

PETROLEUM NEWS

A L A S K A



"Balancing the budget is like going to heaven. Everybody wants to do it but nobody wants to do what you have to do to get there."

—PHIL GRAMM

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Week of April 21, 2002

Drilling non-stop on North Slope



Courtesy of Doyon Drilling

Pictured here is a Doyon Drilling Inc. employee who is part of the around-the-clock maintenance support for Doyon's drilling operations on Alaska's North Slope. Doyon Drilling photos are featured in April's Petroleum Directory, part B of this edition of PNA.

New ship in the sea

Polar Tankers Inc. unveiled its third Endeavour Class double-hulled tanker, the Polar Discovery, at an April 13 christening ceremony at the Northrop Grumman Ship Systems Avondale shipyard in New Orleans.

Phillips Petroleum Co., parent of Polar Tankers, is building five Endeavour Class tankers. Cost of the Polar Discovery is \$168 million.

Phillips said the Endeavour Class tankers, also known as the Millennium Class, are the first crude-oil carriers being built for the Alaska trade in compliance with the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The first tanker, the Polar Endeavour, arrived in Valdez, Alaska, on its maiden voyage in July 2001.



Judy Patrick

The Polar Discovery in New Orleans.

see TANKER page A19

GOVERNMENT

Driving a good bargain

Torgerson, administration, explorers say SB 360 gives gas owners what they want to build North Slope gasline and is good for state; producers disagree

By Kay Cashman
PNA Publisher

Almost eight months have passed since Sen. John Torgerson and his colleagues in the state Legislature expected to be in discussions with the North Slope gas owners about legislation that would help make a gas pipeline project from the North Slope to Lower 48 markets possible.

All lawmakers needed, Torgerson said, was clarification from the gas owners about what they meant when they said they needed state "fiscal stability/certainty" to help make the gas project economically competitive.

The legislators also waited for BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc., ExxonMobil Production Alaska and



Sen. John Torgerson

Phillips Alaska Inc. to give them promised proposals "relating to issues ... like permitting and access," Torgerson said.

Torgerson and his colleagues expected to have gasline legislation written and ready to act on early in the current session.

Still waiting for report

They also expected to have the results of the gas owners' \$125 million study by the end of last year, which would give lawmakers vital information about the economics of the project.

"We're constitutionally mandated to go home next month and we still don't have those study results," Torgerson told PNA April 12.

see BARGAIN page A8

GOVERNMENT

The carrot and the stick: Meyers, Condon look to lure investment

Suggestions include incentives to make state more attractive to smaller companies and tax rate based on reinvestment in Alaska's oil, gas fields

By Kristen Nelson
PNA Editor-in-Chief

How should the state encourage oil and gas investment in Alaska? What incentive programs does the state have now and how do they work? The Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Revenue suggested carrot and stick alternatives to the House Special Committee on Oil and Gas April 5.

On the carrot side, Director of the Division of Oil and Gas Mark Myers said shallow gas leasing and exploration licensing have brought new players to the state,

see INCENTIVES page A17

The carrot The stick



Mark Myers, Oil and Gas



Wil Condon, Revenue

ARCTIC GAS

'Very encouraging' results from Mackenzie Delta hydrate project

Team of scientists met all technical objectives, but won't make detailed results public for two years; experts doubt hydrate production is possible for 30-50 years

By Gary Park
PNA Canadian Correspondent

A seven-member international partnership trying to revolutionize future energy markets has reported "very encouraging" results from successful production testing of methane hydrates in the Canadian Arctic.

Natural Resources Canada, which led the 79-day, C\$14 million experiment said the scientists involved believe the results are a "first step towards evaluating gas hydrates as an energy source."

The federal government department said it will

see HYDRATE page A19



Canadian government photo

Lengths of core in the foreground with tanks of liquid nitrogen (to keep samples of gas hydrate cold during transport) and bottled gas (to keep the gas hydrate samples under pressure during transport) in the background.

I N S I D E

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BLM finalizes regs for NPR-A leases	9
Knowles signs best available technology bill	4
Cosmopolitan on track for 2003 production	15
DNR issues preliminary finding on Nenana license	9

Alaska Rig Report

Rig Owner/Rig Type	Rig No.	Rig Location/Activity	Operator or Status
North Slope - Onshore			
Doyon Drilling			
Dreco 1250 UE	14 (SCR/TD)	Drilling on W-Pad well W-211	BP
Sky Top Brewster NE-12	15 (SCR/TD)	Stacked/Endicott Is.	BP
Dreco 1000 UE	16 (SCR)	GPB Workovers currently on H-Pad	BP
Dreco D2000 UEBD	19 (SCR/TD)	CD2-25 Alpine, exploration	Phillips
OIME 2000	141 (SCR/TD)	Exploration drilling, Heavenly #1 prospect, will move into Miline Point S-pad for BP 1st of May	Phillips
Nabors Alaska Drilling			
Trans-ocean rig	CDR-1 (CT)	Stacked, Prudhoe Bay	Available
Dreco 1000 UE	2-ES (SCR)	Point McIntyre on well P1-02A	BP
Mid-Continent U36A	3-S	Attached to Schlumberger CT Unit 4 Prudhoe Bay, Y pad, W-10A	BP
Oilwell 700 E	4-ES (SCR)	Warm stacked	BP
(Not Available)	7-ES	Being repaired, under contract	BP
Dreco 1000 UE	9-ES (SCR/TD)	Prudhoe Bay, L pad, development drilling, well L-119	BP
Oilwell 2000 Hercules	14-E (SCR)	Moving back to Deadhorse to stack (still under contract)	Anadarko
Oilwell 2000 Hercules	16-E (SCR/TD)	Still at Hunter-A	Phillips
Oilwell 2000	17-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Point McIntyre	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist -2	18-E (SCR)	Moving to Deadhorse to stack (still under contract)	Phillips
OIME 1000	19-E (SCR)	Moving to Kuparuk for workover	Phillips
Emsco Electro-hoist Varco TDS3	22-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Milne Point	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist Canrig 1050E	27-E (SCR/TD)	Moving to Prudhoe	BP
Emsco Electro-hoist	28-E (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Available
OIME 2000	245-E	Stacked in Kuparuk	Phillips
Nordic Calista Services			
Superior 700 UE	1 (SCR/TD)	Moved from Prudhoe Bay to Kuparuk 3 H-16 on 04/08/02. CT side track	Phillips
Superior 700 UE	2 (SCR)	Stacked, Kuparuk	Pending, BP
Ideco 900	3 (SCR/TD)	Moved to 2P-422 A on 04/11/02, redrill	Phillips
North Slope - Offshore			
Nabors Alaska Drilling			
Oilwell 2000	33-E (SCR/TD)	Northstar Is., well 15, development drilling	BP
Cook Inlet Basin – Onshore			
Kuukpik/H&R Drilling			
Rigmasters 850	9	Released, no longer working for Unocal no plans for further work at this time	Available
Glacier Drilling Co. (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contractor)			
Taylor	1	Kenai Gas Field, KBU32-7H, target is gas	Marathon
Inlet Drilling Alaska/Cooper Construction			
Kremco 750	CC-1	Trading Bay, workovers, getting ready to do gas	Forest Oil
Nabors Alaska Drilling			
National 110 UE	160 (SCR)	Stacked, Kenai	Available
Continental Emsco E3000	273	Stacked, under contract	Phillips
Cook Inlet Basin – Offshore			
XTO Energy (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contract)			
National 1320	A	Idle/Middle Ground Shoal	XTO Energy
National 110	C	Middle Ground Shoal, platform C, well C32-23 LW	XTO Energy
Nabors Alaska Drilling			
IDECO 2100 E	429 (SCR)	Redoubt Unit #5	Forest Oil
Unocal (Nabors Alaska Drilling labor contractor)			
Oilwell 2000 E		Steelhead Platform, Idle	Unocal
National 1320 OUE	54	Workovers on Grayling Platform	Unocal
National 1320 OUE	55	Grayling Platform, workovers	Unocal
Oilwell 860	56	Idle, Monopod Platform	Unocal
Draw works removed	57	Idle, Granite Point Platform	Unocal
National 1320 UE	58A	King Salmon active workovers for next two weeks, no change	Unocal
Draw works removed	58B	Idle, Granite Point Platform	Unocal
OIME SD8M	60	Idle, Bruce Platform	Unocal
National 1320 OUE	76	Idle, Dolly Varden Platform	Unocal
National 1320 OUE	77	Idle, Dolly Varden Platform	Unocal
IDECO 2100 E (Unocal's only mobile rig)	428	Stacked, Baker platform, northern most platform in Middle Ground Shoal	Available
Bering Sea-Port Clarence			
Fairweather			
Dreco 147	SDC	Stacked, Port Clarence	EnCana
Mackenzie Delta-Onshore			
Akita Equatak			
Rigmaster E-1500	60 (SCR/TD)	PC Devon Kugpik L-46, drilling	Petro-Canada
Dreco 1250 UE	63 (SCR/TD)	Devon PC Tuk B-2, drilling (tight hole) No other start-ups in next six months	Devon ARL Corp.

The Alaska Rig Report as of April 16, 2002.
Active drilling companies only listed.

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

This rig report was prepared by Wadeen Hepworth



Photo courtesy Judy Patrick

Rig start-ups expected in next 6 months

Nordic Calista
Rig 2 (SCR) Stacked at Kuparuk, will be converted to CT unit in JV with Schlumberger, similar to NC #1 JV. Start-up expected August. Location unknown at this time.

Unocal (Nabors Alaska Drilling labor contractor)
Rig 76 Idle/Dolly Varden platform, start-up expected in May (King Salmon crews)
Rig 77 Idle/Dolly Varden platform, start-up expected in May (King Salmon crews)

Fairweather
SDC Stacked, Port Clarence, MODU will be moved by Fairweather to EnCana McCovey prospect north of Prudhoe Bay in Beaufort Sea in August. Drilling expected to begin in November for EnCana.

Akita Equatak No other start-ups in the next six months.

Doyon Drilling Four rigs working

The Alaska Rig Report is sponsored by:

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EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Murphy continues to appeal state’s Point Thomson decision

Minority interest owner Murphy Exploration (Alaska) Inc. is appealing the Division of Oil and Gas’s decision on expansion-contraction of the Point Thomson unit.

Murphy has interests in two leases at the Red Dog prospect where BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. has drilled an exploration well. Murphy told the state Oct. 24 that except for Murphy and TotalFinaElf, all of the owners in the two Red Dog leases — ADL 377012 and ADL 377013 — are also owners at Point Thomson.

Murphy said that in spite of repeated requests, ExxonMobil, unit operator at Point Thomson, has not addressed unit equities, although, Murphy said, ExxonMobil did offer Murphy an opportunity to ratify the Point Thomson unit agreement and unit operating agreement.

Murphy said it has not been provided with the information which would allow it to “make a businesslike decision on whether to align within the expanded PTU.” Murphy said it has asked ExxonMobil for “access to technical and commercial data (including reserves), development plans, costs, timing, etc., so that we could evaluate our position and make a businesslike decision on unit participation.”

ExxonMobil offered Murphy a 0.325 percent participation in the Point Thomson unit, but Murphy said “no technical justification for the figure was offered.”

Murphy, through its attorneys, told the state in November that it believes DNR has exceeded its statutory authority in expanding the Point Thomson unit to include the

Murphy has interests in two leases at the Red Dog prospect where BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. has drilled an exploration well. Murphy told the state Oct. 24 that except for Murphy and TotalFinaElf, all of the owners in the two Red Dog leases — ADL 377012 and ADL 377013 — are also owners at Point Thomson.

see MURPHY page A4

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ON DEADLINE

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MURPHY

Red Dog leases, because it did so without consent of all the lessees.

Murphy argues that the state's decision compels it to join the Point Thomson unit.

ExxonMobil told the state in November that there is nothing in the state's decision which compels Murphy to join the unit. But, ExxonMobil said, the state's leases do give DNR the authority to compel Murphy to join the Point Thomson unit.

ExxonMobil told the state that

ExxonMobil told the state that Murphy is requesting that it be provided data acquired at substantial cost, with no compensation by Murphy for that data.

Murphy is requesting that it be provided data acquired at substantial cost, with no compensation by Murphy for that data.

In a December response to DNR, Murphy's attorneys said ExxonMobil is still refusing to provide Murphy with information the company needs to name an informed decision.

—Kristen Nelson

■ GOVERNMENT

Governor signs best available technology bill, SB 343

Bill clarifies legislative intent for oil discharge prevention and contingency plans, was introduced by Senate Resources and opposed by activist Tom Lakosh

By Kristen Nelson
PNA Editor-in-Chief

Gov. Tony Knowles signed Senate Bill 343 April 17, resolving the impasse which has existed in Department of Environmental Conservation regulations for oil discharge prevention and contingency plans since Feb. 1, when the Alaska Supreme Court ruled DEC's regulatory interpretation of best available technology did not meet legislative intent.

SB 343, clarifying legislative intent, was introduced by Senate Resources and had the support of DEC, the Department of Law and the Alaska Oil and Gas Association.

At issue was the interpretation of best available technology in regulations adopted by DEC in 1997 after a stakeholder process which included industry, regional citizens' advisory council and representatives of the environmental community.

"The best available technology requirement is an integral part of managing oil exploration, development, and transportation in Alaska," Knowles said in a statement.

"We have had great success in applying the best available technology to bring state-of-the-art tractor tugs to assist tankers in Prince William Sound, and improve well-head source control techniques and leak detection technologies. The best available technology determinations have continually improved Alaska's spill prevention and response system and made it the best in the

world."

The governor's office said the bill validates those consensus-developed and effective methods, sustains the same level of rigor for contingency plan reviews, and supports the ability of the Department of Environmental Conservation to evaluate new technologies and incorporate them into future contingency plans.

As the bill moved through the Legislature, committees were told that without clarification of legislative intent, more than 100 oil discharge prevention and contingency plans approved under the regulations were at risk, and decisions on new plans were stalled.

Forest Oil's Senior Vice President Gary Carlson told Senate Resources March 4 that Forest Oil was "one of the companies caught in the middle of this dilemma" as the company tries to get approval of contingency plans for its Redoubt Shoal project. Carlson told the committee that the Redoubt Shoal development phase is in jeopardy without resolution of the problem.

Spill prevention and response activist Tom Lakosh, whose court suit resulted in the Supreme Court decision, argued against the bill, saying the state does not have adequate response capability and needs a DEC-run response authority.

Lakosh, the Alaska Conservation Voters and the Alaska Forum for Environmental Responsibility also argued that DEC needed to respond to the court's ruling through changes in its regulations. ♦



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GOVERNMENT

Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission short one commissioner

Julie Heusser, the petroleum engineer commissioner on the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, has resigned and the office of Boards and Commissions in the governor's office will be considering an appointment to fill the seat this summer.

Interested applicants should send a cover letter of interest and resume to the Office of the Governor; P.O. Box 110001; Juneau, AK; 99811; Attn Cindy Smith, Director of Boards and Commissions.

The commission has three members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Legislature.

Boards and Commissions description of the requirements include: a petroleum engineer who holds a certificate of registration as an engineer under AS 08.48 and, under regulations adopted to implement that chapter, has qualified as a petroleum engineer; or has earned a degree from a university in the field of engineering and has at least 10 years of professional subsurface experience in the oil and gas industry in drilling, well operations, production process operations, reservoir engineering, or a combination thereof.

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FINANCE & ECONOMY

LONDON

BP increases its share in Russian oil firm Sidanco

BP announced April 16 that it has completed a transaction with Alfa Group and Access-Renova to expand its stake in the Russian oil and gas producer, Sidanco, from 10 to 25 percent.

BP has agreed to pay \$375 million for an additional 15 percent of Sidanco, to take its interest to 25 percent plus one share — a level of equity that matches its current voting rights.

Lord Browne, group chief executive, BP said: “This purchase underlines BP’s confidence in Russia and its improving business environment. Over the last few years Sidanco has refined its costs, strengthened its balance sheet and increased its focus on the upstream business. With this foundation Sidanco is well positioned to compete in the Russian market. BP will now second further staff into Sidanco’s management to help drive the company forward.”

Sidanco produces some 380,000 barrels of oil a day gross, mainly at facilities located in Western Siberia, including the recently returned Chernogorneft assets. Alfa Group and Access-Renova will remain majority stakeholders in Sidanco following the completion of this transaction.

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Who pays out more to stockholders?

Dividends and Dividend Yield

Company		Dividend (annual)	Yield
Agrium	AGU	\$0.11	1.1%
Anadarko	APC	\$0.30	0.6%
BP	BP	\$1.32	3.0%
ChevronTexaco	CVX	\$2.80	3.2%
Conoco	COC	\$0.76	2.8%
EnCana	ECA	\$0.25	0.9%
Evergreen	EVG	-0-	-0-
ExxonMobil	EOM	\$0.92	2.2%
Forest	FST	-0-	-0-
Marathon	MRO	\$0.92	3.2%
Murphy	MUR	\$1.50	1.6%
Petro Canada	PCZ	\$0.25	1.0%
Phillips	P	\$1.44	2.4%
Semco	SEN	\$0.84	8.4%
Tesoro	TSO	-0-	-0-
Unocal	UCL	\$0.80	2.1%
Williams	WMB	\$0.80	3.6%
XTO	XTO	\$0.04	0.2%

Dividend yield based on closing stock price April 16

ANCHORAGE

Revenue’s spring forecast shows prices up, offshore production delayed

Alaska North Slope crude is expected to continue at 1 million barrels per day through the end of the decade, as new oil and satellite fields come on production

By Kristen Nelson
PNA Editor-in-Chief

Commissioner of Revenue Wilson Condon said April 15 that while the department has raised its expected average Alaska North Slope crude oil price for the fiscal year ending June 30 to \$20.50 a barrel, up \$1.70 a barrel from the fall forecast, only a “modest reduction” is expected in the amount the state will have to draw from the Constitutional Budget Reserve to balance.

The budget gap is still close to \$1 billion and the department expects the budget reserve to run out in October 2004, Condon said.

“Although the higher oil prices have slightly reduced our withdrawal of funds from the Constitutional Budget Reserve Fund, it is not enough to give us much breathing room in dealing with Alaska’s fiscal problem,” Condon said. “The higher prices are certainly good news, but they reduce the



Commissioner of Revenue Wilson Condon

Delivered Price for ANS Crude Oil
Average West Texas Intermediate (WTI), ANS West Coast and ANS Wellhead
\$ per barrel

Fiscal Year	WTI	ANS West Coast	ANS Wellhead
Actual 2001	30.41	27.85	30.00
2002	23.38	21.50	16.39
2003	22.50	20.50	15.27
2004	21.50	19.50	14.31
2005	21.50	19.50	14.15
2006	20.50	18.50	12.99
2007	19.50	17.50	11.85
2008	19.50	17.50	11.75
2009	19.50	17.50	11.67
2010	19.50	17.50	11.57

Alaska Department of Revenue

total three-year draw from the Budget Reserve by only \$143 million for Fiscal Years 2002-2004.”

Offshore delay

On the production side, the department said it had made modest adjustments in the fall forecast, including a three-year delay of all Beaufort Sea development as a result of BP’s announcement: that it is shelving the Liberty project. The department said that delay includes the Sandpiper field.

Revenue also said it has increased Alpine’s pro-see FORECAST page A6

CANADA

EnCana strides on to world stage, but gets only lukewarm market reception

Expected to make early moves to shrink staff, sell off non-core assets, blend two divergent corporate cultures; analysts say company must grow beyond North America

By Gary Park
PNA Canadian Correspondent

Tightly wrapped in the Canadian flag, EnCana Corp. has embarked on its journey to turn a Canadian-based company into a “world-class” performer.

The official launch April 8 on the New York and Toronto stock exchanges was an occasion for fanfare and hoopla.

More than 2,000 EnCana employees gathered in Calgary and other company locations to hear chief executive officer Gwyn Morgan again trumpet his ambitions for the new entity.

“This is truly an historic day for our industry and our home country, Canada, but it’s also his-

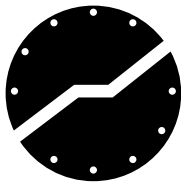
toric for employees and communities wherever we operate in the world — from Denver to Casper to Quito and London,” he said.

“Our mission is to build a global, world-class company, yet retain the agility of a small company, where high performance teams are free to create and act upon opportunities and be rewarded for success.

“We will create our own unique and vibrant EnCana brand. We will be accountable, empowered employees propelled by a relentless desire to be best in class.”

Exchange trading starts

The moment of highest symbolism was the see ENCANA page A6



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ENCANA

start of trading at the New York Stock Exchange, where the success or failure of EnCana will largely be determined.

Chairman David O'Brien was joined on the exchange floor by Salt Lake City skating gold medallists, Jamie Sale and David Pelletier.

"EnCana represents the bringing together of a pair of great Canadian companies (PanCanadian Energy Corp. and Alberta Energy Co. Ltd.) to create a world-class performer. So it's fitting to be here with two Canadians who together created a world championship pair," O'Brien said.

From the outset, EnCana, valued at C\$23 billion, grabbed fourth spot on the list of Canada's largest publicly traded companies, trailing three banks. The next largest oil and gas firms are Suncor Energy Inc. in 15th spot and Petro-Canada in 17th.

Early trading slow

But the early trading scarcely matched the expectations, with trading volume on the opening day accounting for only 0.2 percent of the company's 470 million shares. Market gains were modest to begin with, then got caught in the downdraft as oil prices dropped.

Not quite what Morgan has in mind, when he predicts EnCana's size and growth prospects will propel it to the top of U.S. investors' stock lists and push it ahead of U.S. rivals in market valuations.

However, many analysts suggested it was too soon to be surprised or disappointed, especially since investors looking to position themselves would have been more likely to purchase either PanCanadian or AEC shares in the run-up period to EnCana's debut.

They also said it will take time for U.S. portfolio managers to become acquainted with EnCana.

Home front rumblings

On the home front, there were inevitable rumblings of discontent among almost 4,000 employees who have been told to put out of sight any trappings from their past.

T-shirts, jackets, briefcases — any-

Also in the category of new ventures is Alaska's North Slope and the Mackenzie Delta, where EnCana's leaders have yet to signal their intentions.

thing bearing PanCanadian or AEC logos — are not part of the new image.

"EnCana is not two companies, but one," Morgan said. "There is no room for an 'us' versus 'them' mindset."

But the winners and losers argument persists among employees, despite attempts by Morgan and O'Brien to promote EnCana as a "merger of equals."

Among the employees, many — some expect hundreds — will soon be more equal than others.

Major job cuts are likely to occur this month as a key part of Morgan's promise to shareholders that the combined company can build production while lopping C\$250 million off its operating costs.

Once the staff shuffle is completed and up to C\$1 billion in unwanted assets — mainly midstream natural gas and processing facilities — are identified, EnCana will be able to get on with its greatest challenge, growing daily output from 720,000 barrels of oil equivalent this year to 1.1 million barrels by 2005.

International growth

Morgan has said the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin remains the lifeblood

of EnCana, but is leaving no doubt that international growth prospects are vital as the WCSB continues to mature.

High on the list is Ecuador's Oriente Basin, where production is forecast to double to 100,000 barrels per day by mid-2003.

EnCana also inherits a strong position in the U.S. Rocky Mountains, the Gulf of Mexico, the British North Sea and Canada's East Coast offshore and is starting to explore in the United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan, Australia and Brazil.

Also in the category of new ventures is Alaska's North Slope and the Mackenzie Delta, where EnCana's leaders have yet to signal their intentions.

Beyond North America

David Stenason, an analyst with Scotia Capital Corp., said he believes EnCana's next step will be to grow beyond North America, exploiting its size and financial power to take on risks that present "upside opportunity."

Peter Linder, with Research Capital Corp., agreed EnCana can boost production through projects in Canada over the near term, but will eventually be faced with the need to make international corporate acquisitions.

The hope is that sheer size will put EnCana on the radar screen of investors in the U.S. and Europe, allowing it to trade at multiples only large entities can attract.

"We are not on the kind of treadmill that a lot of our competitors are," said Morgan. "We believe we can have a company whose asset base is the strongest, whose growth curve is the best, whose cost of production is the lowest, whose balance sheet is the best and who operates in countries that are very stable and very sound places to be. It's hard to see why that company wouldn't be in the top multiple stock in the sector." ♦

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FORECAST

duction rate and reserves, reflecting the potential of the West Alpine development as well as ongoing facilities debottlenecking and expansion. Prudhoe Bay production was reduced by 5,000 barrels per day starting in late 2004 "to adjust our expectations for fewer new opportunities in the field."

Long-term recovery from Kuparuk was increased because of "continued excellent enhanced oil recovery response."

Production estimates from Tarn were increased as a result of "successful development drilling and strong reservoir performance." Meltwater production was slowed because of drilling delays.

ANS to stay above 1 million bpd

The department said it expects that new discoveries and developments will keep North Slope production over 1 million barrels per day through fiscal year 2011, after which production is expected to decline 5.6 percent a year.

Northstar, and increased production from Alpine and satellite field developments, along with National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska development, heavy oil from Kuparuk and Prudhoe and additional satellite development will all contribute to keeping ANS production above 1 million bpd.

Cook Inlet production is expected to increase from 29,400 barrels a day in fiscal year 2001 to 32,250 barrels a day this fiscal year and 37,200 barrels a day in fiscal year 2003. Forest Oil Corp.'s Redoubt Shoal field is expected to begin production mid-way through fiscal year 2003.

Thomson in 2008

Some fields might perform better than expected or begin production sooner than expected — and there could be discoveries not included in production estimates, Revenue said.

On the down side, the department is projecting production from fields not yet developed. Some 40 percent of new oil, 124,000 bpd by fiscal 2010, comes primarily from the east side of the North Slope.

If these field developments are deferred or cancelled, the state could lose \$65 million in fiscal year, some 10 percent of projected petroleum revenue, the department said.

East-side fields expected to begin production in this decade include: Point Thomson, Sourdough and Liberty in fiscal year 2008; Yukon Gold in fiscal 2009.

Sandpiper, northwest of Northstar, is expected to begin production in fiscal 2010.

Revenue said Point Thomson would begin production at 20,000 bpd and then product at 30,000 bpd though the end of the decade. Sourdough and Yukon Gold would begin at 10,000 bpd and then increase to 15,000 bpd. Liberty would begin production at 35,000 bpd, increase to 55,000 bpd and then decline to 52,000 bpd. Sandpiper would begin production at 12,000 bpd.

Wellhead value will decline

Revenue said that new shipping requirements — more expensive double-hulled tankers required by the Federal Pollution Act of 1990 and the use of smaller vessels to replace the older vessels — are increasing the marine transportation cost.

Along with marine transportation costs, pipeline transportation costs, both for the trans-Alaska pipeline and for feeder pipelines, are also deducted to arrive at the ANS wellhead value, which is the basis for the state's production taxes and royalties.

Based on projected ANS West Coast prices and transportation costs, the ANS wellhead value is expected to fall from an actual \$22.83 a barrel for fiscal 2001 to \$16.39 a barrel for fiscal 2002 and \$11.57 a barrel by fiscal 2010. ♦

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ARCTIC GAS

FAIRBANKS

Two day conference produces surprising request

Some 125 representatives of industry, government and academia gathered April 11-12 in Fairbanks to brainstorm ways research can help to break through barriers that hinder development of Alaska's oil, gas and coal resources.

"The aim of this workshop was to identify and prioritize the research energy needs that the University of Alaska Fairbanks can jointly work with the industry for the benefit of Alaska," said Dr. Godwin Chukwu, chair of the energy workshop planning committee and a petroleum engineering professor at UAF.

Industry and government research representatives presented information about global natural resources, Alaska's current role in providing energy and barriers to development.

Topics included the proposed natural gas pipeline, development of viscous oil, identification and possible use of "unconventional" gas and increased use of Alaska's coal resources.

Targets for researchers

Using a brainstorming method called "road mapping," participants listed barriers, ranging from technological to permitting to public policy issues for oil, gas and coal, listed research and development efforts that could help mitigate those problems and set priorities.

"We recognized that we were not a demographic sample of Alaska — we're heavily weighted in the technology sector," said Scott Digert of BP Exploration.

Both the oil and the gas groups cited public policy issues and information sharing and data distribution as development barriers.

"A really common theme throughout all our discussions was information sharing subjects. We felt like even though we have been in the business for 25 years, as an industry in Alaska, we've done a very poor job of transferring technology among agencies, industry and the academia environment," said Steve Bross, Phillips Alaska's satellite development supervisor at Kuparuk. "We've tended to act very isolated on the North Slope, and that's a detriment to us."

"We can set up a database collection and be a custodian of data," said Chukwu. "The only surprise is that some people would like us to concentrate on policy issues, but that is not what the University is for."

Independent source of information?

Participants in the gas group discussed the need for an independent information source for energy resource issues, suggesting that the university might be able to fulfill that role.

"While it's not a research and development need, the university might be able to act as an honest broker of information, as it is viewed as difficult to get information that isn't spun by big oil companies or by the environmental perspective," said Digert, in the gas group's presentation. "Someone like the university could be viewed as an honest broker of unspun information."

—Patricia Jones

FAIRBANKS

Meeting highlights gasline challenges; gap in cost of two routes narrows

Producers tell University of Alaska workshop current studies based on 4.5 billion cubic feet a day pipeline, up from original 4 bcf proposal

By Patricia Jones
PNA Contributing Writer

Construction technology and related research, project economics and political maneuvering surrounding the proposed Alaska natural gas pipeline project highlighted talks at an energy workshop held April 11 and 12 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

University researchers, government officials and research organizers met with oil and gas industry representatives to determine development barriers for Alaska's oil, gas and coal resources and to identify possible research projects that could help mitigate those blockades.

High on the topic list for the conference was Alaska's North Slope natural gas pipeline project, which faces substantial economic barriers to its development.



Dave MacDowell, external affairs manager for BP's gas activities in Alaska

An \$8 billion spread

Early in the two-day meeting, BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc.'s David MacDowell presented the standard overview from the producers' group, describing it as an uneconomic project under the current analysis that has cost BP, Phillips Alaska Inc. and ExxonMobil Production Alaska a total of \$125 million during the last 15 months.

Saying that the final analysis should be publicly released in the next few weeks, MacDowell did give a few hints about the producers' economic analysis of the approximately 2,000-mile pipeline and related infrastructure.

"The numbers have gone up, but it is still under \$20 billion," MacDowell said.

Part of the reason why the still-secret cost estimates have risen is that producers have expanded the per-day production capacity of the project. Current analysis puts the project at a 4.5 billion cubic foot per day producer, rather than the initial 4 BCF, MacDowell said.

Previous corporate announcements put the estimated development costs of the northern "over-the-top" route, which would include a portion of undersea

pipeline to the Canadian north shore, then track south through the Mackenzie River valley to existing gas infrastructure in northern Alberta, at \$15.1 billion.

Producers have said the southern route, which would track Alaska's oil pipeline to Delta Junction, then follow a federally approved route along the Alaska Highway to northern Alberta, would cost an estimated \$17.2 billion.

"I will tell you that the gap (between the two routes) has narrowed," MacDowell said.

And the producers have tightened the range of uncertainty in their figures, he added, refining the numbers to a 20 percent uncertainty, down from 25 to 30 percent in the earlier numbers. "On a \$20 billion project, that's an \$8 billion spread," MacDowell said. "That's some serious dollars."

Trenching precise

In view of the research-oriented workshop, MacDowell briefly described trenching experiments conducted by the producers' group this spring in permafrost areas both on the North Slope and just north of Fairbanks. (See related article in the March 17 edition of PNA.)

A huge, 260,000-pound trenching machine dug through varying types of frozen ground, MacDowell said, testing the equipment's ability to work in the different types of permafrost.

The machine dug exacting, five-foot wide trenches, eight to 12 feet deep, he said. "It's really impressive — the linear, precise cuts," he said, in an interview following his presentation.

Important in the evaluation is the trenching machine's efficiency. If crews can complete more miles of pipe installation in a day, then perhaps the construction timeframe for the entire project can be shortened, MacDowell said. "We're still evaluating the results, but we're hopeful that we'll be able to make technology improve the economics."

Producers-pipeline meeting

Also presenting information about the gas pipeline project at the two-day conference was Sally Kornfeld, senior analyst with the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Natural Gas and Petroleum.

One recent development in the overall hoopla surrounding the pipeline project, she said during her presentation, is an upcoming meeting between the North

see MEETING page A8



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ARCTIC GAS/LAND & LEASING

continued from page A1
BARGAIN

On March 1, Torgerson shared his concerns with the three gas owners in a formal letter telling them they had until March 15 to provide the information they had promised the Legislature. If they didn't, the senator said he "would begin to explore other options to get natural gas developed."

March 15 has come and gone and while the gas owners did defend their lack of action in separate letters to Torgerson prior to March 15, the committee he chairs, Senate Resources, introduced legislation in mid-April that is designed to be the framework of the deal the state wants to cut with the North Slope gas owners to get a gasline built.

The Alaska Natural Gas Project Act, which passed out of Senate Resources on April 17, amends the Right Of Way Leasing Act and "seeks to expedite the construction and operation of an Alaska gasline from the North Slope south through Canada to the Lower 48 or to Alaska tidewater for shipment as liquid natural gas," its sponsors said in a written statement.

Basically, Senate Bill 360 promises to give serious consideration to everything lawmakers envision the gas owners will want from the state for the project in exchange for allowing gas explorers fair access to the gasline, satisfying in-state demand for gas and giving preference to local labor and suppliers for construction and operation of the line.

With some caveats, here are the primary things SB 360 gives the gasline owners: tax exempt railroad bonding to finance construction of the line and related facilities; property tax and royalty relief if, among other things, construction begins by a specified date; expedited permitting from all state agencies; limited judicial review for claims brought by state entities; waivers of law from the governor if a provision of law impedes the project.

No incentives if they don't deal

The bill also says that any project sponsor can apply for a right of way lease under the current Alaska Right Of Way Leasing Act without obtaining the certificates outlined in SB 360. They will not, however, be eligible for any of the incentives the legislation offers.

Gas explorers, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Revenue testified in support of SB 360; BP, ExxonMobil, Phillips and the Alaska Northwest Natural Gas Transportation Co., the pipeline company consortium, testified against it.

Supporters of the bill had suggestions for changes and amendments to the bill, most of which were made prior to the bill passing out of Senate Resources.

The producers, Torgerson said, want a 15 percent profit, which he acknowledged might be acceptable for a producer but far above what FERC allows for a pipeline.

No access, no gas industry

Allen Sharp, director of northern business development for EnCana Corp., formerly PanCanadian Energy Corp. and Alberta Energy Co. Ltd., told Senate Resources April 15 that BP, ExxonMobil and Phillips could keep the gasline "full for 20 years" without gas from any other companies.

EnCana is the largest independent in North America and a major leaseholder on Alaska's North Slope where Sharp said only a "very small area" has been explored.

If explorers such as EnCana and Anadarko Petroleum Corp. aren't able to get access to the pipeline to ship gas they discover, the state, Sharp said, won't be able to have lease sales in gas prospective areas such as the Brooks Range foothills.

Sharp said SB 360 provides "the framework to regulate initial design, expansion and access," all "critically important" issues to ensure the gasline will spawn a natural gas industry that will

include investment from more than just the three major North Slope gas owners.

Anadarko's Alaska spokesman, Mark Hanley, reminded the committee that the recent state foothills lease sale attracted bidders such as "Unocal, Chevron, Burlington Resources and Petro-Canada, who are also interested in gas exploration in Alaska."

He testified in favor of the bill "because it helps provide fair and reasonable pipeline access" and should help attract gas explorers to Alaska.

ExxonMobil says bill will increase project costs

ExxonMobil's Alaska Gas Development Manager Robbie Schilhab said "any mandates such as route or labor or material sourcing will only serve to increase the cost of a project and hamper the prospects of a project being economic."

Schilhab said expansion of the pipeline to accommodate new discoveries is "already addressed as part of the federal Natural Gas Act and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rules and regulations."

Phillips says Washington legislation key

Joe Marushack, vice president of ANS gas commercialization for Phillips Alaska, said the gas owners have been focusing on areas they believe are "most likely to result in an economically viable gas pipeline project," giving emphasis to federal legislative changes to advance the project.

"New federal legislation ... creates permitting certainty."

Marushack said the most "critical element" in moving the project forward is a federal tax mechanism that would provide a price guarantee if the price of gas drops to an economically unacceptable level.

SB 360 is "in essence a process bill" that "prescribes no particular tax or royalty relief for a project but outlines a process by which a project sponsor could initiate discussions to progress a viable fiscal sys-

tem," he said, contending that existing state statutes already provide the necessary framework for fiscal certainty and permitting discussions.

An attorney representing the Alaska Highway pipeline consortium, the Alaska Northwest Natural Gas Transportation Co., said it is currently working with state officials to make amendments to the Right of Way Leasing Act and the coastal zone management program to add clarity and predictability to the permitting process.

SB 360, he said, would "create additional uncertainty and risks for our project which could delay, rather than advance, the issuance for our right-of-way lease at the earliest predictable date."

Torgerson says no to retaliation

Torgerson told PNA April 12 that he "doesn't want to even begin to threaten retaliatory action" against the North Slope gas owners "until we see their numbers," referring to the \$125 million study results promised by the gas owners.

His bill, which is being referred to by industry observers as Torgerson's "trump card," is "not a 180 degree change from my existing position."

"The producers are having a little bit of trouble wearing two hats — that of a pipeline company and a producer. I think they're rolling their numbers together, amortizing numbers from both areas," he said, referring to the producers' Prudhoe Bay and Point Thomson operations and the proposed gasline project.

"Pipeline companies don't care whose gas is in their line; they just want it full. ... They're not worried about net back to well head," Torgerson said.

Pipeline companies are content to "sit there and make whatever profit FERC lets them, which is generally 8 to 12 percent."

The producers, he said, want a 15 percent profit, which he acknowledged might be acceptable for a producer but far above what FERC allows for a pipeline.

SB 360 was moved out of Senate Resources April 17 and goes next to Senate Finance. ♦

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MEETING

Slope gas owners and the pipeline companies consortium, which includes Foothills, Williams and a whole host of other companies. Scheduled to meet in Anchorage on April 16, the two groups are expected to take another stab at negotiating some sort of development scheme, she said. Results of an earlier meeting in January were not released, because, Kornfeld said, the consortium had stated that they would "negotiate with the commercial partners, but not in the press or in the government."

Pipeline proposal refined

She did say that the pipeline consortium "had further refined their proposal, based on feedback from the producers' group during the January meeting."

DOE senior analyst Sally Kornfeld spoke of an upcoming meeting between the North Slope the producers' group and the pipeline companies' consortium ... in Anchorage on April 16. The two groups are expected to take another stab at negotiating some sort of development scheme, she said.

"You can gather that the producers wanted a higher volume (of production and pipeline throughput)," Kornfeld said, in an interview after the conference. "If you wanted to do business with the people who have the gas, you'd go in the direction they were going."

The Foothills group has already plunked down several million dollars in reimbursable deposits to start the government regulatory

and permitting process, Kornfeld said. That includes \$5.5 million to the state of Alaska for creation of a gas pipeline office, and an unspecified amount also in the multi-million dollar range to the Canadian government, she noted in her presentation.

"They put \$5 million down and that sounds serious, but they have not yet made a decision," she said. "Obviously they are moving in that direction."

DOE loan guarantee a possibility

The pipeline consortium, or any other development group, could benefit from a proposed amendment to the national energy bill currently being debated. Under that bill, a development group could receive up to \$8 billion in a federal loan guarantee under the Department of Energy.

"That's something that the Secretary of Energy is not in the practice of doing," Kornfeld said. The loan guarantee includes

an interesting provision — should no one apply for the \$8 billion loan, then a study is to be conducted to determine whether the federal government could build the pipeline.

During the energy workshop, Kornfeld also presented a list of research and development needs that could assist design and development of the pipeline project.

"I got these from an informal survey of the companies — they are ideas directly from the interested parties," she said.

And during her presentation, she said that her survey suggestions were immediate needs, quoting one of the stakeholders saying, "These are areas that if we had the answers, we would use the information today."

Those research needs fell into seven categories. They include mitigating proximity to the existing oil pipeline, stream crossings, construction engineering, economic and social impacts, identifying and mapping geotechnical regimes, researching soil and pipe interaction forces generated by the freeze-thaw cycles and statistical trending and forecasting of expected seasonal weather.

Kornfeld also added her own suggested research and development need — looking at security options for the pipeline system.

"This is really exciting — it's important to the country and a lot of people want to see this happen," she said. "If the state or federal government approves an appropriate incentive or the companies can bring down the cost, or a combination of the two — it might happen sooner than later. But then again, it might not." ♦



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LAND & LEASING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

ANWR amendment voted down in U.S. Senate

An amendment by Sen. Frank Murkowski that would have opened the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil development failed April 18 when a cloture vote on the amendment garnered only 46 yeas. The cloture vote would have ended a filibuster on the bill begun April 17 by drilling opponents. It required 60 votes to pass.

Immediately after the vote Murkowski asked for a quorum call, which stops action on the Senate floor and is sometimes used to give leaders a chance to negotiate. When a cloture vote fails, often the sponsor of the amendment withdraws it. At a press conference following the vote, Murkowski said he would not withdraw the amendment "at this time."

Murkowski might modify amendment

Murkowski might modify the amendment to attract more votes, his spokesman told PNA, adding that Murkowski and Sen. Ted Stevens were also considering an amendment that would allow the local Native corporation, Kaktovik Inupiat Corp., to develop oil and gas on 92,000 acres it owns on the coastal plain of the refuge.

Had the cloture vote been successful, the amendment would have allowed the president to mandate the opening of ANWR if deemed necessary for national security or economic reasons. It also specified that lease income would be split evenly between the federal treasury and the state of Alaska.

Stevens speaks to Senate

Debate on the amendment stretched into the night on April 17. Earlier in the day Stevens took the Senate floor in behalf of amendment, but he wasn't optimistic.

"It's apparent now that it will be denied," he said.

Stevens recapped the history of the 1980 law that left it up to Congress to decide whether to allow oil drilling on ANWR's coastal plain, questioned the fund-raising techniques of the national environmental groups, and spoke of the many products made from petroleum.

"Toothpaste, deodorant, footballs, life jackets, pantyhose, dentures, bandages, hearing aids, tires and lipstick. All of those come from a barrel of oil," he said.

"The Inupiat Eskimos who live on the North Slope want this area to be explored," he said.

Stevens said less weight should be given to development objections of Gwich'in Indians.

They don't live in ANWR, Stevens said.

"As a matter of fact, we hardly ever heard from the Gwich'in about this issue until they were hired by one of the environmental organizations, and they have become the spokesman for the environmental organizations as a representative of the Alaska Native people," he said. "But they're Canadian Indians who live in Alaska."

—Steve Sutherlin

NENANA BASIN

DNR issues preliminary finding for Nenana oil, gas exploration license

Final finding expected for Analex Resources request in August; Doyon Ltd. supports proposal for license, says it also wants to do own gas exploration in basin

By Kristen Nelson
PNA Editor-in-Chief

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil and Gas, has issued a preliminary finding of the director for a proposed Nenana basin oil and gas exploration license.

The process began last April, when the division received a request from Analex Resources L.L.C. for an exploration license covering approximately 499,840 acres in the Nenana basin. The division issued a notice of its intent to evaluate the request in May — and at the same time requested additional proposals. No additional proposals were received.

Comments close May 31 and the division expects to issue a final finding in August.

Doyon supports proposal

The division received comments on its intent to evaluate notice from Doyon Ltd., the Native

The Nenana basin is thought to be gas-prone and "the significant volume of coal present in the basin suggests that natural gas is more likely to be encountered in commercial quantity than is oil."

—Division of Oil and Gas

regional corporation for Interior Alaska.

Doyon told the division it supports the exploration license proposal, that it owns subsurface rights within the study area and also wants to conduct its own exploration.

Doyon told the division that its geologic evaluation of the area indicates a "high prospective for natural gas," that production of gas would benefit residents — and that any production of gas from Doyon lands would benefit the corporation's shareholders.

see DNR page A10

NORTH SLOPE

BLM finalizes unitization, other regulations for NPR-A leases

By Petroleum News • Alaska

The Bureau of Land Management has published a final rule on unitization, suspensions and subsurface-storage agreements that relate to oil and gas activities in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. The final rule appeared in the April 11 Federal Register and adds provisions to BLM's existing NPR-A oil and gas regulations.

"The final rule, which implements recent changes in a law that governs oil and gas activities in the NPR-A, complements existing oil and gas leasing procedures in NPR-A," said BLM Director Kathleen Clarke.

"Under this rule, companies operating in the NPR-A will be able to unitize their oil and gas leases. Unitization maximizes production while minimizing the environmental impact of develop-

BLM said it would also be able to suspend a lease term after discovery of producible oil or gas to allow time for construction of a transportation system from the new well to a gathering or storage system or some other facility.

ment," Clarke said.

Unitization, lease suspensions, storage

Under a unit agreement, or unitization, several lessees in a given area may share in the risks and costs — as well as the potential benefits — of oil and gas exploration and development by grouping their leases into one block and delegating the operating responsibilities to one operator, the agency said. The

see LEASES page A10

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LAND & LEASING/EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

ANCHORAGE

Wilson to head drilling group

Ron Wilson, general manager of Doyon Drilling Inc., has been chosen to lead the Alaska chapter of the International Association of Drilling Contractors this year.

Jim Denney, president of Nabors Alaska Drilling Inc., is vice chairman.

Phil Fortner, controller of VECO Corp., is the new treasurer.

The new secretary is Anne Green, administrative manager for Nordic-Calista Services. Phil Snisarenko of Nordic-Calista is membership chairman, and Mike Peters, safety director for Doyon Drilling, is safety chairman.

All the officers work in Anchorage.

NORTH AMERICA

Thirteen rigs active in Alaska

Baker Hughes reported April 12 that the U.S. rig count of 747 active rigs was up nine from the previous week, and down 451 from a year ago. The Canadian rig count, at 127, is down 51 from the previous week and down 90 from a year ago.

Including 103 rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, 874 rigs were working in North America April 12, down 42 from the previous week and down 541 from a year ago.

Alaska had 13 rigs active April 12, the same as the previous week, and down two from a year ago. Twelve of the Alaska rigs were working onshore and one offshore (Cook Inlet), the same as the previous week.

Baker Hughes has issued rotary rig counts since 1944 U.S. active rigs peaked at 4,530 in December 1981. The lowest U.S. rig count, 488, was in April 1999. Canadian rig activity peaked at 558 in January 2000. The lowest Canadian rig count was 29 in April 1992.

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DNR

Informational meetings

Doyon Ltd. also recommended to the state that informational meetings be held in Nenana, Minto and Fairbanks to help the public understand the process and to provide the division with information. Doyon had suggested meetings before the preliminary finding. The division said it has found meetings are more productive after the preliminary finding has been issued and the public has had a chance to review the proposal.

The division has scheduled public meetings to discuss the license proposal, answer questions and take public comments: April 22 in Nenana, 7 p.m. at George Hall; April 23 in Minto, 1:30 p.m. at Lake View Lodge; and April 23 in Fairbanks, 7 p.m. at the Noel Wien Library auditorium.

Time-equivalent to Kenai Group

The division said the Nenana basin is a northeast trending elongate alluvial basin of some 8,500 square miles and said "the prospective sedimentary section, thought to be time-equivalent to the productive Kenai Group in the Cook Inlet, consists of sands, gravels, conglomerates, shales and coals."

Two relatively shallow exploration wells have been drilled in the basin. The Unocal Nenana No. 1 was drilled to a total depth of 3,062 feet and plugged and abandoned in 1962. The ARCO Totek Hills No.

Want to know more?

If you'd like to read more about Nenana exploration, go to Petroleum News • Alaska's Web site and search for these recently published articles.

Web site:
<http://www.PetroleumNewsAlaska.com>

2002

■ **Feb. 10** Exploration incentive credits play 'significant role' in attracting Anxex to Nenana Basin

2001

■ **August** Anxex close to Nenana deal, gas could go to Anchorage

■ **May** State evaluating Nenana exploration license

Note: You must be a paid subscriber to PNA to access the archives.

1 was drilled to a TD of 3,590 feet and plugged and abandoned in 1984.

"Except for minor amounts of gas associated with coal beds," the division said, "no hydrocarbon shows were observed in the wells. Reports of oil seeps in the basin are unconfirmed."

The Nenana basin is thought to be gas-prone, the division said, and "the significant volume of coal present in the basin suggests that natural gas is more likely to be encountered in commercial quantity than is oil." ♦

continued from page A9

LEASES

grouping also enables two or more leases to produce using fewer wells, which then reduces the size of the drilling area and the drilling impacts to the environment.

BLM said lease suspensions allow much-needed time to plan for development and construction of activity. The suspensions, which would be granted by BLM, allow leases to be extended beyond their authorized time or term by stopping the clock under circumstances that are beyond the control of the operator.

BLM said it would also be able to sus-

pend a lease term after discovery of producible oil or gas to allow time for construction of a transportation system from the new well to a gathering or storage system or some other facility.

The subsurface storage agreements will assist production in the NPR-A by allowing operators, for a fee, to store oil or gas in existing geological structures rather than in above-ground tanks while waiting for distribution.

BLM said severe climate or other factors often make it difficult to construct distribution and storage systems for the oil and gas, and little environmental risk is posed by subsurface storage. ♦

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■ PRUDHOE BAY

ARCO, Humble Oil discover the Prudhoe Bay oilfield in 1968

In the second part of a two-part series, Gil Mull describes how the exploration wells struck a massive oil find at Prudhoe Bay

By Alan Bailey
PNA Contributing Writer

In the previous article of this series Gil Mull, a geologist who participated in the discovery of the Prudhoe Bay oil field, told PNA how Harry Jamison of Richfield Oil Corp. drove the exploration of the North Slope between 1963 and 1965. Jamison's geological and seismic field teams uncovered some possible oil bearing geological structures.



While the exploration was in progress, a flurry of leasing activity had divvied the North Slope acreage between a number of companies. Richfield and Humble Oil had together purchased leases over the crest of a promising looking structure at Prudhoe Bay, while BP, Atlantic Refining, and other companies had separately purchased leases down the flanks of the structure.

Within a couple of years Richfield and Atlantic Refining would combine as Atlantic Richfield (ARCO), while Humble would later become part of Exxon.

Drilling at Susie

While the lease sales were taking place, Richfield was mobilizing to drill at Susie, a surface geological structure north of Sagwon on the Sagavanirktok River. Equipping the remote drill site at Susie required some innovative thinking.

"They got approval from the Defense

see DISCOVERY page A14



Prudhoe Bay discovery well. Airstrip in the foreground.

Gil Mull

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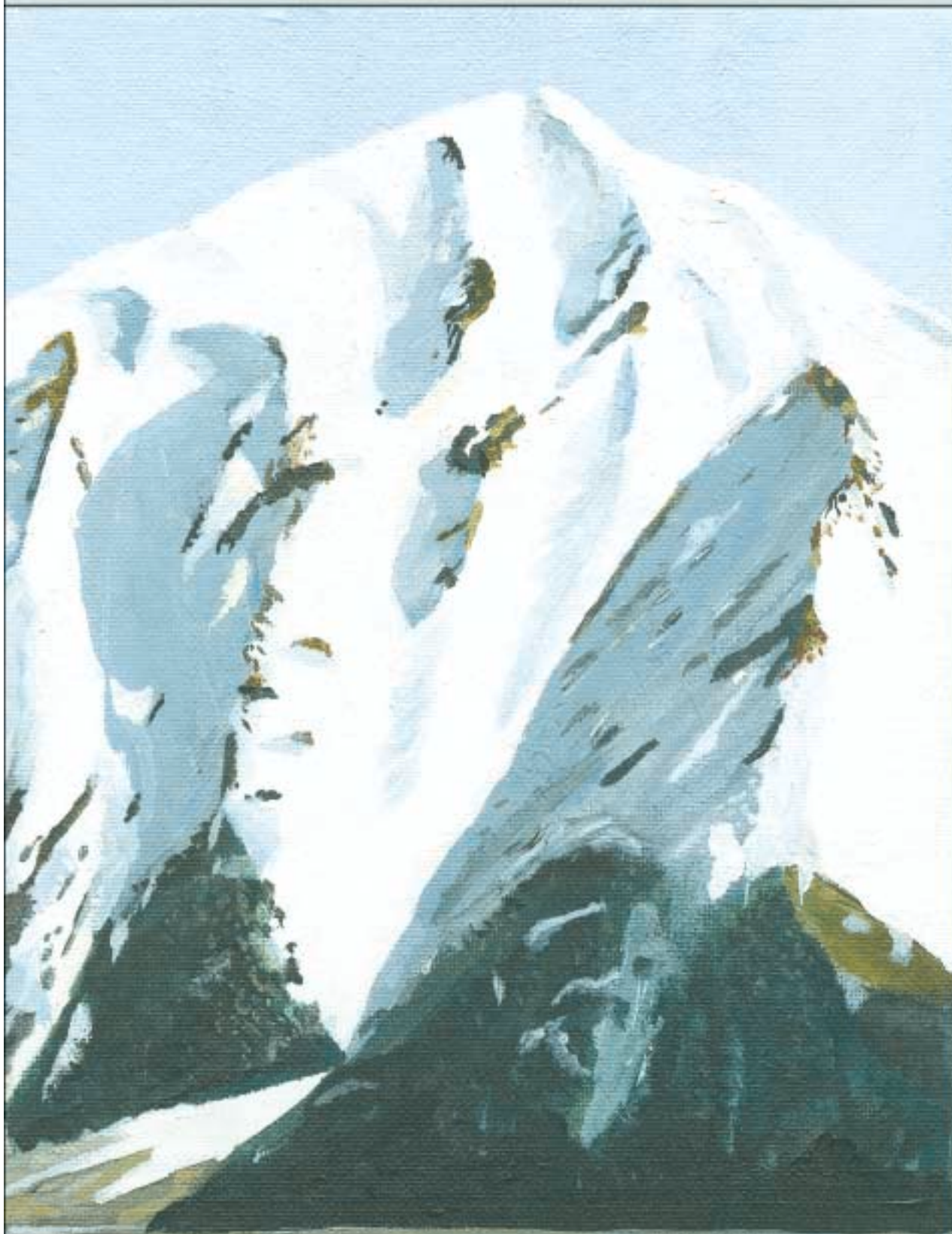
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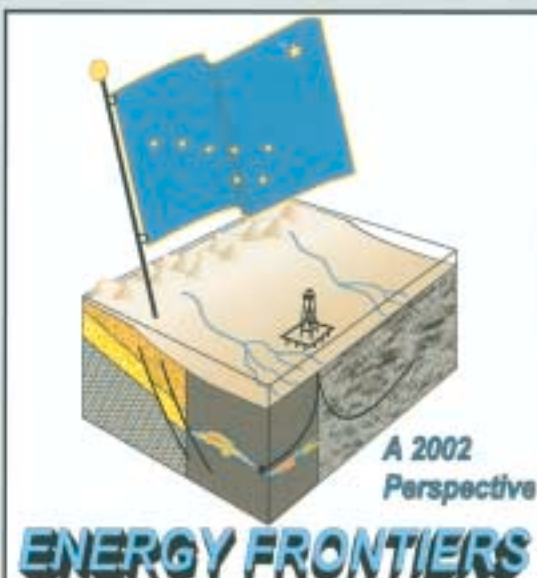
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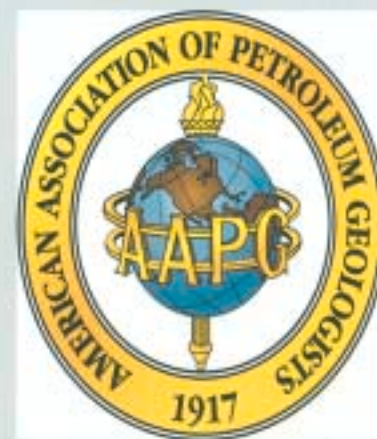
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INVITATION FROM THE GENERAL CHAIRPERSONS

Dear Colleagues:

You and your fellow geologists, engineers, and other oilfield professionals are cordially invited to the May 20-22, 2002 joint conference of the Pacific Section AAPG and the Western Regional SPE, in Anchorage, Alaska. This meeting marks the second annual joint meeting of these two organizations. Our hope is that this new tradition, which was first conceived in Long Beach, California in 2000, will endure and prosper in the new and increasingly challenging environment of the 21st Century.

Energy Frontiers: A 2002 Perspective was selected as the convention theme as it reflects the nature of business in Alaska and our Arctic regions. The Arctic regions hold much promise for continued discovery. Developing both the large-scale oil reserves of the Arctic and the here-to-fore untapped gas reserves of Prudhoe Bay and the Mackenzie Delta will help foster increasing energy independence for North America. This perspective provides a forum from which the future and security of domestic energy supplies and the current technology and innovations can be viewed and analyzed.

The conference technical sessions focus on many aspects of oil and gas exploration, development, and production within the Arctic environment. The oral and poster sessions are supplemented with field trips, workshops, and short courses that are presented both pre- and post-conference, on May 18-19 and 23. Other activities include an excellent suite of exhibits, icebreakers, the all-conference luncheon and various other social functions for your enlightenment and enjoyment.

Late May in the Anchorage Bowl can provide some of the most enjoyable weather Alaska has to offer. We urge you to spend a little extra time and partake of some of the unique cultural and recreational opportunities that the area provides. The Anchorage Sheraton Hotel is located within a few short blocks of most of Anchorage's distinctive attractions, as well as valuable visitor information.

The organizing committee and our numerous volunteers have worked diligently to provide you with the best meeting possible. Sincere thanks are due to them and their employers for the time, effort, and support provided to assure that this meeting is a success. Come and join us to celebrate this truly Alaskan wedding of engineering and geology.

Barbara Holt
SPE General Chairwoman
Western Regional Meeting

David Hite
AAPG General Chairman
Pacific Section Convention

AAPG/SPE Conference Schedule

SATURDAY, MAY 18

Field Trip No. 1	KUPARUK FIELD TOUR	5:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Short Course No. 6	OSHA 300 WORKSHOP (1/2-day)	1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Registration		7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Technical Sessions	Oral Sessions	2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Short Course No. 1	ALASKA NORTH SLOPE CORE WORKSHOP (1-day)	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.		Poster Sessions	2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Short Course No. 4	APPLIED WELL TESTING (2-day)	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	K-12 Teacher Activity Meeting Walk Through		4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Short Course No. 5	APPLICATIONS OF ICHNOLOGY (2-day)	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Student Event	SPE Student Paper Awards Dinner	6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 19

Registration		7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	WEDNESDAY, MAY 22		
Exhibits	Set-up	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration		7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Field Trip No. 2	ROCKS, FIRE, ICE & THE BIG QUAKE GEOLOGY OF THE ANCHORAGE BOWL	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Speaker's Breakfast		7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Short Course No. 2	ALASKA NORTH SLOPE CORE WORKSHOP (1-day)	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits	Open	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Short Course No. 3	FORMATION DAMAGE IN VERTICAL & HORIZONTAL INJECTION & PRODUCTION WELLS (1-day)	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Business Meeting	SPE Regional Section Officer's Meeting	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Short Course No. 4	APPLIED WELL TESTING (continued)	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Technical Sessions	Oral Sessions	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Short Course No. 5	APPLICATIONS OF ICHNOLOGY (continued)	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.		Poster Sessions	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Exhibits	Open	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Business Luncheon	AAPG Division of Professional Affairs	11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Evening Reception	Ice Breaker	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Technical Sessions	Oral Sessions	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
				Poster Sessions	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
			Exhibits	Break down	5:00 p.m. - 12 a.m.

MONDAY, MAY 20

Registration		7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	WEDNESDAY, MAY 23		
Speaker's Breakfast		7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Field Trip No. 3	ALASKA RAILROAD WILDLIFE & GEOLOGY TRAIN / KENAI FJORDS CRUISE	6:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Working Breakfast	Pacific Section House of Delegates	7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Field Trip No. 4	THE TERTIARY NENANA BASIN - HEALY (2-day trip)	8:00 a.m. May 23 - 9:00 p.m. May 24
Exhibits	Open	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Field Trip No. 5	GEOLOGY AND HYDROCARBON SYSTEMS OF THE COOK INLET BASIN, ALASKA (2-day trip)	May 23-24 (Times will be sent to participants)
Technical Sessions	Oral Sessions	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Short Course No. 7	NATURAL GAS HYDRATES	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Poster Sessions	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.			
Lunch		11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	IMPORTANT DEADLINES		
Technical Sessions	Oral Sessions	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	April 18, 2002	Field Trip Sign-up	
	Poster Sessions	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	April 18, 2002	Advance Registration	
Student Event	SPE Student Paper Presentations	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	April 18, 2002	Short Course Sign-up	
Evening Reception	Ice Breaker	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	April 26, 2002	Sheraton Anchorage Reservations	

TUESDAY, MAY 21

Registration		7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	REGISTRATION		
Speaker's Breakfast		7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Individuals may register for the conference in advance (at discounted fees) or on site. ONLINE REGISTRATION VIA www.aapg-spc-2002.org IS THE PREFERRED REGISTRATION METHOD. Advance Registration must be completed on-line by April 18, 2002. Mailed forms must be postmarked or faxed to the advance registration site (Anchorage, Alaska) by April 18, 2002, and must be accompanied by full payment (check or credit card). Registration will not be processed without full payment. Requests for refunds of registration, short courses, or field trip fees must be received in writing at the advance registration site by April 18, 2002.		
Exhibits	Open	8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.			
Technical Sessions	Oral Sessions	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.			
	North Slope Gas Symposium	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.			
	Poster Sessions	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.			
Luncheons	Keynote Luncheon	12 noon - 1:30 p.m.			

EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

continued from page A11

DISCOVERY

Department to lease a Lockheed C-130 Hercules, which up to that time was strictly a military plane,” Mull said. “Nobody had ever done anything like this. They flew the entire drill rig ... all the camp, all the casing, everything to the North Slope from Fairbanks.”

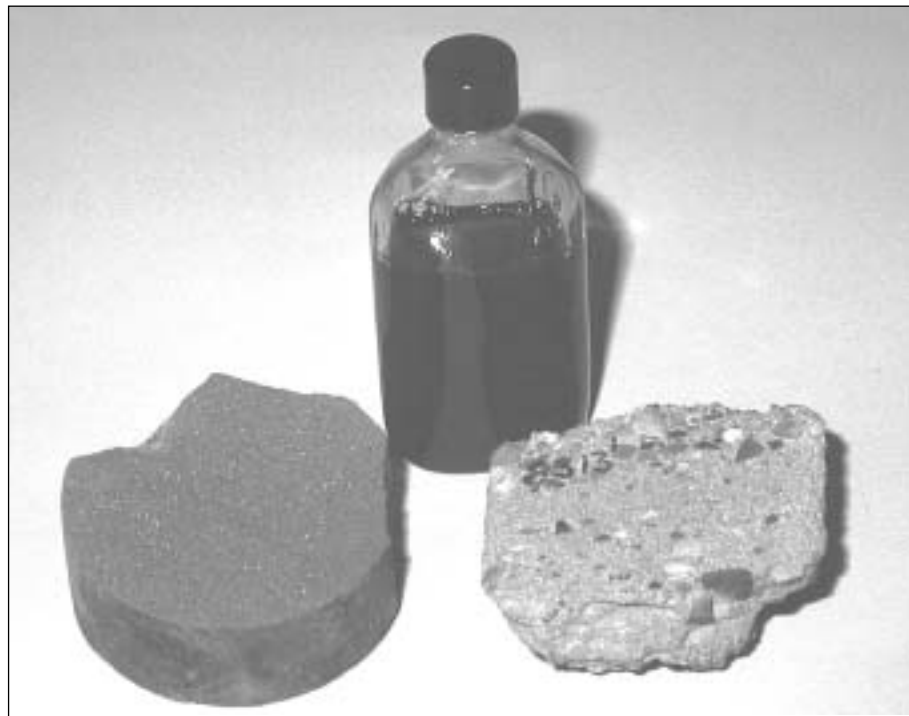
The entire operation to move the rig involved more than 80 flights over a period of about three weeks using the C-130 and another cargo plane. The first construction equipment was landed on a gravel airstrip on a river bar at Sagwon and from there was moved overland to the Susie location, where a winter snow and ice strip was built for the subsequent rig move by the C 130 cargo plane.

In 1966 Richfield drilled down through the crest of the surface anticline at Susie.

“That well went down to 13,500 feet and had some oil shows in the ... upper part of the hole,” Mull said. Unfortunately, the shows did not prove economic and Richfield abandoned the well in December 1966.

Prudhoe Bay

With a dry hole at Susie, Richfield decided to drill the major structure that



Top, sample of crude oil; left, oil saturated sandstone from oil zone; and right, cal from the Sadlerochit gas cap — all from Prudhoe Bay State No. 1 discovery well.

the seismic crew had found at Prudhoe Bay.

“The drilling rig was hauled 60 miles north by cat train to Prudhoe Bay in the late winter of ‘67,” Mull said. The well at Prudhoe Bay was spudded in the late spring and then shut down for the summer, he said.

The drill team returned to Prudhoe Bay in the fall of 1967, after the freeze up. The drilling camp and its attendant ice airstrip looked a forlorn sight in the middle of the vast, snow-covered coastal plain. But Prudhoe Bay State No. 1 well would soon catapult into the forefront of oil exploration history.

In fact, the well looked promising right from the start of drilling. Mull, by then working for Humble, was one of the group of well site geologists for both ARCO and Humble who analyzed the rock samples from the well.

“Early on in drilling that hole we started to get some really good oil shows ... and some gas shows,” Mull said.

Discovery

Then, in December 1967, at 8,200 feet, the well entered the sandstones and conglomerates of the Ivishak formation, which is what is now the main Prudhoe Bay reservoir formation.

“The mud logging readings — the gas readings on the drilling mud and drill cuttings that were coming out of the hole — just went off-scale,” Mull said.

Just after Christmas a well stem test was run, in which the mud pressure in the hole is temporarily relieved to see whether gas or oil would flow into the well bore.

Usually when you run a drill stem test there’s a brief puff of gas and then it dies, Mull said. “This one was not that ... there was an immediate huge flow of gas to the surface, which was diverted off into a flow pipe and ignited.

“It was like listening to a jet plane, with the pressure and the roar of this gas flowing.”

The pressure of gas in the pipe was so great that the flare continued burning for 12 to 14 hours after the well was shut well in again, Mull said.

The well drilled on down until it reached an oil column in the base of the Ivishak formation, 400 feet below the top of the gas. Another drill stem test was run in January, after oil was encountered, and this test flowed a mixture of gas and oil.

The first gauged flow of oil on March 12, 1968, was more than 1,100 barrels of oil per day from dolomite in the Lisburne formation, a lower unit that underlies the Ivishak formation, and resulted in an oil flare that looked like a gigantic, horizontal blowtorch. The riches that underlie the coastal plain at

Prudhoe Bay had finally appeared.

“So at that time it was clear that the well had both gas and oil in a really good formation, so things got really ramped up then,” Mull said.

A second well

ARCO and Humble decided to drill a second evaluation well, seven miles southeast from the discovery well and 400 feet down dip to help confirm the size of the field.

For this second well, ARCO hauled in a rig by cat train from the Colville River.

“This was a rig that BP and Sinclair Oil had hauled in by barge from the Mackenzie River in Canada and drilled a (dry) hole on the Colville structure west of Prudhoe Bay,” Mull said.

Alaska Airlines, which had acquired two Hercules C-130 aircraft by this time, started flying in equipment around the clock. Mull recalls trying to sleep in the camp next to the airstrip.

“It was certifiably exciting ... there were a hell of a lot of things happening,” he said.

The second well confirmed the discovery. Then, when an independent evaluation by DeGolyer and MacNaughton, an internationally recognized consulting firm, assessed a five to

10 billion barrel find, headlines blazed across newspapers worldwide.

“None of us in our wildest imagination would have dreamed it would be a structure that large

and that there would be a 400-foot gas cap on top of a 400-foot oil column in the structure,” Mull said. “As it turned out, the leases that BP had down the flank actually contain about half of the oil.”

Did luck play a part?

Was the Prudhoe Bay discovery just the result of good luck? Mull doesn’t think so. The skilled team of geologists and geophysicists had delineated prospects in a sedimentary basin with a high potential for oil or gas.

However, there was a bit of luck when the discovery well was positioned at a short distance down from the crest of the Prudhoe Bay structure.

“The reason the well was drilled down dip some ... (was) to see more of the stratigraphic section below an angular unconformity,” Mull said. “In fact, if the well had been drilled right on top of the very highest part of the structure, all it would have seen in the Ivishak formation was gas.”

And teamwork provided the key to success on the North Slope: geologists, geophysicists, landmen, construction men, engineers and drillers all played some part in the Prudhoe Bay discovery. Surface geology led to seismic work that led to land acquisition that led to engineering and drilling, Mull said.

But one man, Harry Jamison, really made the whole thing happen, when he initiated the Richfield exploration back in 1963 and when he insisted on the need for a seismic survey on the North Slope.

“There’s not a shred of doubt in my mind that if Harry hadn’t been there, and ran Gar Pessel’s note up to the upper level management to get a seismic crew authorized ... Atlantic Richfield and Humble (Exxon) would not have had the position they had on the North Slope,” Mull said. “He was the sort of spark plug to get these things going.

“And nearly 40 years later we continue to see the results of Jamison’s persistence.” ♦

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PETROLEUM NEWS

A L A S K A

COOK INLET

NINILCHIK

Marathon files plans for G0 gas pad development

Marathon Oil Co. plans to begin gas development activities at the Grassim Oskolkoff drill pad approximately nine miles north of Ninilchik in August and start producing gas from the pad in December 2003.

The Division of Oil and Gas said the pad is within the Ninilchik oil and gas unit, in the SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of section 23 township 1N range 13W, Seward Meridian, on privately owned surface lands.

Work at the prospect began in 2000 with the reactivation of an access road, pad construction and the drilling of a water well. Two exploration wells were drilled, one each in 2000 and 2001, the Grassim Oskolkoff No. 1 and No. 2 wells.

Proposed development is from the two existing wells. Additional wells may be drilled in the future, and Marathon said in its application that the pad configuration should allow up to two additional wells, if required.

The development work planned to begin later this year includes installation of production facilities on the existing pad and the installation of a steel gas gathering lateral immediately adjacent to the existing pad access road to carry natural gas from the pad to the proposed Kenai-Kachemak pipeline.

Production facilities will be housed in heated metal buildings on the existing pad. Gas flow lines and heating, dehydration, separation and metering equipment will be installed.

Marathon said there will be methanol injection capability at the wellhead and elsewhere in the process as necessary to inhibit the potential for formation of natural gas hydrates.

—Kristen Nelson

Work at the prospect began in 2000 with the reactivation of an access road, pad construction and the drilling of a water well. Two exploration wells were drilled, one each in 2000 and 2001, the Grassim Oskolkoff No. 1 and No. 2 wells.

ANCHOR POINT

Commission told Phillips is on track at Cosmopolitan

The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission held a hearing April 16 on Phillips Alaska Inc.'s Starichkof field plan, submitted Feb. 25.

Six Cook Inlet fields discovered before Jan. 1, 1988, and undeveloped or shut in from at least Jan. 1, 1988, through Dec. 31, 1997, are eligible for 5 percent royalties on the first 25 million barrels of oil and the first 35 billion cubic feet of gas if production for sale begins before Jan. 1, 2004, and the commission approves a written plan, containing "a voluntary agreement by the lessee to use its best efforts to employ residents of the state, consistent with law, and to contract with firms in this state for work in connection with the development of the field, including the fabrication and installation of required facilities, whenever feasible"

Phillips' plan shows production from the field to begin in the fourth quarter of 2003.

Patrick Noah, land consultant with Phillips Alaska, told the commission that the company was on schedule as identified in its plan.

For the second quarter of 2002 Phillips' plan includes evaluating information from the Hansen No. 1 well which the company drilled beginning in October, and which reached total depth in January.

Second quarter plans include evaluation of well information and formulation of either a development plan or a plan to conduct additional seismic operations.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dan Seamount, Noah said Phillips was still evaluating well data and was not planning additional seismic operations.

Noah said the company's next decision point was this fall, and that would be a decision on what form development would take. He said the company was on track with the schedule presented to the commission, and that nothing had occurred that would cause Phillips to cancel development at the prospect.

—Kristen Nelson

■ C O O K I N L E T

Things are changing in Cook Inlet, Scott Jepsen tells Alliance

Price, market, remaining reserves now make gas exploration feasible, says Phillips Alaska's Cook Inlet assets manager

By Kristen Nelson
PNA Editor-in-Chief

Things are changing in the inlet, Scott Jepsen told the Alaska Support Industry Alliance April 11. Predictions that Cook Inlet is running out of gas — headlined in the press beginning in late 2000 — are alarmist, said Jepsen, Cook Inlet assets manager for Phillips Alaska Inc., and are based on "simplistic" calculations: known reserves divided by annual gas usage.

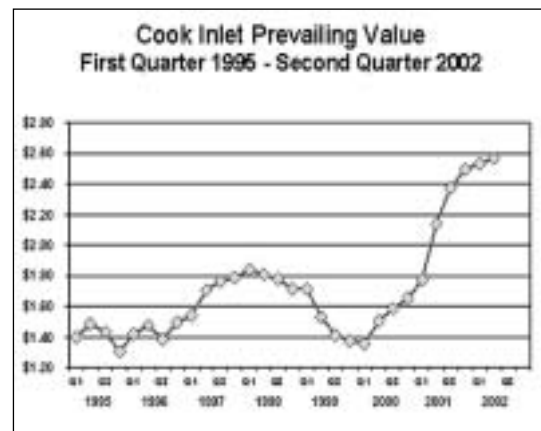
Gas fields don't decline linearly, he said, and while the reserves-production ratio, reserves divided by production, may be 12 years for Cook Inlet, in the Lower 48 it "has been about seven to 10 for the last 20 years: And the last time I checked," Jepsen said, "they still have a lot of gas down in the Lower 48."

In addition to known reserves there are also potential reserves, Jepsen said, and the U.S. Geological Service has estimated that there is a greater than 10 percent chance that there are 2.4 trillion cubic feet of undiscovered reserves in the inlet.

If gas is likely, companies will explore

Current known reserves are 2.5 tcf, Jepsen said, and "the RP ratio of 12 assumes there's no more gas to be discovered.

"The problem with that is it really violates one of the fundamental tenants of the oil and gas business," he said: "If you provide us with a price for our commodity, you provide us with markets to sell it in and if there's a reasonable belief that there are economic accumulations of oil or gas, companies will go



Alaska Department of Revenue

out there and explore for it."

In the 1970s, Jepsen said, the reserves-production ratio stood at about 55 years: "If you were unfortunate enough to discover gas, you probably couldn't sell it for a long time or else you'd have to basically sell it at a very low price in order to displace somebody else's gas."

"Really all the low RP means is that there's actually a market developing to sell gas," he said: "You know those headlines could very easily have read that for the first time in 30 years, if somebody finds gas, they can sell it!"

And predictions about the difficulty of meeting needs on the coldest days of the winter don't reflect a reserves problem, he said, but a problem of deliverability — having storage available which can be drawn on to meet those peak demands.

Meeting that peak demand, he said, is a "business opportunity for some entrepreneurs who want

see INLET page A16

■ A N C H O R A G E

Danco appeals AOGCC, court decisions

Appeals to Alaska Supreme Court, Alaska Superior Court in Juneau concern overriding royalty interests the parties held in state oil and gas leases

By Kristen Nelson
PNA Editor-in-Chief

Dan Donkel and associated overriding royalty interest owners have appealed two recent decisions, one by the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission and one by the Alaska Superior Court.

The commission's decision rejecting a petition for addition of a lease to the North Cook Inlet unit has been appealed to Alaska Superior Court in Juneau.

In the case appealed from a decision by the Department of Natural Resources at the North Middle Ground Shoal field, Donkel and others argued that the department incorrectly excluded a lease in which they held an overriding royalty interest from a gas participating area. After the case was remanded to DNR by the court for a hearing, the parties appealed the judge's ruling.

Supreme Court appeal

Daniel Donkel, Robert Bolt and George Kasper appealed a decision by Superior Court Judge Sigurd Murphy, remanding a Department of Natural Resources decision on a gas participating area at the North Middle Ground Shoal field to DNR for a hearing.

In an April 4 appeal to the Alaska Supreme Court, attorney Douglas Mertz said the Superior Court "erred by failing to rule that the Department of

Natural Resources had a mandatory duty to include lease ADL 369116 in a natural gas participating area after DNR concluded that the leasehold contained hydrocarbons capable of producing or contributing to production of hydrocarbons in paying quantities."

In his March 4 decision, Murphy did not address whether the lease had hydrocarbons, but ruled that DNR's regulations required it to "provide notice and hearing to all working interest, royalty and overriding royalty owners" before rejecting the participating area proposed by Unocal, operator of the North Middle Ground Shoal field, which included both ADL 17595 and ADL 369116.

DNR had provided opportunities for Unocal to present information, but had not included overriding royalty owners in those meetings.

Commission ruling appealed

Danco International Oil & Gas Inc., Danco Royalty Partnership Ltd., Monte J. Allen, Dr. George Kasper, Kasper Profitsharing, Kasper Family Partnership and the Estate of Dr. John A. Blume, have appealed the recent decision of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to Alaska Superior Court in Juneau.

Appellants earlier appealed a ruling by the commission on the North Cook Inlet petition in Superior Court in Anchorage, but that appeal was made before the commission responded to an administrative appeal, and the Anchorage appeal was rejected

see DANCO page A16

COOK INLET

continued from page A15

INLET

to go out there and provide peaking facilities for local utilities.”

Mid-sized fields missing

When companies look at basins, Jepsen said, one thing they look at is drilling records and the results others have had. Because gas exploration hasn’t been a priority, there aren’t gas exploration records for Cook Inlet.

What companies can look at is analogies with other large hydrocarbon basins.

“When you do that, there are a couple of common themes that jump out at you,” Jepsen said.

The first is that basins contain fields of different sizes.

“One thing about naturally occurring phenomenon like oil and gas accumulations is they occur in what we call a log normal distribution. Simplistically what that means is there are always going to be a few large fields, giant fields, with an ever-increasing number of smaller fields,” Jepsen said.

And in Cook Inlet 85 percent of gas discovered has been in four fields each of which initially contained more than 1 trillion cubic feet of gas. Then there have been four fields found with reserves from 100 to 250 billion cubic feet and a handful of fields in the 50-100 bcf range.

“Statistically,” Jepsen said, “one would expect to see more of the mid-sized fields than we’ve seen so far.”

Geological concepts

The other common theme with large basins is discovery cycles, Jepsen said: A geologist has a concept, it’s successful and a number of discoveries follow.

Then there will be a period of no discoveries, “and then somebody comes up with another concept and there’s another round of discoveries.”

The best example right now is Alpine

Oil is not dead

Scott Jepsen of Phillips Alaska Inc. told the Alaska Support Industry Alliance April 11 that Cook Inlet is not running out of gas.

And, he said, he also wanted to disagree with the “truism” that oil exploration is dead in the inlet — that companies have looked for more oil, not found much and there’s not much potential.

What you find, he said, is that every couple of years, someone will go out and drill an oil exploration well, either because they are looking again at old data or because of new geologic concepts.

That’s what Forest did at Redoubt Shoal, he said.

It’s what Phillips is doing at the Cosmopolitan prospect north of Anchor Point.

Results at the Hansen well at Cosmopolitan are confidential, Jepsen said, but Phillips has completed drilling the well.

“We did reach our target, which is an oil play. And so it’s a technical success. ...Right now we’re evaluating the data we’ve collected and we’re trying to determine what our next steps are going to be.”

and the discoveries in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

“Alpine was discovered because of an evolution in 3-D seismic technology. We could not have found that field 20 years ago. And of course that gives rise to other prospects, now in NPR-A, that we’d have never tried chasing 15 or 20 years ago,” Jepsen said.

The other change in the inlet is new players. In other large basins, “independents are the vast majority of people that are drilling wells out there now.”

And “the more players that you have, the more likely wells are going to be drilled.

“The more wells that are going to be drilled, the more likely that’s you’re going to have discoveries.”

Jepsen said the smaller players are also a positive thing, because small fields can be economic for small companies, where they are not for larger players.

Lower 48 comparable price

Price has also been a factor in slowing Cook Inlet gas exploration, Jepsen said. For long periods the gas price in the inlet was about 25 cents per thousand cubic feet.

“You pretty much gave your gas away, but that’s also pretty much what you would expect if you had an RP of 55 years — there’s not much market for your supply,” he said.

The recent Enstar contract tied gas prices to the Henry Hub price, which means Alaska gas prices are “tied to something in the Lower 48,” making it easier for companies to compare investing in gas prospects in Alaska with gas prospects elsewhere.

“So in the last several years, we’ve seen all the key elements come together to motivate exploration. We’ve seen a decrease in RP, which means there’s an active market. We’ve seen higher prices, which means investors can probably get a reasonable rate or return on their investment. And lastly, I think there is a consensus that there’s a reasonable probability that more gas remains to be found,” Jepsen said.

Recent activity

In 1998, Phillips (then ARCO Alaska Inc.) and Anadarko Petroleum Corp. found Moquawkie. “We were looking for oil, but we found gas,” Jepsen said.

Aurora has since brought the Nicolai Creek field back into production, and Unocal and Marathon have announced 90-plus billion cubic feet near Clam Gulch.

“And just last Friday (April 5), a pretty exciting announcement by Forest Oil with regard to gas: They found a 589-foot gas column in their last well that they drilled over at Redoubt Shoal. That’s a significant gas column, folks. That’s the kind of gas column we have in the North Cook Inlet field.”

A deliverability issue

The issue of providing gas on the coldest

days in the winter is a deliverability issue, Jepsen said.

“Historically, if Enstar needed additional gas on a real cold day, they could call us up over at Beluga” and ask for more gas the next day.

“We could do it. We just opened a few valves and the gas would flow. We didn’t need compression. Things are changing a bit now. On those cold days we might fire up a compressor ...for a couple of days.”

But now, Jepsen said, Cook Inlet needs to look at meeting peak demands. Elsewhere, “you don’t rely upon the wells to provide that peak deliverability,” he said.

Elsewhere peak demand is met with liquefied natural gas storage or natural gas storage in abandoned reservoirs.

“Generally speaking that is a function of the utilities, that’s what they do, they can build those facilities, put it into the rate base and that’s how those things get paid out,” he said. And those discussions are happening now for Cook Inlet.

“Because the gas is there. We have plenty of gas. It’s not a function of not having the gas on those peak days. It’s ... just a function of putting in the deliverability systems.”

Phillips and gas

Phillips would like to see more gas discovered in the inlet, Jepsen said, and while the company has no current plans to drill, “we’re constantly looking. We’re doing our own internal evaluation work in determining if there’s gas exploration that we want to do in the general Cook Inlet area.”

Whoever does the drilling, Jepsen said Phillips expects to see gas exploration going on over the next five to 10 years, “and many of the questions that we have right now are going to be answered through the drill bit.”

If there is a big gas discovery — say a couple trillion cubic feet — “then we’ll probably see everything go quiet again.

“There’s no point in looking for a lot of reserves if the RP is back up there around 30 or 40,” Jepsen said.

“I guess one thing I want to leave everybody with, if you’re not familiar with the business, is: you don’t need more reserves than you can sell. You put your money someplace else.”

The LNG plant

Phillips is 70 percent owner of the Nikiski LNG plant, and all of the gas from its North Cook Inlet unit produced through the Tyonek platform goes to the LNG plant.

Jepsen said the export license for the LNG plant runs through March 2009.

The company is often asked if the plant will operate beyond 2009, Jepsen said.

“And we’d certainly like to.

“But at this point in time we don’t have any plans to file another application to renew our export license, primarily because we need more gas before we can do that.”

A big gas discovery would be needed, he said, but probably wouldn’t result in a plant expansion because of competition from other gas sources at tidewater. ♦

continued from page A15

DANCO

by the court.

In the current appeal, filed March 11, appellants argue a number of points, including that the commission did not provide it access to “exploratory, seismic and related data held by Phillips

Petroleum,” that the commission “failed to use independent legal counsel,” but instead was advised by the Department of Law and that the commission “erred by failing to reconvene the original February, 1997 hearing on Appellant’s petition and by applying, retroactively, statutes which were not in effect at the time the Appellant’s original petition was filed.” ♦

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THE REST OF THE STORY

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INCENTIVES

and told the committee the state should smooth out its leasing and permitting programs to make the state more attractive to mid-sized oil and gas companies.

On the stick side, Commissioner of Revenue Wilson Condon said existing tax incentives have worked to keep older fields producing and to encourage the development of smaller fields, but also suggested to the committee that the state should consider doing what is already done in other jurisdictions worldwide — offer tax encouragement for companies to reinvest money they earn in the jurisdiction.

Leasing incentive programs

DNR has a number of incentive programs, and Myers said two new leasing incentives are good programs for the state, drawing in new companies and getting work started in basins other than those currently producing.

The state's shallow gas leasing program, an incentive because it foregoes competitive bids, offering over-the-counter first-come-first-served shallow leases in areas outside Cook Inlet and the North Slope, has already brought a new company to the state, he said:

"Evergreen Resources, pretty much a world-class coalbed methane company, has stated several times: they have come to Alaska because of this program."

The shallow-gas leasing program is promoting coalbed methane development in the Fairbanks, Matanuska-Susitna and Homer areas and development of shallow gas from fractured shales near the Red Dog Mine, and Myers said the division strongly supports amendments to the program in Senate Bill 319 sponsored by Sen. John Torgerson: "We think it takes the program

"I do think that ... we have to ask ourselves whether we should be imposing the same tax obligation on a firm that makes money here and then reinvests that money here, as opposed to a firm that makes money here and takes that money and invests it in Kazakhstan." —Commissioner of Revenue Wilson Condon

from what was designed to be a small local energy program into a full fledged commercial program." The bill also provides "additional environmental protections for the state," additional revenues to the state and "significant additional rights to the lessees," he said.

The other new leasing incentive program that Myers said was working well is exploration licensing, an incentive because "it foregoes the normal competitive bonus received in a lease sale (and) allows a company to explore a large amount of acreage, up to 500,000 acres, for the cost of a work commitment."

An exploration license in the Copper River basin has been issued, Myers said, and three more licenses are pending. The program allows a company to spend money on exploration, rather than on competitive bidding, in areas the division thinks "are economically more marginal than typical North Slope or Cook Inlet," he said.

Discovery royalty not appropriate

Myers said that among the state's existing exploration incentive and royalty reduction programs — reducing royalties or taxes to promote activity — royalty reduction is appropriate. That program, based on economic analysis by the state, allows the DNR commissioner to reduce the royalty to keep fields in production or to bring non-producing fields into production.

The exploration incentive program was appropriate because it is targeted directly at exploration and because exploration incentives are granted at the discretion of the

commissioner.

But, Myers said, the discovery royalty credit has not proven to be a good incentive.

"Or at least it hasn't stimulated or accelerated exploration, in my opinion."

One discovery royalty program was repealed in 1969, but there are 274 leases on the North Slope still eligible for the program and another 33 in Cook Inlet.

Fourteen discovery royalties were granted while the program was active — but the state is still granting discovery royalties, Myers said, for leases under the old program: Some \$12.5 million estimated in discovery royalties at Alpine and \$50 million at Point McIntyre.

Myers said the continuing royalty credits show "that when you do create an incentive program for royalty purposes, you generally create a contract right that will exist as long as those leases exist."

The program was established to accelerate exploration and development, and since it has most recently been granted on 30 and 40 year old leases, "it's hard to make the argument that it has in fact accelerated exploration," Myers said, probably because a reduction from 12.5 percent to 5 percent for a few years "has a very limited effect when you look at the cost of development of a field."

Incentives from the tax side

Revenue Commissioner Wilson Condon said he was using incentive to mean "a provision in tax legislation that influences the behavior of the taxpayer." Some incentives from tax legislation are intended, he said,

and some are unintended.

In three cases, he said, the Legislature acted with conscious intention.

One tax oil and gas incentive was enacted then the basic tax rate was increased from 12.25 percent of the value of production in the field to 15 percent in 1981, Condon said. The Legislature left the rate for the first five years of field life at 12.25 percent "because they did not want to discourage investment in new fields..."

And the Legislature had two different incentives in mind when it enacted the economic limitation factor, or ELF, Condon said.

Legislators wanted to make sure that fields were not shut down prematurely because of the production tax, so as a property neared the end of its economic life, the tax rate fell to zero, "so that the cost of the tax would not be the straw that broke the camel's back... in terms of ending the life of a producing property."

When the ELF was enacted in 1977, it was based on the per-well production rate.

When the Legislature changed the ELF in 1989, Condon said, one of its objectives was to add overall field production into the ELF formula, "so that the ELF formula was a product of both per-well productivity and the overall production level from a producing field."

The Legislature's goal, Condon said, was to increase the rate for highly productive fields and reduce the rate for small fields, to encourage development of small oil accumulations.

"And certainly the taxpayers tell us," Condon said, "that the development of what we call the satellite fields on the North Slope today is made more economic by the manner in which the ELF has been constructed."

New investment not recognized

Condon said one thing Alaska's tax sys-

see *INCENTIVES* page A19

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Mike Tolbert established Taiga Ventures in 1979 and has been actively involved with the operation for the entire 23 years of its existence. Mike has a daughter who lives in Kirkland, Wash., and a son attending the University of Minnesota. Mike and his wife Marie-Fabienne, who lives part of the year in France and returns to assist in the business during the summer, enjoy travel and history. They have even seen bull fighting in some of the old Roman coliseums that are still in use in Southern France.



Mike Tolbert, Taiga Ventures

Umiat Commercial
Co. Inc.

Umiat Commercial Co. Inc. owns and operates a lodge on the Colville River at the edge of the National Petroleum Reserve, NPR. The lodge provides beds for 44 people and seven employees and includes facilities for fueling aircraft and helicopters. Tourists find their way to the lodge via float trips, but the primary focus is to provide housing and support for the many projects in the area. Currently, the lodge is home to Jacob's Engineering employees working on an environmental reclamation project for the Corps of Engineers.

Mike Tolbert is the president and third partner of UCC Inc. The other partners are Mick Killion and Tony Karl. Their facility is "state of the art" for being in such a remote location. The lodge is equipped with satellite TV, Internet service, and a complete kitchen. The lodge is designed to support whatever the client needs/wants 24 hours a day every day of the year.

THE REST OF THE STORY

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HYDRATE

continue to assess the practical energy potential of hydrates through international collaboration on research, while pursuing strong linkages with Canadian industry, universities and other federal and territorial agencies.

More than 60 scientists and engineers were involved in the project at the Mallik gas hydrate field on the Mackenzie Delta, drilling three research wells through the permafrost to evaluate the potential and economic viability of hydrate production.

Other partners in the project were the Geological Survey of Canada, Japan National Oil Corp., the United States Geological Survey, the U.S. Department of Energy, the German government's GeoForschungsZentrum Potsdam, the Gas Authority of India Ltd. and the Oil & Natural Gas Corporation of India Ltd., the International Continental Drilling Program and Canada's gas industry. Japex Canada Ltd. was responsible for drilling operations.

"The risks are extremely high, but the payoff is rich. I think the economics are very close."
—Tim Collett, geologist, U.S. Geological Survey

Canada at forefront

Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal said the project "positions Canada at the forefront of natural gas hydrate research and the Canadian industry stands to benefit greatly from developing technologies to produce gas hydrates commercially."

Scott Dallimore, a scientist with the Geological Survey of Canada, said the team drilled one production and research well and two observation wells.

In the process, it completed cross-well tomography surveys, a vertical seismic profiling survey, surface seismic studies and continuous coring from the top of the hydrate zone to beneath the free-gas interval. Hydrate intervals were on average between about 33 feet and 66 feet thick.

Dallimore said that for the first time

anywhere in the world the team was able to production-test a hydrate well and examine the controls of pressure and temperature, but said the tests were not "industry-style, long-term flow tests."

He said detailed results of the tests completed at Mallik will not be made public for two years.

Long-term energy

Described as coaxing fire from ice, the process of trying to bring hydrate fields under the coastal waters of every continent to full-scale production is seen by many as the key to long-term energy needs.

Estimates put the world's hydrate reserves at more than twice the amount of energy found in all other known sources of fossil fuels — natural gas, oil, coal and oil sands.

Natural Resources Canada says hydrate reserves in Canada could be 32 times greater than conventional gas sources.

But because the bounty is locked in frozen deposits deep beneath ocean

floors, it could take 30 to 50 years for hydrates to displace other gas supplies, said Tim Collett, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey.

"It could also be world-class stuff," he said. "The risks are extremely high, but the payoff is rich. I think the economics are very close."

The U.S.G.S. said there could be 320,000 trillion cubic feet of hydrates beneath U.S. soil, said Collett.

Although "no one knows if it's producible or not," the possible benefits make the current research worthwhile, he said.

Marlan Downey, president of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, cautioned against anyone thinking hydrates could provide the U.S. with an early alternative to dependence on foreign oil.

Among the challenges, apart from developing the technology to tap the deposits, is the concern that methanes are 20 times more damaging to the environment than greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide. ♦

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INCENTIVES

tem doesn't do is to recognize new investment.

But among our competitors, he said, "many other areas in the world do take into account new investment in figuring the tax obligation of firms engaged in the oil and gas industry in their jurisdiction.

"And that is something we ought to think about today," he said, because Alaska does compete with other areas for investment dollars and "if other jurisdictions have structured their fiscal system so that they take into account investment there and we do not, it does place us in a competitive disadvantage if all other things are equal in terms of cost, geologic prospectivity and so on."

Committee Co-Chair Hugh Fate, R-Fairbanks, asked Condon if that kind of a tax change wouldn't get the state "into a competitive shooting match" which would "seesaw downward."

Condon said he didn't think we could do anything about "a race to the bottom."

But, he said, "I do think that when we look at our own tax system we have to ask ourselves whether we should be imposing the same tax obligation on a firm that makes money here and then reinvests that money here, as opposed to a firm that makes money here and takes that money and invests it in Kazakhstan."

New players an issue

Myers told the committee at the end of the hearing that he thought promoting Alaska's geologic potential to new companies, including mid-sized companies, was one of the important things the state could do.

Historically, he noted, as basins mature you see more independents coming in.

"Once the basic infrastructure is there they can move a little quicker, a little more inexpensively." Smaller companies, he said, have better economics.

But, he said, they have to turn things around quickly.

"They have to make money — a rate of return — quicker. They can't want 10 years for their production to come online. They need to get it in three or four years."

The state can do some things that aren't strictly monetary to encourage those companies, he said.

One thing is turning leases around quickly.

"We're taking 14 months to issue a

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■ **March 24** Exploration incentive credit bill stalls in Senate Resources Committee

■ **March 10** House considers gas tax credit

■ **Feb. 24** Oil exploration incentive bill passes House

■ **Feb. 17** Rokeberg proposes modification of royalty incentives for marginal fields

■ **Feb. 10** Sponsors of HB 380 wanted to encourage Cook Inlet development

■ **Feb. 10** Exploration incentive credits play 'significant role' in attracting Andex to Nenana Basin

■ **Feb. 10** Exploration incentive credits bill moves in House; Myers says needs some work

■ **Feb. 3** Good wells get drilled; bad wells get subsidies

2001

■ **Dec. 16** British Columbia aims for C\$24 billion in new energy investment

■ **January** Pearce refutes claims she wants to change ELF

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lease now — that's problematic," Myers said.

"We need to be able to accelerate our leasing program. We need to make sure that our title work is great and all our permitting processes work smoothly in terms of accelerating exploration and developing, and lowering their risk of project delay."

And, he said, "the infrastructure on the North Slope needs to be open for all parties and that includes pipelines and facilities, facilities sharing agreements need to be efficient and work, so that new parties can come in and have excess capacities available in facilities..."

Myers said he thought there were a lot of areas "outside of strict fiscal incentives" where the state can improve — and bring in new players.

"They may not be large super majors," Myers said, "but they will be the next tier of companies that you would expect as sedimentary basins mature and infrastructure develops." ♦

continued from page A1
TANKER

The Polar Discovery will join the Polar Tankers fleet in 2003.

The Polar Resolution will enter the Alaska trade this summer.

The Polar Adventure will be delivered in late 2004 and the fifth ship, the Polar Enterprise, in 2005.

Kevin Meyers, executive vice president of Alaska production and operations for Phillips Petroleum Co. and

The Polar Discovery will join the Polar Tankers fleet in 2003.

president of Phillips Alaska, said: "These five Endeavour Class tankers demonstrate Phillips' commitment to protect the environment while providing reliable energy for America. Alaska is one of Phillips' legacy assets, and we plan to maintain daily production there at 375,000 to 400,000 barrels-of-oil-equivalent for the foreseeable future."



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April 2002

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Courtesy of Arctic Industrial & Automotive Supply



Courtesy of Arctic Industrial & Automotive Supply



Forrest Crane

Above, the Arctic Industrial repair shop is providing companies with a new choice in Alaska. They are involved in hydraulic repair, remanufactured piston pumps and motors for Caterpillar, Hitachi, Komatsu, etc. Their clients include state, military, marine, forest industry and private companies. Top left, The WOTEC (waste oil to energy converter) 15xDC is providing technology that gives power plants, cities and boroughs 100 percent control of waste oils. The system offsets fuel costs, improves engine performance and eliminates removal costs of waste oil.

Arctic Industrial and Automotive Supply juggles environment, efficiency in business success

Anchorage company looks to cutting-edge technology to deliver eco-friendly services

By Amy Marie Armstrong
Special to PNA

Environmental sensitivity that also benefits the bottom line is a motto for Les Roe as he strives to provide innovative products to his customers at Arctic Industrial and Automotive Supply.

"We try to supply our customers with cutting edge technology," Roe said. "Early on, a big part of our business has been products that aid with environmental concerns."

It's one of the reasons why Roe established the Anchorage-based business in 1992.

Back then, Roe specialized in self-contained cabinet washers.

"At all levels, the oil industry was under fire for getting rid of solvents," Roe explained. "Not only are solvents an environmental hazard, but they also are a health risk for workers."

The self-contained cabinet washer is essentially like a gigantic dishwasher, Roe said. Instead of using solvents to strip grease from engines and other equipment parts under repair, mechanics could put the parts in the cabinet washer and let 200-degree water and biodegradable soap do the work.

"It was amazing because it did a better job of removing grease, and all of sudden folks did not have to deal with proper and expensive disposal of solvents," Roe said. "We sold a lot of those all across the Arctic and the North Slope Borough."

Building on that success, Roe began offering other products he thought beneficial.

Putting the environment first

He sells air filters made from cotton. The washable filters are guaranteed for 10 years or one million miles while providing better breathing and filtration for engines. His customers also find Royal Purple Synthetic Oils, a synthetic product proven to reduce emissions and decrease wear on moving parts. Roe also offers antifreeze recyclers, as well as solvent recyclers.

"Some people don't want to give up solvents because they are so effective," Roe said. "Now, they don't have to throw used solvents away and keep spending money on the same product over and over again."

Roe's latest product addition has him thinking in lofty terms.

The machine is called the Waste-Oil-To-Energy Converter. Roe is the only warehouse distributor in Alaska, Western Canada, Washington and Oregon for the revolutionary invention that bonds used oil to diesel fuel.

"WOTEC means onsite disposal of all waste oils," Roe said, adding it eliminates the practice of burning waste oils

that is currently under increased federal scrutiny as an uncontrolled emission. "When you are burning waste oil, there is no way to control the quality of emissions. Oil burners have no way to filter out all the contaminants."

Innovative techniques

WOTEC takes all sorts of oil — differential, power steering, hydraulic and transmission — and extracts contaminants while bonding them with virgin diesel fuel through a process called static blending.

"When this bonded fuel leaves the WOTEC system, it actually exceeds fuel specifications set out by manufacturers," Roe said.

That's good news for fuel users in remote Alaska, where fuel quality tends to be inferior and hard on engines.

"If you take this on a broader perspective, worldwide, diesel fuel producers are under the gun to remove more of the sulfur from the fuel because it is a major part of the pollutant going out into the atmosphere," Roe said. "But unfortunately, sulfur is also a natural lubricant and so as our fuels become drier and drier, equipment users are seeing more wear and tear."

Roe said WOTEC's bonding of oil and diesel is an environmentally friendly progression of a practice already common to equipment users on the North Slope.

"For years, people have been taking oil from their oil pans and dumping it into diesel fuel," he said. "There are a couple of problems associated with doing that. For one, the oil is not clean and, also, they had to use the fuel it was dumped into the same day. Otherwise the oil would separate from the fuel."

Extending shelf life

Thanks to the static blending process, the newly bonded fuel can be stored in a holding tank for use as needed.

"The neat thing about WOTEC is that it is a system that pays for itself," Roe said. "For every gallon of waste oil that runs through this machine, the machine converts it to a gallon of free diesel fuel."

Roe offers three models of the WOTEC machine

invented by Otto Jacobi and Dan Montegari of Global Energy Recovery Corp. in West Babylon, N.Y. The three versions range from \$23,000 to \$54,000. The top-end model is completely electronic and requires little human interaction.

"That is another issue in rural Alaska," said Roe.

"Manpower."

The higher-end model was designed for power plants and is perfect for rural Alaska power plants that commonly use diesel fuel to power generators.

Yakutat Power Inc., a small municipally owned power plant supplying power to the 800 residents and businesses in Yakutat, installed a WOTEC system in December 1998.

Satisfied customers

Scott Newlun, general manager of Yakutat Power, said the agency had burned all of its stockpiled waste oil and was saving \$1,500 a month in fuel expenses. That was more than double the \$700 savings that agency planners estimated would be required to pay for the WOTEC machine.

Since then, Newlun said, Yakutat Power continues to realize the fuel savings and has noticed emissions from its exhaust stack are now a light gray instead of a dark color. The plant also tested the bonded fuel and found lubricant levels to be consistently higher.

"We are getting to know the machine even better," Newlun

said. "We are looking forward to next month when we do an overhaul on the power plant. It should be interesting to see what shape things are in."

Looking to the future

That's good news to Roe, who recently inked a deal with the Alaska Energy Authority, which has WOTEC machines operating in five Bush communities.

Roe also foresees WOTEC as an efficient fuel source for the myriad of machines working in the oil patch.

He said oil companies could follow the model of GO Transit in Toronto, Canada, where WOTEC machines are equipped with hand-held fuel pumps used for immediate fueling of transit buses.

"The possibilities are endless," Roe said. "I am finding the environmental side of this business to be quite interesting." ♦



Forrest Crane



Arctic Industrial's recent move to a larger facility took place in Nov. 2001. The new location provides additional space for the repair shop and additional inventory. They also offer a full line of environmental products that protect the environment and reduce operating cost.

About the cover

The photo on the cover of this month's directory and all the standalone photos within the directory are from Doyon Drilling Inc., an Alaska-based drilling company which operates on Alaska's North Slope. Pictured on the cover is a Doyon Drilling welder. The company's on-site personnel and facilities sustain nonstop rig operations.

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Courtesy of Doyon Drilling

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Largest volume capacity in Alaska offers clients infinite possibilities

When STEELFAB President Richard Faulkner and Vice-President Janet Faulkner purchased the company in 1988, they embarked on an intensive capital expansion plan for the 10-acre plant site, located just off Post Road in Anchorage. They brought fresh energy and vision to the 40-year old company, and transformed STEELFAB into the largest steel service center and fabricator in Alaska.

During the next 14 years the Faulkners tripled the plant size to nearly an acre of covered plant space, and added major capabilities like all-indoor storage of materials, and all-indoor processing. STEELFAB has a dedicated railroad spur, and is ocean dock accessible. Up-graded equipment, like a computer guided plasma-fueled flame cutter, new shears, new forklifts and cranes, added industrial lighting and an expansive, ultra-modern central office considerably increased STEELFAB's capabilities for their customers.

The capital expansion was complemented by the recruitment of qualified and knowledgeable staff. Long-time Plant Superintendent Larry Larson works with a full-time crew of around 30, a number that can double during a busy season in the plant. A quality control department, a scheduling project coordinator, steel detailers and structural and mechanical engineer consultants ensure STEELFAB customers get top performance, quality and safety. The entire goal, says Richard Faulkner, was to ensure that fabrication and manufacturing most recently done outside Alaska, because of a lack of Alaska infrastructure, could now be produced by STEELFAB.

Today STEELFAB is the largest locally owned steel service center and

fabricator in Alaska, fulfilling the Faulkners' vision. It is the company of choice for oilfield repairs and tank fabrication. Richard Faulkner is justifiably proud that STEELFAB has always been 100 percent locally owned. Its facility is equipped with the largest range of processing equipment in the state. STEELFAB is the only fabrication facility that maintains an ASME code certification and stamps for pressure vessels (U), pressure piping (PP) and repairs (R). The company holds welding qualifications from the American Welding Society (AWS), the American

Petroleum Institute (API) and a stamp from Underwriters Laboratory (UL). STEELFAB produces pressure vessels, modules, special design items, a premier sewage treatment plant, and raw steel products for the oil and construction industries. Just last year STEELFAB earned the American Institute of Steel Construction's (AISC) certification for "Complex Steel and Conventional Building Structures and Simple and major Steel Bridges, with Fracture Critical Endorsement and Sophisticated Paint Endorsement" categories. This stringent program requires STEELFAB to be re-certified every year, but it's an expense, says Faulkner, which is worth the guarantee of readiness and capabilities it provides to STEELFAB customers.

The Faulkners' latest acquisition is an automated plate girder/beam welding machine. The machine can weld the same amount of beams together in 10 hours that it formerly took four men working for an entire week. STEELFAB is using the machine to fabricate the 200,000-pound railroad bridge for Unit Construction use at Ted Stevens International Airport.

"We've always looked at the acquisi-



Courtesy of STEELFAB

With nearly an acre of covered indoor working and storage space, STEELFAB works year-round to safely deliver quality products.

tion of modern, labor-saving equipment as an advantage to our business, and certainly a benefit that we can pass along to our customers," notes Richard Faulkner. "We know that while it's a big overhead expense for us, that special tools demonstrate STEELFAB's commitment to providing Alaska companies the best and most modern services." STEELFAB's plasma burning table fits that criterion. The largest in Alaska, it cuts stainless, carbon and aluminum products up to

two-inches thick. With a capacity of 10 feet by 45 feet, this shearing and processing tool can cut up to 200 inches per minute, saving time and ultimately money for STEELFAB's customers.

Another product that distinguishes STEELFAB is the fabrication of a self-contained sewage treatment plant. Manufactured for over 25 years by STEELFAB, the ALASKAPAK contains many Arctic modifications pioneered by

see STEELFAB page B7

Courtesy of STEELFAB



Courtesy of STEELFAB

At left, STEELFAB is the only active American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) certified tank fabricator in the state. It is the first choice repair facility for Alaska's oil industry and its many support companies. Above, STEELFAB fabricates the ALASKAPAK, a sewer plant shipped to all corners of Alaska. Made with special Arctic modifications, the ALASKAPAK is a reliable, simple solution to healthy living in remote locations and configured to serve as many people as is necessary.

continued from page B6 STEELFAB

STEELFAB. Used throughout Alaska in remote work sites and villages, the ALASKAPAK can be tailored to any size of community, and used for additional purposes like laundrette, shower and flush toilets, incineration and water treatment and storage units. STEELFAB manufactures, installs, trains, sells or leases ALASKAPAK plants, which they proudly state are, "Alaska-designed, Alaska-built and Alaska-proven."

The Faulkners' long and genial partnership began over 30 years ago in their native Arkansas. Both were students at Arkansas State University when Richard enlisted in the army. They came to Alaska over 30 years ago, by way of Korea, where Richard was a U.S. Army helicopter pilot. He has worked for over two decades in the steel business in Alaska. Before acquiring STEELFAB, the Faulkners owned Faulkner Supply and Services. If you cannot find Richard at the STEELFAB plant during the summer, you'll find him fishing at his favorite fly-in river. Richard earned a B.S. degree from Alaska Methodist University.



President Richard Faulkner and Vice-President Janet Faulkner purchased the company in 1988.

Janet Faulkner, vice president of Finance for STEELFAB, has worked with financial matters her entire professional life. She remembers her father's advice: that she should take as many math courses as she could throughout her education, and she wisely followed that path. She graduated from the University of Alaska Anchorage with a BA in Accounting and brings her work at major financial institutions to STEELFAB.

Janet enjoys all aspects of exercising. Her latest challenge is bicycling classes at her health club.

The Faulkners' ultimate goal was to have the steel capacities and capabilities in Alaska so it becomes unnecessary for any Alaska industry to go Outside to make purchases. "We've very competitive right now," notes Richard Faulkner. "The considerable investment we've made in STEELFAB is beginning to pay

off in terms of the more and more complex and interesting jobs we're handling, especially if you compare our workload today with it about 10 years ago.

"But I guess," he shrugs, "It's like the old saying goes, 'The proof is in the pudding.'"

The Faulkners are careful managers, which shows in their relatively low turnover of employees, and the presence of a major year-round workforce, in an industry known for a hiring and lay-off pattern that follows a varying workload.

"And we recognize that providing excellent customer service is as important today as providing a top quality product," acknowledges Richard Faulkner. "We think we've built a winning combination of a modern facility, top quality products, a broad-based, knowledgeable staff, and excellent customer service that is proved up by the fact that STEELFAB steel is in every corner of Alaska.

"Whatever the size — large or small — we'd invite everyone to be sure to consider our services for their next steel project," he continues. "Alaska pride is alive and well down here at STEELFAB. We know we can run with the big dogs...now we are waiting for the big dogs to find that out!" ♦

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Courtesy of Doyon Drilling

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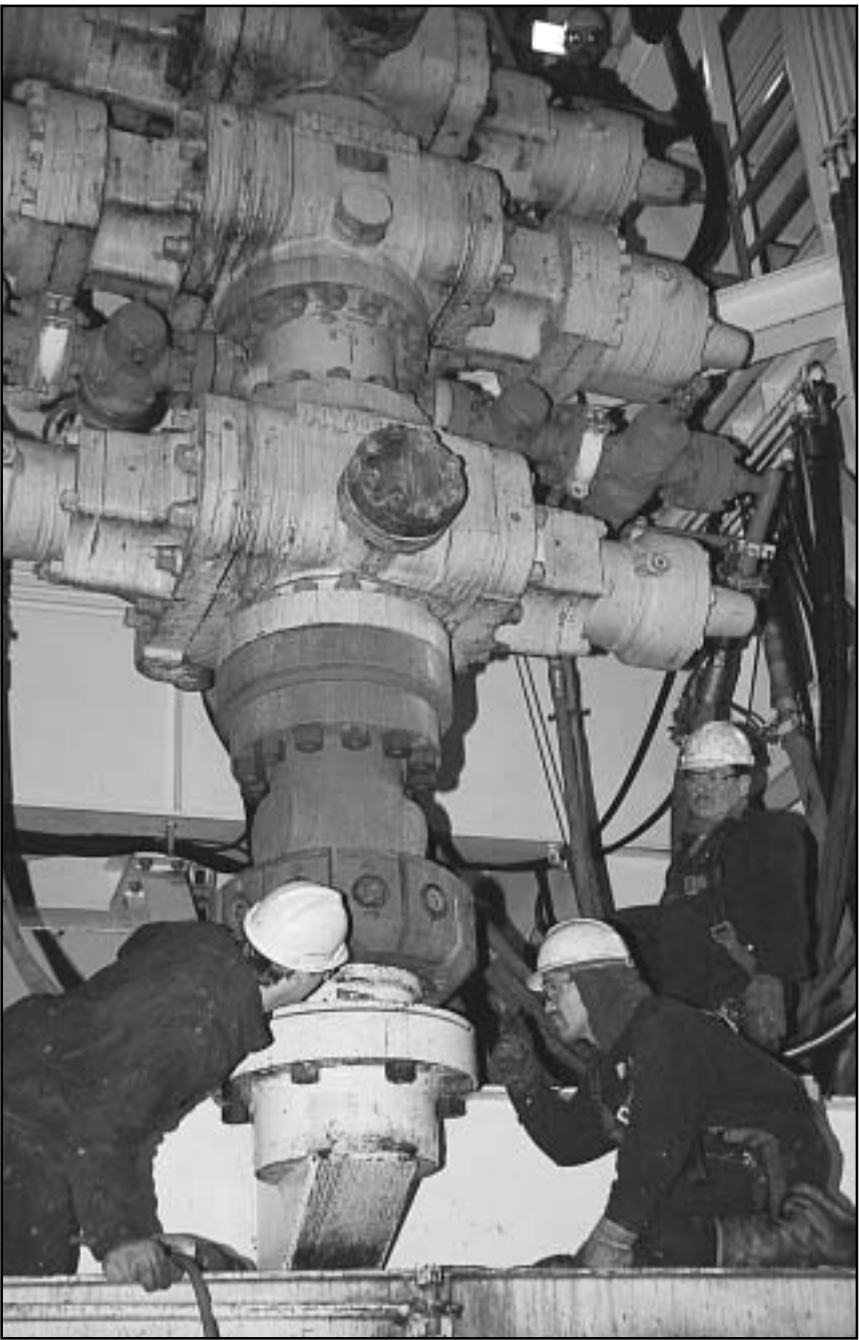
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Forrest Crane

Executive Suite Hotel offers guests plenty of room to relax while traveling on business or pleasure

Marketing managers strive to achieve local partnerships to offer guests such services as same-day dry cleaning, one-day memberships at nearby athletic clubs

By Amy Marie Armstrong
Special to PNA

As Dorothy said, there really is no place like home. But the 102-suite Executive Suite Hotel in Anchorage comes as close as possible. “We know our business travelers would probably rather be back in their own homes, so our aim is to provide all the comforts of home when they are here with us,” said Dawnette Squires, director of sales and marketing.

It’s a policy hotel staff takes to heart. Thus the signs stating, “This is not just our job, but a living space for our guests while they are with us.”

Suites at the Executive range from 500- to 750-square feet. There are seven two-bedroom suites that are perfect for families while relocating. Six of those have a microwave and small refrigerator. One of the two-bedroom units has a full-size kitchen. Of the remaining one-bedroom suites, 50 have full-size kitchens.

An apartment setting

“These used to be apartments and when the hotel took over, some of the features were retained — including separate living rooms and the full-size kitchens with the items and the space you need to cook with,” Squires said. “It sure beats a kitchenette where you don’t have enough room to cook.”

All other suites have a coffee maker, small dorm-size refrigerator, microwave, irons and ironing boards.

“Our guests can wake up with in suite coffee and then come down to our hospitality suite for our complimentary continental breakfast,” Squires said.

The breakfast, available from 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., includes a variety of cold cereals, bagels, toast, at least two kinds of fresh fruit, assorted Danishes, muffins and croissants, juice, milk, coffee and tea.

“And of course, we always have hot, fresh coffee in the lobby,” Squires said.

Those homey touches

The hotel also offers a complimentary airport shuttle service to pick up travelers arriving in Anchorage, transporting them back to the hotel, where suite and car packages are available through a partnership with Affordable New Car Rental.

“By utilizing our shuttle and our suite and car package, guests can avoid a 10 to

12 percent airport concession fee,” Squires said.

Hotel guests also avoid costly airport parking through the Executive Suite Hotel park-and-fly program.

“A guest can leave their vehicle here in our parking lot for up to 14 days provided they stay at least one night on either end of the trip here with us,” Squires said. “It’s a safe place to leave your vehicle parked.”

That’s because Executive Suite bellstaff keep a constant watch over the hotel and its parking lot. The Anchorage Police Department unofficially lends the Executive Suite Hotel some extra security, Squires said.

“In an effort to help keep our community safe, we have partnered with APD by providing space for rookie training here on a regular basis,” she said.

Partners in the community

It’s just one of many working relationships the Executive Suite Hotel and its staff have established with the Anchorage community.

Through a deal with the Alaska Club, for just a few dollars guests can enjoy a workout and complimentary shuttle to and from the club.

Several eateries in the Spenard area work with the hotel for meals and/or delivery.

“We have partnered with some local restaurants so that clients can have hot meals whenever they arrive. Direct bill accounts and schools can charge the meal to their room,” she said. “We have one pizzeria, Milano’s Pizzeria, that delivers awesome pizza and an incredible Philly cheese steak. I am a Pennsylvania girl and trust me, I know what a Philly cheese steak should taste like. And that is most definitely it.”

Several fast-food chains — including Wendy’s and McDonald’s — are located nearby. Also in the vicinity: The Sub Station, The Village Inn restaurant and

COMPANY PROFILE



Courtesy of Executive Suite



Daily continental breakfast from 6:30 - 9:30 a.m. also includes fresh fruit, danish and muffins.



The Executive Suite Hotel is located at 4360 Spenard Road, one mile from the airport with complimentary 24-hour airport shuttle.

Courtesy of Executive Suite

Gwennie’s, an Anchorage eatery famous for its extensive historical ambiance.

A new Alaska fan

The decor of the Executive Suite Hotel was extensively updated to include burgundy and green contemporary motifs less than two years ago when Yong Juhn, a Korean-American hotel owner based out of Minnesota, bought the property in December 2000.

Juhn, whose nephew Anthony Lee now manages the property, said he likes the Anchorage area.

“I could see great potential here for the hotel business,” he said.

“This area is so naturally beautiful.” He likes the coming addition of partnerships with fishing guides to the hotel’s roster of guest options.

“Dawnette has done an outstanding job of marketing the hotel, as well as establishing links with other Alaskan businesses,” he said.

Plenty of leg room

The hotel’s large suites are another selling point.

“We’ve got space and lots of it,” Squires said. “Whether it’s a survey crew with lots of equipment or an outdoor excursion, our suites have enough room for all your gear.”

And if that isn’t enough space, the Executive Suite Hotel also offers additional storage, including freezer space for the “catch of the day.” And there’s no extra charge.

Squires hopes to soon offer a computer work area in the hotel’s main floor hospitality suite — not only for business travelers but also so other guests can keep in touch while visiting Alaska. The room already has a cozy fireplace, plenty of overstuffed chairs, reading lamps and a large television.

Beside the standard ironing boards and hair dryers, all suites come with Internet access next to desks large enough to create a comfortable working space, cable television, Nintendo and an industry pay-per-view movie system, direct phone lines and personal voice mail.

For long-term stays of seven nights or more, special extended-stay rates apply. The Executive Suite also offers direct billing for corporate guests.

All guests have access to copy and fax services, as well as coin-operated laundry facilities. The Executive Suite also offers same-day dry-cleaning contract with a local cleaning service.

Improving on success

Keyless entry and a new reservation system are planned for late spring. Beginning this fall, installation of new carpeting and tiling for kitchen and bathroom areas will begin in some suites. Larger television sets also are planned. More landscaping is slated for summer as well.

“We have been working very hard to do our part by updating our property and keep the outside looking nice, especially in the summer months when we can do some extra work with flowers and shrubbery,” Squires said.

Guest satisfaction is and will always be the top priority. Guests are encouraged to fill out hotel survey cards. It is their input that allows the Executive Suite Hotel to be successful.

“Our service is professional, yet relaxed,” Squires said. “When you stay with us, we want you to feel like you are at home.” ♦

A large excavator places armor stone around the Kuparuk bridge to protect its slope from erosion. The worker in the boat to the left takes periodic directional soundings to assist with direct placement of the armor stone in water that is more than 20 feet deep.



Courtesy of Great Northwest

Fairbanks general contractor gains foothold in oil, gas construction industry

After five years of marketing to the oil and gas industry, Great Northwest Inc. enjoys a high level of acceptance as a leader in heavy civil ‘earthwork’ construction

By Amy Marie Armstrong
Special to PNA

Great Northwest Inc. of Fairbanks has been marketing their construction services to the oil and gas industry for only five years. But with its convenient base and its easy access to air, rail and road transportation, the company is quickly becoming a leader in the earth moving, cleanup and reclamation business.

“Working with the oil and gas industry is fairly new for us,” said Howard ‘Buzz’ Otis, president of Great Northwest. “But we are being received quite well and we are enjoying building long-term relationships with new people.”

As Otis builds the company’s portfolio, Great Northwest looks back to its roots for guidance.

“We started in 1976 as a landscape contractor,” Otis

said, noting that landscape work naturally leads to being environmentally conscious and making work sites attractive. “The environmental standards have always been a part of our past and our approach to construction has been to have clean, well-maintained work sites with people on those sites who are conscious of doing a good job. We recognize that any level of pollution is not acceptable and we are trying to be exemplary in the way we go about our business.”

That doesn’t mean readers will see many headlines about Great Northwest winning environmental awards for their work, Otis said.

“We go out and do good work for our clients,” Otis said. “We try to be successful for the client and let them take the credit rather than ourselves being out on the front page.”

Protecting workers also a priority

Aside from taking extreme measures to protect the environment during a job, Great Northwest has an excellent employee safety record, Otis said.

“We are a union company and put a lot of time and energy into making sure our employees are properly trained and have the safety equipment they need to do the job,” Otis said. “We have an excellent working relationship with labor.”

That good working relationship extends to customers. “We make sure our clients are satisfied,” Otis said. “We solve problems as they arise. We don’t let them fester. Sometimes we have to give a lot, but at the end of the day, we move forward while maintaining our standards.”

COMPANY PROFILE



Courtesy of Great Northwest

A 12-foot diameter culvert is replaced as part of the Dalton Highway milepost 144 to 175 reconstruction project. More than a million cubic yards of gravel were mined, hauled and placed as part of this project.

Community ties

Otis’ high standards go beyond business. He is active in his local community as well.

“I try to lead by example,” he said, crediting his ability to participate in public affairs to having good managers, employees, and partners at Great Northwest.

“It allows me to get deeply involved in public service. That is important to me because my goal is to make the community and this state a better place for all of us.”

Otis was a member of the North Star Borough Assembly from 1982 to 1988. He is on the executive committee of the Alaska Support Industry Alliance, the executive committee of the Fairbanks Economic Development Corp., he is co-chairman of the procurement committee for the annual fund-raiser of the Catholic Schools of Fairbanks and he is chair of the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce. He and his wife,

Renee Webb-Otis, have been married for 20 years and have three children.

“We have really focused on community throughout our history,” Otis said. “Of course, my involvement in the community benefits Great Northwest. But it is not self-serving. Just by being here, Great Northwest helps drive the economy and benefits other businesses.”

Otis said it is easy for business owners to get wrapped up in the day-to-day affairs of running a business. He is thankful he has the ability to step beyond his role as president of Great Northwest and reach out to the community.

“In some ways, because many other business owners don’t have the ability to stay involved as much as they would like to, it is even more important that I do so that I can help represent all of us,” Otis said.

“Working with the oil and gas industry is fairly new for us. But we are being received quite well and we are enjoying building relationships with new people.” —Howard ‘Buzz’ Otis, president of Great Northwest



Courtesy of Great Northwest



Courtesy of Great Northwest

At left, Great Northwest employees use state-of-the-art construction equipment while on the job. Asphalt is being laid out by one of the 400 pieces of machinery in the company's \$10 million fleet. Above, workers control erosion along the Chena River by placing small rock rip rap, burlap and willow tree cuttings.

continued from page B14
GREAT NORTHWEST

Busy season ahead for rock crusher

Otis anticipates the company's rock crusher will stay busy during the summer construction season. "Our machine is state-of-the art, reliable and safe," Otis said. "This is a big benefit to our clients because we can give them a lower unit cost."

Great Northwest manufactures a variety of rock and aggregate products, including graded aggregates, gravel, peat, rip-rap and topsoil. In the past few years, the company has done extensive road upgrades and culvert replacement and resurfacing roads on the Dalton Highway. Otis expects Great Northwest to be involved in as many as 10 such projects this summer.

The company also specializes in environmental cleanup work on the North Slope. The company's 300-acre location at an industrial park in Fairbanks also contains a foreign trade zone.

"This allows duty on any materials supplied from a foreign source to be delayed until those materials leave the zone," Otis said. It gives customers a financial cushion while manufacturing or storing materials until a project is ready for those materials.

Through an arrangement with the Alaska Railroad, Great Northwest can stage and unload cars from a 6,000-foot railroad spur on the company's southern property boundary. A gravel pad that enhances the siding facilitates staging materials. Van Horn Road serves as the property's northern boundary with easy access for highway transportation. The rest of the property is being developed as gravel mining and processing areas with several million cubic yards of gravel available for a variety of projects, Otis said.

The company's shop and maintenance facility is connected to the 2,500-square-foot main office via a CAT-5 network system. Both facilities were built in 1998.

"We make sure our clients are satisfied. We solve problems as they arise. We don't let them fester. Sometimes we have to give a little, but at the end of the day, we move forward while maintaining our standards." — Howard 'Buzz' Otis

The making of Cuddy Park

Despite its relative newness to the oil and gas industry, Great Northwest played an important role in an industry wide project last summer.

The company helped prepare the site for the new 14-acre Cuddy Park, a service project that 600-plus attendees at the annual British Petroleum Classic — held in Anchorage last year — helped to finish.

"We were one of many construction firms involved," Otis said. "We moved several thousand yards of fill material and helped do the foundation work for the structures, including the theater. They (BP workers) went out there with the rakes and shovels and hard hats and got to work putting the finishing touches on the grades we established."

The park honors D.H. Cuddy, president of the First National Bank of Alaska, formerly known as First National Bank of Anchorage, one of Alaska's oldest businesses. Cuddy has run the bank for more than 50 years, financing numerous oil-related projects.

"We were quite proud to play a major role in the partnership that put that project together," Otis said. "It exemplifies what our company is about." ♦



Courtesy of Great Northwest



Courtesy of Great Northwest

In the photo above, the Old Steese Highway Reconstruction added traffic lanes to a congested area of town. Much utility work was accomplished including the pictured storm drain improvements. At left, as part of the Beaver Springs Creek Restoration Project, a culvert was replaced with a 30-foot long pedestrain bridge to enhance grayling migration within the slough. The bridge connects the 5th Avenue park in North Pole to North Pole Elementary and a 1-mile nature trail. Below, at the Eielson Air Force Base potable water project, workers place geocell to protect steep slopes from erosion.



Courtesy of Great Northwest

Wood Group Alaska keeps engines spinning and measurement devices accurate

Experienced employees and mobile testing units make Wood Group Gas Turbines a profitable venture

By Amy Marie Armstrong
Special to PNA

Wood Group Gas Turbines (Alaska) Inc. credits 13 primary factors for success of the Anchorage-based company: its 13 hard-working employees.

So says operations manager Martin Bellerive.

"They each bring a unique personality and individualized expertise to the business," said Bellerive, with Wood Group Alaska since 1998 and its operations Alaska manager since 2001. "They each have their own little areas that they like to take care of and that makes a good fit for everyone working here and for our customers."

Wood Group Gas Turbines (Alaska) Inc. is part of Wood Group International, headquartered in Aberdeen, Scotland. Its Alaska subsidiary has two separate divisions — jet engine overhaul and maintenance, and test equipment repairs and calibration.

To his knowledge, Bellerive said, all technicians have prior military experience and training.

Rebuilding quickly

Bellerive said that expertise is how the company was able to rebuild within six weeks of losing the majority of its electronics and calibrations testing equipment when a contract with the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. expired.

Until Alyeska transferred its own calibration facility to Fairbanks, Wood Group worked out of Alyeska's shop and used its tools.

"It left us in a real shortcoming," Bellerive said. "We had to quickly procure all that equipment and get a facility up and running again."

Besides calibration work for the pipeline service company, Wood Group had begun to acquire other customers, but would need more with the loss of Alyeska.

"The decision had to be made whether to re-equip or not," he said. "We moved forward and could not have done so without our employees."

One of those employees is Fred Schriener, an electronics and instrumentation specialist who worked for Alyeska and Northwest Technical before joining Wood Group.

Researching older parts easily

"Because of the length of time Fred has been here in Alaska with the pipeline being in service for 20-plus years now, Fred has a lot of experience with much of the older

equipment that is no longer supported by the manufacturer," Bellerive said. "He knows how to maintain it and that is a value-added benefit that comes along with him."

Schriener's job often means knowing where to look for parts in repairing obsolete equipment.

That used to mean lots of phone calls and hours spent going through manufacturers' manuals. Now Schriener uses the Internet to find parts. But he also hangs on to old technical data manuals, just in case that option fails.

"Sometimes they will have some ideas or suggestions," he said. "Sometimes it is frustrating to look for those old parts. But that is just part of the challenge."

Meeting challenges is something Wood Group employees do each spring and summer as they head to the North Slope with the company's portable testing laboratory. The mobile unit is a huge asset, Bellerive said.

"The biggest advantage it offers for us and our customers is that our customers don't have

to lose their equipment for a week or two having to ship it to us in Anchorage," Bellerive said. "With being on site, they may lose their equipment for a day or so. It makes a big difference."

Coming soon to Kenai and Cook Inlet

It's a difference Bellerive wants to start making for oil and gas producers on the Kenai Peninsula and in Cook Inlet this fall.

"We are setting up another mobile unit housed in a 40-foot fifth wheel that will be a lot easier to get around," Bellerive said, noting the previous unit used on the North Slope is so large that it must be brought in by a tractor-trailer.

The mobile units allow oil and gas producers to participate in the calibration process.

"Any problems we encounter, can be solved right then instead of having to send documentation long distance," he said. "The producers can see the same database we look at when generating the information regarding their equipment."

Compliance documentation is issued on site and the customer can put the equipment back to work immediately, Bellerive.

"The rates for the mobile lab are very



Account Executive Sharon Shern and C&I Lead Technician Fred Schriener work closely together to meet a customer's calibration and instrumentation maintenance needs.



Martin Bellerive and Jim Steel with a cutaway of a Garret ASMES8 engine, one of several engine types supported through Wood Group Alaska.

competitive with what would be paid to send equipment to a lab in the Lower 48," Bellerive said, with the added advantage of not losing use of the equipment for days or weeks at a time.

Wood Group is a ISO9002 registered company, an international standard that maintains and regulates industry standards for the service industry.

Working as a team with the instrumentation side of the business is the Rotating Equipment division of Wood Group Gas Turbines (Alaska) Inc. The Rotating Equipment business was established in 1996 in order to maintain the Alyeska Pipeline turbine engine fleet.

The Anchorage repair facility can repair and supply many turbine components

Wood Group companies around the world, the majority of the Alaska industrial turbine fleet can be supported through the local facility.

Wood Group Gas Turbines (Alaska) has state-of-the-art borescope equipment and

skilled technicians to operate it. This equipment is capable of taking digital photographs from the inside of many types of rotating equipment. Using this service has saved customers time and money by identifying problems before they became serious and keeping serviceable equipment in service.

Bellerive also credits Jim Steele, project engineer for the rotating equipment section, and Art Parrish, rotating equipment mechanic, for a large part of the success that side of the Wood Group Alaska has achieved.

"Each of them has been in the turbine repair business for 20-plus years," he said. "A lot of the knowledge we have on the types of engines maintained throughout Alaska come from those two."

Bellerive also thanks the rest of the staff at Wood Group Alaska for their efforts.

They are Joyce Oechslein and Janet Bowers, who handle accounting, shipping and receiving. Carrie McMullen, Keith Wedin and Chris Ifland are on the

calibration technician team. Greg McMullen and Ernie Jemmings work in the rotating equipment section. Sharon Shern is the sales account executive.

"Without them, we wouldn't have the viable business we have now," Bellerive said. ♦

COMPANY PROFILE



Rotating Equipment Project Engineer Jim Steele and Martin Bellerive at Wood Group's spacious Anchorage Rotating Equipment Shop.

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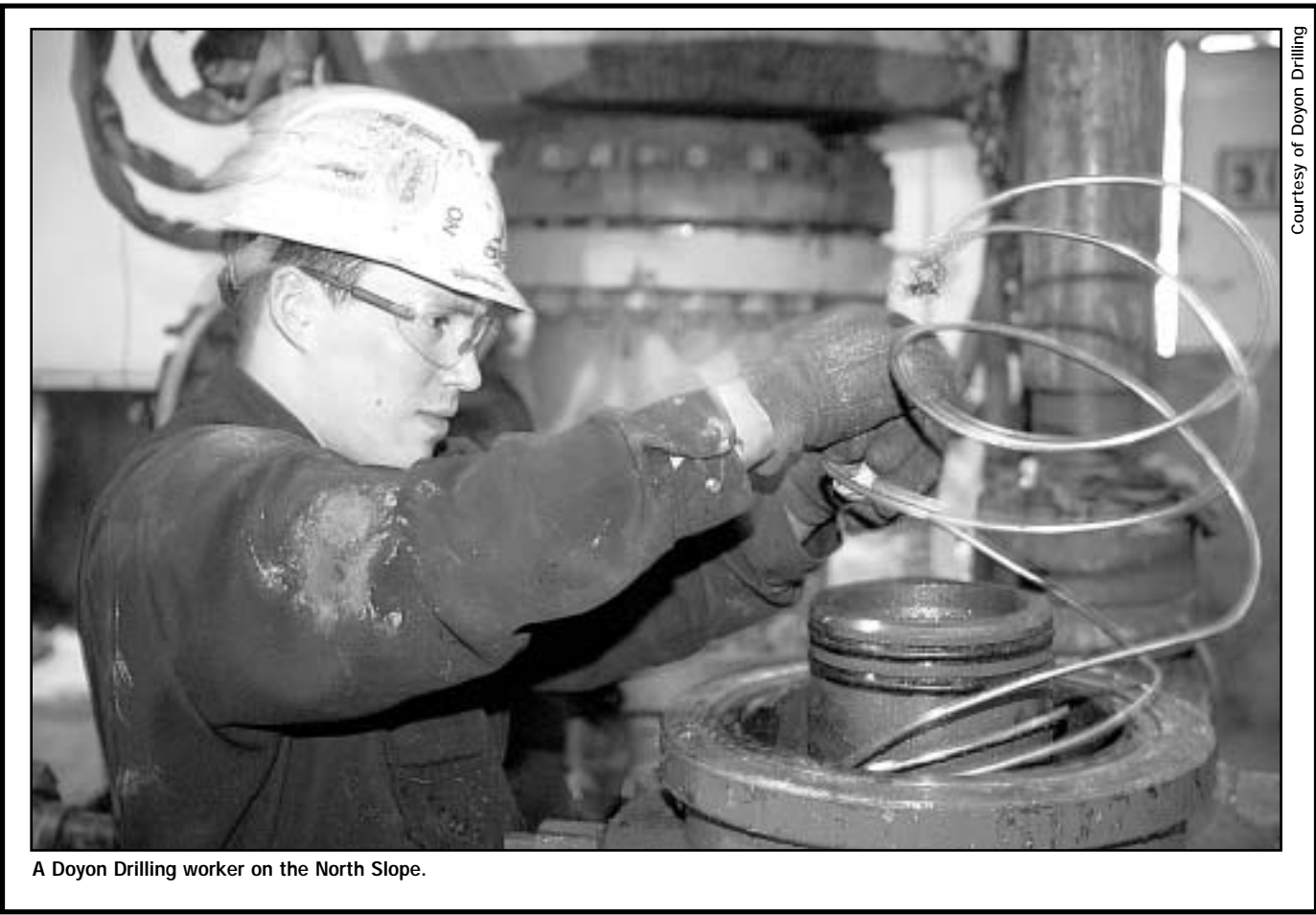
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Courtesy of Doyon Drilling

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Alan Bailey

Shane Langland, president of Eagle Enterprises, in the company's Anchorage lifeboat packing shop.

Having the right gear can save you from a world of hurt

Eagle Enterprises' experience and knowledge can help you obtain quality equipment and clothing for any safety situation

By Alan Bailey
PNA Contributing Writer

Think Alaska and you think about survival in some of the world's most rugged territory. So, perhaps it's not surprising that the state boasts a premier supplier of safety and survival gear — Anchorage-based Eagle Enterprises Inc. has established an international reputation for its expertise in Arctic clothing and Arctic survival gear. "Eagle Enterprises started in 1971 as oilfield supply services and marine services, packing life rafts," Shane Langland, the company's president, told PNA.

Over the years the company has continued its marine and aviation life raft services. However, the company has also grown to become a supplier of a wide variety of commercial and industrial goods and services.

"So what we are now is a commercial sales house for safety and survival equipment, industrial supplies, for pretty much any industry that has safety requirements," Langland said. "We can do containment equipment for asbestos removal all the way to water making equipment that can supply an island of people."

Protective clothing

Eagle Enterprises supplies breathing apparatus, safety glasses, hard hats and respirators to both the fire service industry and the oil industry. "One of the projects that we've been doing lately is we outfit crews that do work on the North Slope — from their boots to their hats," Langland said. "They come in (here) and then they go out to work."

The company has even designed its own brand of Arctic outerwear, called Eagleloft.

Eagleloft originated as a project to outfit the Alaska State Troopers with winter parkas. "We took a sample of what the state troopers were looking for in their outer parka and designed it to match (their) specifications," Langland said.

Eagle Enterprises has succeeded in selling the Eagleloft parkas to police departments around the world, as well as to the Alaska State Troopers. "It's done very, very well — it's very durable, very strong," Langland said. "We've sold them to the federal government for air force bases — that's kind of rewarding to meet that specification."

Survival kits

The assembly of survival kits has also become one of Eagle Enterprise's specialized business lines — the company designs and sells kits for a wide range of applications, including hotels, aircraft and company cars.

"We design a lot of custom kits for hotels, for vehicles or for unique survival situations," Langland said. "We keep in touch with the latest gear, with who's making it, with

what the faults are — we see it, we touch it, we play with it and we develop that expertise in what really works."

In one of its most unusual assignments, the company designed survival kits for people working on oil rigs in the Caspian Sea. The Caspian Sea is very shallow, so that rig workers might have to wade through slush and ice after an emergency rig evacuation.

"We were able to design these kits so that the rig workers can escape the rig and have the right equipment to survive," Langland said.

Airliner emergency kits

Langland feels particularly proud of his company's achievements in developing emergency kits for airplanes operating in the polar regions.

"Designing a kit for a disaster over the North Pole in an airplane and helping some major carriers develop an action plan if that were to happen was very challenging," Langland said. "You've got weight requirements, space requirements, but if you end up having to dump it in Siberia you've got extreme conditions you have to deal with."

Eagle Enterprises started working with one air carrier. Then, as other carriers became involved in the project, the initial approach of storing emergency kits on aircraft evolved into the concept of staging kits at strategic sites. "We designed some survival kits that are staged around the world and that these carriers can then take to the (emergency landing) site," Langland said.

New locations

In 2000 Eagle Enterprises bought a business in Homer. "They were mostly a life raft re-pack station for fishing vessels and commercial boats — so we do that service down there as well," Langland said.

The Homer business has also opened a retail store for safety and survival gear.

In a recent venture Eagle Enterprises has opened stores to sell Helly Hansen clothing in Anchorage's 5th Avenue Mall and on Homer Spit. The Helly Hansen gear dovetails into Eagle Enterprises' range of protective clothing. "We opened that in April last year — it's done very well — we're very pleased," Langland said. "It does so well because the product is such a good quality."

Eagle Enterprises has also opened up business on its web site, www.ultimategear.com. The company developed the site to eliminate the cost of printing a paper catalogue and to enable the marketing of a wider range of products.

"(The web site) has been profitable every year," Langland said. "It's not a tremendous amount of sales,

because so much of what we do is hazardous materials which we can't send through the mail." Shipping costs also limit Internet sales from Alaska.

Safety and survival expertise

Although Eagle Enterprises has developed a very diverse range of products and services, the company's core focus remains safety and survival. The company has established a reputation for its expertise in providing quality products that meet customer requirements.

"We tend to stick with products that we know meet our needs and requirements, that stand the test of time," Langland said. Customers know that they can rely on Eagle Enterprises for reliable, fit-for-purpose gear.

Although quality gear sometimes costs more than the "bargain basement" options, expert advice can save customers' money. "Most of the things that work the best are typically the least expensive," Langland said. "The fancy gadgets we find don't always work when it really gets down to it."

People also need expert advice when assessing the needs of a particular safety situation. For example, different work environments require different styles of safety glasses. "You're asking us to tell you how

to protect your eyes from whatever environment you're in — well we'd better understand very clearly what your environment is," Langland said.

And survival gear demands especially careful selection. "You only need (survival gear) when you're really in trouble," Langland said, "and, contrary to what most people believe, accidents happen faster than you can prevent. When you get to that point, you're relying on the survival gear you have purchased and the training you have received." Eagle Enterprises takes pride in its knowledgeable sales staff. "One of our largest challenges is training new people into what we do, because we are so incredibly diverse," Langland said. "There's a full year of on-job training before someone can answer customer questions with confidence," he said.

Customer focus

Langland said that he expects Eagle Enterprises to maintain its customer-driven approach to doing business — the company continuously modifies or extends its product and service lines to meet evolving customer needs.

"We kind of view our relationship with our customers as partnerships — if they have success, we have success," Langland said. "As opportunities in Alaska arise, our customers will require us to do different things in different places we will continue to grow in whatever way our customers need us." ♦

COMPANY PROFILE



Alan Bailey



The Eagle Enterprises Anchorage store is located at 700 W. International Airport Road.



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