of a well. The Sensa system's laser launches light every 10 nanoseconds from a surface optical unit. The light is absorbed, backscattered to surface, or transmitted along the length of the silicon dioxide optical fiber, depending on the temperature at all points along the fiber. By analyzing the back-scattered light, system computers report the average heat along three-foot sections of the cable for up to 18 mile lengths on a continuous basis.

The small diameter and temperature resilience of silicon fiber makes it superior to electronic components for oil and gas applications. "Think of it as seismic with light where we are interrogating optic fibre and backscattered light in time domain where seismic technology interrogates the earth and backscattered acoustic energy in time domain," Smith said.

Sensa systems are not in Alaska now, but the company is active in Canada and elsewhere in the United States, as well as world wide, he said. The company has completed wells for BP, Exxon Mobil Corp., Conoco Inc., Anadarko Petroleum Corp. and others.

"We're growing quickly," Smith said. "We have 180-plus wells completed around the world for all the majors. With Schlumberger, it will grow even faster."

## One-of-a-kind technology

Sensa's unique fiber optic method of monitoring oil and gas wells is referred to as Permanent Production Logging, as opposed to the classical intervention logging methods using electrical wire line methods.

There are many optical technology methods and companies vying for the permanent down-hole monitoring of oil and gas wells, the company said. These optic technologies typically are designed to replace classical electrical systems that monitor down-hole pressure, down-hole flow, and will eventually lead to even down-hole

A "Strategic Inflection Point" SIF in Remote Asset Management?

Permanent Optical Logging

> SIF Driven by 2 New Converging Technologies

> 1-OPTIC SENSORS TECHNOLOGY

> 2-INTERNET DATA PROCESSING

> Results are vastly improved Reserve Allocations

> Enhanced Operational Efficiency

> Knowledge workers free to INNOVATE with Powerful new Tools

Optic sensors combine with Internet data processing to allow remote monitoring of optical well logging.

permanently disposed optical geophones for 4-D seismic.

Now Sensa has pioneered a novel optical technology not possible with previous electrical methods. Sensa technology, called Distributed Temperature System, monitors the continual temperature of an optic fiber at all points along its length for up to 18 miles with nothing but

light in the fiber. This gives petroleum engineers a powerful new tool for well and reservoir analysis, that is to detect where in the well the fluid is coming from.

Temperature at an accuracy of 0.5 degrees Fahrenheit at every depth of the well allows monitoring of the inflow of perforations or injection wells. Temperature monitoring can also yield valuable insights into the production tubing

integrity and gas lift performance. It can monitor surface flow lines for insulation leaks, hydrate precipitation or wax deposits as well as detect leaks in pipelines.

The physics of the technology is referred to as Optical Time Domain Reflectometry. A laser is attached to an optic fiber disposed inside a quarter-inch control line in a well. Sensa then attaches its laser and back-scattered light processor to the fiber at the surface to detect light that is reflected back to the surface from down the fiber.

This back-scattered light is processed in time domain to yield the temperature at every depth of the well.

## Monitoring hydrate melting in tundra

The applications for the technology are just now starting to emerge in Alaska, where it would enhance the monitoring of hydraulically fractured wells, gas lift operations, water floods and surface pipelines. Other novel applications are monitoring hydrate melting projects in the tundra in Canada and Alaska, where vast reserves from methane encapsulated in hydrates may one day be liberated by heat, all of which needs to be monitored to avoid surface subsidence.

The fiber optic sensor is intrinsically safe. That means deploying it in hazardous areas is not a safety issue as it uses photons as opposed to electrons eliminating spark and ignition issues. The optical fiber system is corrosion-resistant and safe in humid or saline situations.

"Because fiber optics measurement systems are able

to work in temperatures up to 600 degrees Fahrenheit there is a lot of interest in their potential as permanently installed reservoir monitoring reservoir systems," George Brown of Sensa told the London Petrophysical Society at the group's annual new technology seminar Jan. 14.

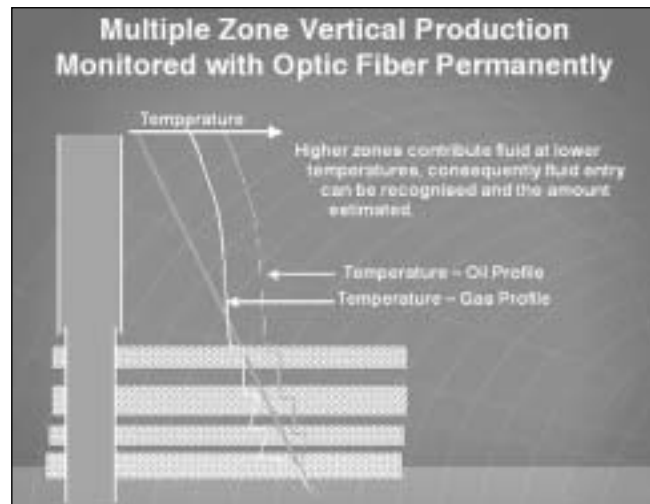
Sensa can install fiber permanently in oil wells and has pioneered the use of distributed temperature measure-

ments in both steam flood and conventional oil and gas wells for reservoir monitoring, according to Brown. He said distributed temperature can be used for many well monitoring applications including flow monitoring (both producers and injectors), hydraulic fracturing and water and gas breakthrough.

## Global access

Sensa's cutting-edge techniques allow data to be transmitted in the client's choice of protocol — including satellite, Internet and cable communication systems. Data can be accessed online, anywhere in the world, supplying detailed insight into performance as it occurs. This eliminates time consuming data logging, and retrieval of the many wells, and enables customers to operate assets with maximum efficiency and minimum cost.

Sensa's advanced technologies give immediate access to the well data any time, any place, the company said. This means accurate production analysis, performance monitoring, and modeling on a permanent basis. Furthermore, the permanent monitoring of inflow adds value to any remedial work with minimal disruption, intervention and down time to the well. Sensa manufactures the optical gear and deploys the systems in wells, making it a full service provider available worldwide to the oil and gas industry. ♦



Permanent fiber optic monitoring of multiple zone vertical production.

Distributed Temperature Sensing (DTS)  
OPTICAL Fiber used as a Sensor

- Self Calibrating.
- Monitoring length 18 miles
- Accuracy 0.5 deg F
- Multiplexing Options for Optical Gear
  - 2 channel.
  - 4 channel.
  - 6 channel.
  - Now 24 channels.

Backscattering of Light caused by molecular vibration

Time for back scattered signal gives Distance along Fiber

Amplitude (Ratio of Wavelength) Gives Temperature

Multiplexing: 24 wells can be monitored from one surface source/detector.

Courtesy of Sensa

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Courtesy of Conam



Courtesy of Conam

At left, between 1987 and 1991, Conam led the way for a pipeline reconditioning project at ARCO's Prudhoe Bay field. At right, Conam workers load a new well house structure during the year-long Milne Point Well Tie-Ins Project conducted jointly by BP Exploration and the Tikigaaq Corporation, Conam's native partner from the North Slope Borough village of Point Hope.

# CONAM Construction tackles diversity of projects, despite shrinking oil production

**Anchorage based company cites partnerships with Alaska Native corporation on the North Slope as one of its greatest accomplishments in serving rural Alaska construction needs**

By Amy Armstrong  
Special to PNA

Despite declining oil production, CONAM Construction Co. continues to serve Alaska's oil and gas industry as a general contractor, tackling a wide range of projects, from pipeline construction to building oil and gas processing facilities.

"We seek revenue from other sources in Alaska to continue servicing the oil and gas industry — our prime focus — with the same level of expertise and excellence," said Bob Stinson, president of the Anchorage-based company.

Stinson looks forward to getting back to work with the oil and gas industry this spring.

CONAM recently won the contract with Forest Oil for installation of the offshore and onshore pipelines from the Osprey Platform in Cook Inlet. The work includes installation of two 8-inch and one 6-inch pipelines to the platform that sits approximately 2 miles offshore and installation of approximately 14 miles of 8-inch and 6-inch pipelines onshore. The onshore pipelines run to the Production Facility located on the West Forelands and toward the Trading Bay Production Facilities.

It is the first offshore drilling and production platform that has been installed in Cook Inlet in years. "This is very challenging and will require planning, planning, planning," Stinson said.

While he cannot release the project's cost, Stinson said

## COMPANY PROFILE



Courtesy of Conam

During the 1995 replacement of the four-inch main gas distribution line, Conam workers laid 6.5 miles of polyethylene coated six-inch steel mainline pipe combined with a variety of four and two inch subheader and lateral lines.

Anchorage International Airport.

"It was a turnkey operation for us," Stinson said. "It really is our signature project. We showed that we could handle all phases of a project. That is very beneficial to the customer because then they are dealing with only one entity instead of several."

Permitting for the jet fuel pipeline took 18 months. Once permits were secured, CONAM was allowed only one access point to the Knik Arm mud flats, where the pipeline was laid four feet below the surface.

As the access point became increasingly muddy, CONAM officials used a helicopter to string and lay the concrete-coated pipes in order to meet the project timeline and beat encroaching ice sheets.

"Still, it was a huge success for us," Stinson said. "We completed the project on time despite all the challenges."

### From humble beginnings

That project illustrates how far CONAM has come since its 1984 beginning as an open-shop contractor, Stinson said. In 1985, the contractor completed several North Slope endeavors, including pipelines as well as civil and electrical projects.

By 1986, when oil prices crashed, CONAM was forced to look elsewhere in Alaska for work, but still managed to hang onto one important job on the North Slope.

CONAM engineers took on the stabilization of the Endicott causeway linking the Endicott oil production island with the North Slope mainland. They used a revolutionary system of concrete pillow grout mats under the surface of the Beaufort Sea — on the edge of a breach where current and tidal wave action were eroding the causeway.

In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, CONAM

completed several oil industry projects. The company relocated ARCO's flare stack at the Central Gas Facility in Prudhoe Bay and completed a \$29 million pipeline rehabilitation for ARCO and the Produced Water Handling Expansion for BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc.

CONAM also handled the response to several spills and ruptures, including an overturn of an 8,000-gallon diesel fuel tanker truck in Atigun Pass in the winter of 1992 and the soil cleanup the following spring. CONAM also replaced a river-crossing pipeline in 1993, when Enstar Natural Gas Co.'s main gas supply line to Anchorage ruptured in a Susitna River crossing channel.

### Native alliances

But CONAM's greatest success is illustrated in the relationships it has developed with Alaska Native corporations, Stinson said.

CONAM and Tikigaaq Corp., the village corporation of Point Hope in the North Slope Borough, became partners in 1994 through joint ventures.

Since then, the partners have completed several civil improvement projects, including the Barrow gasline, public school additions and public housing renovations.

"Our primary focus is to develop relationships that make good business sense," Stinson said. Bridging the cultural gap between rural and urban Alaska is an additional benefit.

CONAM is committed to local hires on rural projects. The \$65 million Point Hope water and sewer system project was completed with locals supplying 67 percent of the work, according to Stinson.

"It just makes sense to have local people trained and qualified to do rural projects," he said. "It is not always easy to do, but it is working."

Stinson supports the training efforts of the Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium. By teaming up with educators in Alaska, the consortium offers industry internships and scholarships for students pursuing careers with the oil and gas industry.

"They are trying to figure out how to get more interest in the oil and gas industry," Stinson said.

### Challenges ahead

Despite current layoffs, he said, gaps remain between the number of available jobs and the number of eligible applicants.

"This is going to be a huge issue when the natural gas pipeline comes," Stinson said. "We will have a major shortage of qualified workers."

Stinson, current president of the Alaska Support Industry Alliance, plans to focus on what contractors can do to alleviate the shortage of qualified workers.

"We really need more people to come into this business," Stinson said. "Not only do we need craft folks, but we also need professional support personnel. We as a construction industry have really felt the shortage in both areas for the past four or five years." ♦



Bob Stinson, Conam Construction Co. president.

Forrest Crane



Replacement of the flare stack at pump station number one in Prudhoe Bay in 1986 was completed in two phases. In the second phase, the new flare stack was lifted into place as a single completed section. The project was completed 28 days ahead of its contractual requirements.

work is scheduled to begin in April, with completion expected in July.

### An impressive resume

The Forest Oil project is the latest feather in CONAM's cap of tough projects.

In November 2000, the company completed the Crosstown Pipeline, a controversial jet fuel pipeline connecting the Port of Anchorage with the Ted Stevens



Courtesy of SOLOCO

DURA-BASE onsite in Prudhoe Bay. DURA-BASE is a proprietary product substituting systems currently utilized as site-preparation methods in the Arctic environment.

# DURA-BASE transforms exploration planning in the Arctic

*Company's new interlocking composite mats perform exceptionally as temporary road and platforms systems in Far North oilfield projects*

By Amy Armstrong  
Special to PNA

SOLOCO, LLC of Lafayette, La., recently introduced the DURA-BASE Composite Mat System — its latest advancement in temporary road and platform technology — to the oil and gas exploration industry of the Arctic. Having served this industry for more than 40 years with both domestic and international operating locations, SOLOCO is the world's largest general oilfield construction company specializing in temporary road and site preparation technologies.

DURA-BASE is a proprietary product substituting systems currently utilized as site-preparation methods in the Arctic environment. Prior to DURA-BASE, operators used wood mats, granular fill and/or other materials, operating only "during the freeze."

Wooden mat systems quickly deteriorate in the harsh Arctic elements and also pose environmental challenges in today's eco-sensitive working conditions.

"About six years ago, we began to realize that wooden mats just were not going to satisfy new concerns about the environment," said Keith Pearson, the company's vice president of sales and marketing. "The sheer cost of procuring wood for mat fabrication, coupled with limited availability of quality hardwoods, motivated us to initiate research and development for a new generation of mat systems."



Courtesy of SOLOCO

DURA-BASE work site in an Arctic environment

Although mat systems historically have been constructed of laminated timber, there is now the option of the current high-density polyethylene, HDPE composition. A totally engineered product, DURA-BASE is not susceptible to the inconsistencies found in natural wood. The product is both environmentally safe and friendly, is 100 percent recyclable, lighter than its wood counterpart and can be stored indefinitely with no loss of integrity.

The mats measure 8 feet by 14 feet and are designed with overlapping lips that combine with a drop-in locking pin to bind the entire mat system together into a solid surface for roads, operational pads and staging areas on soft sub-grades. This interlocking system accommodates spreading the weight of heavy equipment over a larger area. The built-in tread pattern offers improved traction for load-bearing vehicles, heavy equipment and personnel.

### Polyethylene mats provide engineered solution

The DURA-BASE mat represents a departure for SOLOCO from the traditional wood mat systems the company marketed over the last 40 years as it built a reputation as a leader in oilfield construction, according to Marketing Manager, Don Couvillon.

"One of the key benefits of the DURA-



Courtesy of SOLOCO

Prior to DURA-BASE, operators used wood mats, granular fill and/or other materials, operating only "during the freeze."

BASE product is that it is an engineered product and we are certain every mat will have like strength characteristics and load handling capacity," he said. "Design Engineers can now count on a reliable performance. Reliability and physical properties just cannot be duplicated in a natural product. Engineers have a proven mat system in which to use in their design models and calculations."

These characteristics naturally vary with wood products — especially after going through the kiln drying



Courtesy of SOLOCO

A stable platform is provided quickly with DURA-BASE.

see DURA-BASE page B13

Courtesy of SOLOCO



Courtesy of SOLOCO

Mats minimize the impact to the natural landscape with DURA-BASE utilization. The mats measure 8 feet by 14 feet and are designed with overlapping lips that combine with a drop-in locking pin to bind the entire mat system together into a solid surface for roads, operational pads and staging areas on soft sub-grades.

*continued from page 12*  
**DURA-BASE**

process. Moisture from the working environment — whether it is tropical or Arctic — causes wood mat systems to deteriorate within a few years.

The composite mats are designed to last 20 years or more, Couvillon said. Initially, the composite mats cost more than wooden mats, Pearson said. But in the long run, the composite mats are a far better deal.

***“These mats will provide a stable working platform in areas where work previously could only be conducted when the ground was frozen. Now operators can extend their work year — especially in the Arctic — to year-round.”***  
***—Keith Pearson, SOLOCO’s vice president of sales and marketing***

“Ultimately, producers will save money because this product will not degrade as a result of exposure to natural elements such as weather, moisture and break-down,” he said. “You will not spend time and money continually replacing and repairing it.”

In comparison to wooden mats, according to SOLOCO’s economic estimates, the break-even point in purchasing the composite mat systems is at 23 months of usage. (Factoring yearly repair and maintenance cost, transportation cost and labor) “The ‘return-on-investment’ is realized quickly and the economic benefits are compounded over the life of the mats due to its long service life,” said Couvillon.

**Mats stable on frozen ground**

Another economic benefit provided by composite mats is an extended work season. “These mats will provide a stable working platform in areas where work previously could only be conducted when the ground was frozen,” Pearson said. “Now operators can extend their work year — especially in the Arctic — to year-round.”

The mats have a temperature service range of -60°F to 180°F. The transportation of the composite mats to work sites is also an improvement over wood counterparts. A standard road truck holds 16 to 18 of the wooden mats but can accommodate as many as 42 of the composite mats. That’s 57 percent more mats being transported per truck.

“That is a big savings in transportation



Courtesy of SOLOCO

cost,” said Pearson, noting that the majority of mats heading to Alaska arrive by truck. The composite mats can be put into place by a team of three with forklift — forklift operator and two roustabouts.

**DURA-BASE proven in the Arctic**

“Major operators are testing a limited number of composite mats,” said Pearson. “There has been a positive response in their testing so far.”

About 14,000 of the composite mats have been shipped to Canadian producers.

The composite mats are useful in applications beside access roads and drill sites. Disaster relief efforts, heavy haul and lift industry, waste management facilities, as well as military operations, will benefit from the mat systems, company officials said.

SOLOCO will be an exhibitor at the Pacific Rim Construction Oil Mining Expo in Anchorage Feb. 20-21, presenting the DURA-BASE Composite Mat System. For more information about this innovative system, access the company Web site at [www.solocollc.com](http://www.solocollc.com) or call (877) MATROAD. ♦



Courtesy of SOLOCO

The composite mats are useful in applications beside access roads and drill sites. Disaster relief efforts, heavy haul and lift industry, waste management facilities, as well as military operations, will benefit from the mat systems

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# Army Navy store owners build lasting relationships with oil industry workers by providing quality work-wear

**Summer addition of a \$100,000 outfitting room means the Army Navy store can handle the largest of oil crews needing all types of matching flame-resistant clothing**

By Amy Armstrong  
Special to PNA

They are called the “Kings of Carharts.” And they have the coveted company awards to prove it. Mike Miller and Mark Cruver, who own the Army Navy Store in downtown Anchorage, are partners with Monty Rostad, who runs Big Ray’s in Fairbanks.

More important than accolades are the sales figures that back up the trio’s claim to work-wear fame. In 2000, they sold more than 50,000 Carharts and currently maintain a daily inventory worth more than \$1 million. Sales for 2001 topped 2000 by 30 percent.

“You wouldn’t walk into the grocery store and expect them to be out of milk,” Miller said, referring to the Fourth Avenue store’s approach in supplying the overalls and accessories that are as much an Alaskan staple as duct tape. “You can come in to our store any day of the year and we will never be out of what you need.”

## Winning contracts through customer care

Miller and Cruver have garnered a large portion of the oil industry contracts for clothing, outerwear and footwear by combining basic customer service with an in-house embroidery shop and a new \$100,000 outfitting room that can handle large crews comfortably.

“It’s pretty impressive,” said Miller. “You wouldn’t think you were in the Army Navy store.”

Cruver said the pair decided to invest in remodeling nearly half of the downstairs area last summer to make product selection easier for mainstay clients — oil and natural gas workers.

The outfitting room is complete with several full-length mirrors, extra chairs and a videotape machine and numerous manufacturer-produced tapes explaining various products.

“It’s been a great addition in assisting our clients that bring in those large crews,” said Miller. “But the real credit for the success in the contract sales department is our key employee, Rhody Lauenders, who has been with us for 11 years now. He knows everybody and goes the extra mile for our customers.”

So do the storeowners, who put their retail faith in stock on hand.

“We constantly re-invest into our inventory,” Miller said. “We can probably outfit 500 people at any time 365 days a year. Our goal is to always have your size in stock every day.”

## Huge inventory is key to success

Finding what they need is a real advantage to oil crews who shop the store on their way to the job, Cruver said.

“A lot of the time, these guys are here for a day to shop and then they are getting on a plane and headed to work,” he said. “Now they can get everything they need from jackets and coveralls to footwear, socks and gloves and have it embroidered as well.”

“They don’t have time to wait six- to- eight weeks for orders to come in from Outside,” Miller added. “We can react locally to changes in customer demand.”

When oil production skyrocketed, Miller and Cruver knew they had to find work clothing that was flame resistant.

They researched gear worn by Canadian oil workers and found manufacturers already making flame-resistant clothing that stood up to arctic conditions found in the Canadian oil patch.



The Army Navy store located at 320 W. Fourth Avenue in downtown Anchorage now boasts 10,000 square feet of merchandising space for all types of work clothing needs and a full service embroidery shop at the back of the store.



At left, Army Navy store owners Mark Cruver (left) and Mike Miller (right) stand on each side of long-time employee Rhody Lauenders who runs the store’s new outfitting room on the basement floor. At right, Two brothers, Richard and Mark Cruver, grew up helping their father, Dick Cruver, stock shelves at the Army Navy store on Fourth Avenue in Anchorage. Mark went on to become a partner in the store. Richard now lives in Seattle and is a web designer.

“The Canadians had already written the specifications and their oil patch was years ahead of us,” Miller said. “So we turned to them as our suppliers because we knew they would have the best to offer.”

## Keeping it in the family

Putting customers first has kept Army Navy in business since their fathers started the store at its current loca-

tion. “For years, we heard from customers that they could not find anything thick enough for the kids. And we found that to be true when looking at kids’ lines,” Miller said. “So we went out and basically came up with our own line called Activ8. There is nothing like it on the market.”

About two-thirds of their children’s line goes through the Fairbanks store. However, demand has increased in Anchorage.

For the 2001 Christmas season, Miller and Cruver cashed in some of their Carhartt co-op advertising dollars and featured their daughters touting Carharts as men’s gifts on television. “It paid off,” Miller said. “We had a tremendous Christmas season.”

Even with recession looming on the economic horizon and a current lull in the oil industry, Miller is optimistic about sales in 2002.

“What we sell is basic. It isn’t an item that will die next year,” he said.

## Parking lot means more customers

The store’s parking lot just off C Street is usually full. That’s just fine with Miller.

“It was terrible when we did not have it,” he said. “Once we put that parking lot in, our sales doubled.”

Customers also can park in the garage just across C Street or in front of the store in the meter parking spaces on Fourth Avenue.

“We’ll pay your parking,” he said. ♦



At left, Christmas promotions spurred sales in the early years of the Army Navy store. This picture was taken during the early 1950s when the Army Navy store still focused on selling war surplus items. At right, Glenn Miller, father of current co-owner Mike Miller, poses for a picture as Bob Reeve, founder of Reeve Aleutian Airlines, makes last minute adjustments for flight. Reeve frequently flew Miller throughout Alaska during the World War II era when Miller was in the U.S. Army Intelligence Corps.



tion on Fourth Avenue and C Street in the late 1940s.

“Our dads were in the war together up here in the Army,” Miller said. “In those days, GIs were given first-cut in surplus military merchandise. They went down to Sacramento and bought sheep skin coats. They brought them back to Anchorage and had sold all of them in two days.”

That was the start of what has blossomed into much more than a work-wear store.

By adding women’s and children’s clothing lines, sales have shot up beyond expectations.

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Judy Patrick

**MELT WATER** — Workers from the Rowan Camp at Meltwater dig out after a "blow" during phase 3 conditions in early February. Phase 3 conditions consist of high winds, blowing snow and zero visibility. Personnel must stay where they are, sometimes for several days. Production began late last year from Meltwater, the fourth Kuparuk River satellite to come online. It is the most distant of the Kuparuk satellites — only 10 miles from Tarn, but some 25 miles from production facilities at Kuparuk. Phillips Alaska Inc. is the operator at Kuparuk and Meltwater.

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Fax: (907) 563-4928  
Email: scunning@ncelec.com  
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Fax: (907) 283-5230  
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Email: bkhananna@integrity.com  
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Web site: www.bp.com

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Web Site: www.marathon.com

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P.O. Box 100360  
Anchorage, AK 99510-0360  
President & CEO: Kevin O. Meyers  
Phone: (907) 265-6134  
Fax: (907) 265-1502

Unocal Alaska  
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Email: rsinz@unocal.com  
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Fort Worth, TX 76102  
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