



page 11 Jim Weeks, ConocoPhillips cut deal to drill Winstar lease

Earnings in the trough



JUDY PATRICK

A huge chasm has opened between U.S.-based oilfield service companies and the exploration and production spending on which they depend, according to projected 2003 first quarter earnings for both groups. But despite last quarter's weak drilling environment outside onshore United States, Salomon Smith Barney expects full-year per-share earnings for service companies to rise about 14 percent on the average. Pictured above, Nabors Alaska Drilling rig on the North Slope. Nabors Industries is one of the few service companies that should show improvements over the last quarter. See full story on page A9.

Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline spurs drilling, staking along route

One of the liveliest winter drilling seasons in years is winding down in the Northwest Territories, although results remain scant for competitive reasons.

Spurred by the need to make commercial natural gas discoveries in anticipation of an 800-mile Mackenzie Valley pipeline, operators were especially active in the lower NWT. With hopes high that the project will start deliveries by 2008, companies have been actively staking out interests along the pipeline route.

On the Mackenzie Delta, there is no news yet from three wells: the Nuna I-30 exploration well being drilled by Petro-Canada and Devon Canada that is expected to reach a depth of 11,800 feet; a 6,500-foot well by Devon and Shell Canada, and Langley K-30, a 4,600-foot exploration well that is being drilled by Chevron Canada and BP Canada Energy on Burlington

see **MACKENZIE** page A23

LAND & LEASING

BLM takes second look

Feds to loosen restrictions, offer more acreage, in northeast NPR-A

By **KRISTEN NELSON**

Petroleum News Editor-in-Chief

Henri Bisson, Bureau of Land Management Alaska state director, said April 15 that BLM plans to amend the 1998 land use plan for 4.6 million acres in the northeast planning area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

Bisson told the Resource Development Council in November that the agency was "strongly considering amending the NPR-A northeast plan."

If BLM proceeded with amendments, he said then: "We would propose to revisit several issues, including the areas that are currently available for leasing in the NPR-A" and changing "the exploration and development stipulations and mitigation measures to be identical to the ones that are

being developed in the ongoing NPR-A northwest plan."

Both of those objectives are now under consideration, the agency said in an April 15 statement: reevaluating the current plan to include exploration in areas

"that could provide access to significant new oil discoveries" and considering "changing the current prescriptive stipulations into a mixture of prescriptive and performance-based stipulations similar to those being developed" for the NPR-A northwest planning area.



HENRI BISSON, BLM



PETER DITTON, BLM

Teshkpu Lake area

Under the 1998 land use plan, the area around Teshkpu Lake was not offered for leasing and a boundary around that non-leased area was offered for

see **NPR-A** page A13

GOVERNMENT

Fence-mending trip to D.C. eases tensions between U.S., Canada

No lasting damage to energy flow, but Canada urged to help rebuild Iraq

By **GARY PARK**

Petroleum News Calgary Correspondent

A high-powered delegation of Canada's most influential business leaders, including a heavy sprinkling of oilpatch executives, has scurried back home from a fence-mending trip to Washington, D.C., hoping they won't suffer too much from U.S.-Canada tensions over Iraq.

But their optimism is tempered by warnings from political and corporate leaders on both sides of the border that Canada would be well-advised to

cooperate in efforts to rebuild Iraq and to curb some of the gratuitous insults directed at President George W. Bush by senior members of Prime Minister Jean Chretien's government.

Following a two-day summit April 7 and 8 that included 100 Canadian chief executive officers, Deputy Prime Minister John Manley, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge and White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, there was a general view that the immediate crisis is

see **MEND** page A21

LAND & LEASING

MMS promises faster lease processing

Direct electronic access to seismic should cut lease issuance by a month

PETROLEUM NEWS HOUSTON STAFF

The U.S. Minerals Management Service, in a move that should greatly speed up the issuance of oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico, has acquired direct electronic access to seismic data it uses to help determine whether it's getting fair market value for acreage sold at lease sales.

Industry has long complained about the length of time — up to 90 days in some cases — that it takes for successful bidders to receive title to their leases.

For routine cases, the new electronic system could reduce the waiting time by at least a month, said Chris Oynes, Gulf regional director for MMS.

"The devil is in the details," Oynes cautioned.

MMS is currently reviewing last month's Central Gulf Lease Sale 185. ... MMS likely will take a close look at two blocks on the gas-prone continental shelf that received an unheard of 18 bids, the most competitively bid blocks in the entire sale.

"But it's hard to imagine that the vast bulk of leases in this process would not get done faster."

The current process of acquiring seismic data from vendors using digital linear tape and 8 millimeter tape alone requires six to eight weeks. More delay occurs when vendors write the data to

see **MMS** page A23

I N S I D E

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Alaska - Mackenzie Rig Report

Rig Owner/Rig Type Rig No. Rig Location/Activity Operator or Status

Alaska Rig Status

North Slope - Onshore

Doyon Drilling			
Dreco 1250 UE	14 (SCR/TD)	Milne Point, drilling MPS-01	BP
Sky Top Brewster NE-12	15 (SCR/TD)	Endicott, drilling 3-25B/L-27	BP
Dreco 1000 UE	16 (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Available
Dreco D2000 UEBD	19 (SCR/TD)	Alpine, drilling CD2-51	ConocoPhillips
OIME 2000	141 (SCR/TD)	West Sak Multi-lateral, drilling 1C-178	ConocoPhillips

Nabors Alaska Drilling			
Trans-ocean rig	CDR-1 (CT)	Stacked, Prudhoe Bay	Available
Dreco 1000 UE	2-ES (SCR)	Prudhoe Bay, C-11A	BP
Mid-Continent U36A	3-S	Stacked, Prudhoe Bay	Available
Oilwell 700 E	4-ES (SCR)	Prudhoe Bay, 16-13	BP
Dreco 1000 UE	7-ES (SCR/TD)	Kuparuk, 3S-23	ConocoPhillips
Dreco 1000 UE	9-ES (SCR/TD)	Prudhoe Bay, Borealis Field W-207i	BP
Oilwell 2000 Hercules	14-E (SCR)	Stacked, Prudhoe Bay	Anadarko
Oilwell 2000 Hercules	16-E (SCR/TD)	Puviaq #1	ConocoPhillips
Oilwell 2000	17-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Point McIntyre	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist -2	18-E (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Available
OIME 1000	19-E (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	ConocoPhillips
Emsco Electro-hoist Varco TDS3	22-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Milne Point	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist Canrig 1050E	27-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Pioneer
Emsco Electro-hoist	28-E (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Available
OIME 2000	245-E	Stacked, Kuparuk	ConocoPhillips

Nordic Calista Services			
Superior 700 UE	1 (SCR/TD)	Nikuk, 62A	BP
Superior 700 UE	2 (SCR)	Prudhoe Bay, C-31	BP
Ideco 900	3 (SCR/TD)	Moving to stack site	Available

North Slope - Offshore

Nabors Alaska Drilling			
Oilwell 2000	33-E (SCR/TD)	Northstar Is., NS-23	BP

Fairweather			
Dreco 147	SDC	Rig cold stacked	EnCana

Cook Inlet Basin - Onshore

Marathon Oil Co. (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contractor)			
Taylor	Glacier 1	Beaver Creek, well BC-6	Marathon

Inlet Drilling Alaska/Cooper Construction			
Kremco 750	CC-1	Crew at Trading Bay, Kustatan #1 field	Forest Oil

Nabors Alaska Drilling			
Rigmasters 850	129	Stacked, Swanson River	Available
National 110 UE	160 (SCR)	Stacked, Kenai	Available
Continental Emsco E3000	273	Hansen #1	ConocoPhillips

Aurora Well Service			
Franks 300 Srs. Explorer III	AWS 1	Stacked, Nikiski	Available

Evergreen Resources			
Wilson Super 38	96-19	Stacked, Wasilla	Evergreen
Engersol Rand	1	Stacked, Wasilla	Evergreen

Cook Inlet Basin - Offshore

XTO Energy (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contract)			
National 1320	A	Idle	Idle
National 110	C (TD)	Idle	Idle

Nabors Alaska Drilling			
IDECO 2100 E	429E (SCR)	Osprey, Redoubt Shoal RU#6	Forest Oil

Unocal (Nabors Alaska Drilling labor contractor)
Information no longer available, due to layoffs and budget cuts.

Mackenzie Rig Status

Mackenzie Delta-Onshore

Akita Equatak			
Dreco 1250 UE	63 (SCR/TD)	Drilling, Nuna J-30, Spudded February 7, 2003	Petro-Canada

Akita Equatak			
	64	Testing, Langley K-30 spud March 19, 2003	Chevron Canada Resources

Central Mackenzie Valley

Akita/SAHTU			
Oilwell 500	51	Stacked, Norman Wells	Available

Nabors Drilling			
Oilwell 500	62	Stacked, Norman Wells	Available

Wilson Drilling Ltd.			
TSM 700	3	Stacked, Ft. St. John, BC	Available

The Alaska - Mackenzie Rig Report is sponsored by:



The Alaska - Mackenzie Rig Report as of April 14, 2003.
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



Cook Inlet Platform

COURTESY OFFSHORE DIVERS

Baker Hughes North America rotary rig counts*

	April 11	April 4	Year Ago
US	979	972	747
Canada	175	221	127
Gulf	97	97	103

Highest/Lowest

US/Highest	4530	December 1981
US/Lowest	488	April 1999
Canada/Highest	558	January 2000
Canada/Lowest	29	April 1992

*Issued by Baker Hughes since 1944

Rig start-ups expected in next 6 months

Aurora
AWS 1 Starting pre-job maintenance on April 22, 2003. Forecast mobilization to the west of Cook Inlet between May 1 through May 5. First well is a top-to-bottom, shallow gas well for Aurora Gas, Nicolai Creek #9.

Kuukpik Drilling
Rig 5 Mobilizing in May for a multi-well drilling program located on the Tyonek platform in the Cook Inlet for ConocoPhillips.

Doyon
Rig 19 Drill one well at Tabasco then back to Alpine by end of April.

PIPELINES & DOWNSTREAM

Mackenzie Valley breakthrough

The Deh Cho First Nations of the Northwest Territories, the major aboriginal holdouts in the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline project, have signed an interim land deal that could open their region to oil and gas exploration and possibly speed up pipeline negotiations.

The April 18 interim resource management agreement with the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will "pave the way for orderly development" of the southern Mackenzie Valley, said Deh Cho Grand Chief Mike Nadli.

He said he was "flabbergasted" that the terms had been reached as quickly as they had for a deal that is "unprecedented in its scope."

Nadli, who speaks for 10 chiefs and 4,000 residents, said the pact covers about 80,000 square miles, of which slightly over half will be open to oil, gas and mining development, subject to terms and conditions set out by the Deh Cho.

The deal will be in effect for five years, or until the Deh Cho settle land claims and self-government negotiations and a mineral inventory is completed.

Until now the Deh Cho have declined to be part of an October 2001 memorandum of understanding between the Mackenzie Delta Producers Group and aboriginal communities along the proposed pipeline right of way that set out the terms of a one-third aboriginal stake in the project.

Nadli has insisted his elders were not ready to make a commitment until issues of ownership, jurisdiction and sovereignty of the Deh Cho "homeland" were resolved.

Hope for discussions

A spokeswoman for Indian Affairs and Northern Development said there is now hope that discussions can proceed on a pipeline that offers benefits to all stakeholders.

see **BREAKTHROUGH** page A4

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CORRECTION

House version of HB 16 passes Senate

Petroleum News incorrectly reported April 13 that the Senate Resources substitute for House Bill 16, amendments to the Alaska Stranded Gas Development Act, was approved by the Senate.

The Senate approved the House Finance Committee substitute for HB 16. Senate Resources approved a version of the bill April 2 which restricted projects to those for North Slope gas. The Senate approved the same version of the bill approved by the House, which does not limit projects under the act to North Slope gas.

The Senate vote, April 4, was unanimous; House approval, March 26, was also unanimous.

—KRISTEN NELSON, Petroleum News editor-in-chief

NORTH AMERICA BRIEFS

Canada's Bonavista to become largest trust

Bonavista Petroleum, Canada's sixth-largest oil and gas producer, is turning itself into the largest energy income trust in a C\$1.03 billion deal. It said April 9 that 90 percent of its production of 37,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day will be placed in Bonavista Energy Trust. CEO Keith McPhail said Bonavista, which started as a C\$20 million company in 1997, has run out of expansion prospects in the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin. Trusts traditionally direct 75 percent to 95 percent of their cash flow to investors rather than into E&P activities.

Canada on notice: Wyoming gas output to soar

Canadian natural gas producers have been put on notice that they could lose out to production from Wyoming's Powder River Basin unless they tie up long-term pipeline capacity. Paul Miller, vice president of Northern Border Pipeline Co., said contracts for 1 billion cubic feet per day on the Northern Border system and 1.8 bcf on the TransCanada PipeLines system expire in November. He said Wyoming output is now 900 million cubic feet per day and could soar to 5 bcf in the next three to five years.

Refiners Frontier, Holly agree to merge

Privately held U.S. refining independents Frontier Oil and Holly have agreed to a merger valued at \$462 million in cash, shares and assumed debt. The combined com-

see BRIEFS page A6

GOVERNMENT

Railroad bonds back for gas financing

Two railroad bonding bills, one for local gas, one for \$17 billion

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News Editor-in-Chief

Remember Alaska Railroad bonding for North Slope natural gas development, introduced by the Knowles administration last year? It died in the Alaska Legislature, but is now back, with proposals in the Alaska House authorizing the railroad to issue bonds for slope gas development and for local gas utilities.

House Bill 235, introduced April 2 by Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch, R-Juneau, would authorize use of railroad bonds to finance community gas lines, allowing the Alaska Railroad to "provide financing for and operation of facilities for the transportation and distribution of natural gas, propane air, and manufactured gas."

The bill authorizes bonds to provide gas public utility service in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska: Juneau, Sitka, Haines, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Yakutat, Angoon, Cordova, Craig, Kake, Klawock, Petersburg, Skagway, Valdez, Wrangell, Klukwan and Metlakatla.

House Bill 267, introduced April 15 by Rep. Vic Kohring, R-Wasilla, and cosponsored by Rep. Harry Crawford, D-Anchorage, revives Alaska Railroad bond financing for a North Slope gas project, authorizing the Alaska Railroad to issue up to \$17 billion in bonds "to finance the construction of a natural gas pipeline and related facilities for the transportation of natural gas recovered from the North Slope of this state."

As former Gov. Tony Knowles explained in February 2002, the state has U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, to thank because when the U.S. Congress transferred the Alaska Railroad to the state in 1983, Stevens had included in that transfer a special exemption to the railroad to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance industrial development.

HB 267 provides that the bonds could finance facilities "within and outside the state without regard to whether the facilities are or will be owned in whole or part by the corporation or located on land

owned by the corporation."

Both bills have been referred to the House Special Committee on Oil and Gas.

Other bills moving

House Bill 11, limiting revenues to the Alaska permanent fund to 25 percent of royalties, passed the House April 15 and moved to the Senate, where it was referred to Senate Finance. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Norm Rokeberg, R-Anchorage, sets all royalty contributions to the fund at the constitutionally mandated 25 percent. Department of Revenue fiscal notes say deposits to the general fund would be increased by some \$40-\$55 million annually; royalty deposits to the permanent fund would be reduced by the same amount, and permanent fund dividends would be reduced by amounts estimated at \$1 per dividend in 2005 to \$20 per dividend in 2012.

House Bill 57, royalty gas contracts, passed the House April 16 and moved on to the Senate. Sponsored by Rep. Mike Chenault, R-Nikiski, the bill gives the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources authority to negotiate royalty contracts on natural gas and includes manufacturers in the negotiating process.

"The state has always negotiated with natural gas producers, but not with the manufacturers," Chenault said in a statement. "The manufacturers also incur costs for state royalties; therefore, they should participate in royalty negotiations."

A fiscal note from Mark Myers, director of the Division of Oil and Gas, says the bill requires "DNR to enter into agreements with lessees to use the price for gas established in contract(s) entered into on or after the effective date between the lessee and a manufacturer of agricultural chemicals as the value of the state's royalty share."

The Agrium fertilizer plant is the beneficiary of this bill, estimated to cost the state \$11.5 million for the fiscal years 2004-09. ●

continued from page A3

BREAKTHROUGH

Hart Searle, a spokesman for the Delta producers, told Petroleum News that the resource agreement could help "kick-start" negotiations with the Deh Cho.

He said the producers' consortium has always been "ready, willing and anxious" to discuss benefits, plans and access" matters with the Deh Cho and an agreement that clarifies which land is available for resource development should help to "move the process forward."

The agreement also clears the way for land postings within a year for a region that Canada's National Energy Board estimates has undiscovered marketable resources of 10.2 trillion cubic feet. Production in the Liard Plateau has totaled more than 90 billion cubic feet in almost three years, but exploration ventures involving companies such as Purcell Energy, Talisman Energy and Chevron Canada Resources have been stalled by the absence of a land agreement.

—GARY PARK

Petroleum News Calgary correspondent

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● GOVERNMENT

BLM to improve application process

Goal is to increase efficiency for processing drilling applications

PETROLEUM NEWS ANCHORAGE STAFF

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management said April 16 that it is implementing "fundamental new management strategies" to improve the agency's processing of oil and gas permit applications as part of the implementation of President Bush's National Energy Policy.

"These innovative strategies will update the permit application process while ensuring protection of cultural and other resources on the public lands," said BLM Director Kathleen Clarke.



KATHLEEN CLARKE

"Overall, the new policies will help implement the National Energy Policy. These important steps move us toward a much improved method of working with our energy partners across the country and ensure a reliable supply of affordable energy for America's families and businesses."

BLM said the goal of the new policies is to enhance the agency's efficiency in processing applications for permits to drill.

The new policies include:

- Simultaneous processing and completing of environmental analyses on multiple permit applications with similar characteristics;

- Geographic area development planning approach for fields or areas within fields, "designed to meet the BLM's environmental goals while addressing the operator's business needs";

- Standard operating practice agreements to identify drilling and surface practices for entire oil and gas fields or geologic formations to "improve protection of the environment, reduce paperwork and eliminate redundancy in project analyses";

- Applying best environmental practices and allowing block surveys of cultural resources "to cover larger areas, resulting in a more thorough survey of cultural resources and greater flexibility in planning";

- Promoting clear and consistent use of "conditions of approval" for permit applications;

- Revising established procedures for completing applications for permits to drill; and

- Initiating a working group to revise and update BLM's brochure on oil and gas surface operating standards.

Policy changes are effective immediately.

The agency is establishing workgroups to revise "Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1," the agency's procedure for completing applications for permits to drill, and to revise the brochure on operating standards. Drafts of the revised onshore order No. 1 and the brochure are to be completed by March 1, 2004. ●

continued from page A4

BRIEFS

pany will have initial output of 263,000 barrels per day from five refineries in Kansas, Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah and Montana and a 25 percent market share in the Rocky Mountain region.

El Paso asks for employees' advice

On April 14, El Paso Corp. filed a letter with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission saying it has sent a letter to employees asking for ideas on how to cut expenses for its three-month "clean slate initiative." The letter said El Paso's costs increased as a result of mergers with Sonat, Tenneco and Coastal Corp., but expenses haven't decreased as El Paso has shrunk in the past year in the face of a weak energy market, the ongoing shutdown of its energy trading unit, heavy debt, fleeing shareholders and stepped-up scrutiny from credit rating agencies and regulators in the aftermath of the collapse of Enron Corp.

El Paso sells stake in East Coast Power

El Paso Merchant Energy, a subsidiary of El Paso Corp., is selling its stake in East Coast Power to a subsidiary of The Goldman Sachs Group Inc. for \$456 million. The cash sale was announced April 16 and is subject to a number of conditions.

Kyoto cash: Stanford donates \$350 million

KYOTO CASH: James Stanford, a former chief executive officer at Petro-Canada, is handing out C\$350 million of Canadian government money to accelerate commercialization of technologies to help Canada meet its Kyoto Protocol targets. He is chairman of the government's Sustainable Development Technology Fund. Despite Kyoto opposition from his former company and the industry at large, Stanford said the "debate is over." Now the challenge is to make the climate change treaty work.

Temps in Canada Arctic hit 5,000 year high

A study to be published soon by researchers at Queen's University, Ontario, says temperatures in Canada's Arctic are the warmest in 5,000 years. The findings show that algae requiring long

periods of open water, free of ice, are thriving in 50 Northwest Territories lakes. Queen's biologist John Smol said the easiest explanation is global warming.

Suncor to buy ConocoPhillips refinery

Calgary-based Suncor Energy said April 15 that its U.S. subsidiary has reached an agreement with ConocoPhillips to acquire its Denver, Colorado refinery, along with 43 Phillips-branded retail stations and associated storage, pipeline and distribution facilities. Suncor is paying US\$150 million plus buying current crude and product inventories. The company says the acquisition, which is subject to a number of conditions including approval of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, is a key strategic step in its oil sands growth strategy.

ARC Energy, Star Oil and Gas close deal

ARC Energy Trust said April 16 that it had closed on its acquisition of Star Oil & Gas following receipt of all regulatory approvals. ARC, Canada's second largest conventional oil and gas royalty trust with an enterprise value of approximately \$2.4 billion, will change its name to ARC Resources Ltd.

Michigan web site offers gas price info

The state of Michigan has a new web site for consumers to get information on gasoline in Michigan, including gas prices, where to find gas stations and tips for buying gasoline. Check it out at www.michigan.gov/gasprices

Union files Habitat Division grievance

The Alaska State Employees Association has filed a grievance filed with the state Personnel Division over layoffs that will result from Gov. Frank Murkowski's executive order to do away with the state's Department of Fish and Game's Habitat Division. The union cites contract violations as the reason for the filing. Twenty-two division employees will lose their jobs May 1 when the agency's authority to issue permits is transferred to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Habitat biologists have been criticized for delaying development projects by holding up permits or demanding unnecessary studies or other paperwork, Murkowski has said.

NORTH AMERICA BRIEFS

Decision could affect Exxon Valdez judgment

An early April U.S. Supreme Court decision limiting the size of jury awards could affect the \$5 billion judgment in the Exxon Valdez oil spill case, which is still pending. The court ruled in a case involving a Utah traffic accident that a state court jury's award of \$145 million was excessive and found that punitive damages should not so vastly exceed the actual damages. The court also said juries may not award giant sums to punish companies just because they're big, rich or regarded as part of an unpopular industry.

ChevronTexaco cuts CEO's bonus by 86%

ChevronTexaco reduced its year-end bonus for Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Dave O'Reilly by 86 percent due to lower than anticipated income in 2002, the company said in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission in mid-April. O'Reilly received a \$700,000 bonus for 2002, compared with \$5 million for 2001.

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IRAQ

Iraqi oil fields under U.S. control

All oil fields in Iraq now fall within areas controlled by the U.S. coalition, a U.S. general announced April 14.

Allied forces had previously secured all 1,000 oil wells in southern Iraq. Kurdish allies last week seized the northern oil city of Kirkuk, Iraq's No. 2 oil center, which pumps as much as 900,000 barrels a day.

U.S. Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks made the announcement at a U.S. Central Command briefing in Doha, Qatar.

"There is one well we discovered in the north in recent days that is still burning, and that will be addressed as soon as we can do so," he added.

Iraq has the world's second-largest proven crude reserves, at 112 billion barrels, but its pipelines, pumping stations and oil reservoirs have suffered for years from a dearth of funds and lack of maintenance. In recent years, oil revenue has accounted for 95 percent of Iraq's revenue and is estimated at \$22 billion a year.

On April 13, Kuwaiti firefighters extinguished the last oil well fire in Iraq's southern al-Rumeila field. Since the war began, firefighters have put out fires at four Iraqi oil wells that were sabotaged by Saddam Hussein's loyalists. Another seven wells sabotaged by Iraqis went out by themselves.

Saddam's forces booby-trapped hundreds of Kuwait's oil wells after invading the country in 1990, and blew them up during the 1991 Gulf War as U.S. forces drove them out of Kuwait. It took months for the fires to be put out.

—THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Williams sells more assets, moves closer to \$3.7 billion sale goal

Financially troubled energy company Williams is now about two-thirds of the way to its goal of shedding \$3.7 billion in assets this year, agreeing to sell its 5,800-mile Texas Gas Transmission natural gas pipeline system to New York conglomerate Loews for about \$1.05 billion in cash and debt.

The April 14 announcement came just a week after Tulsa, Okla.-based Williams said it agreed to sell \$400 million worth of U.S. exploration and production properties to Fort Worth, Texas, independent XTO Energy.

Last month Williams completed the sale of its Memphis, Tenn., refining operations to Premcor for about \$455 million, and agreed to sell its power agreement with Jackson Electric Membership Corp. in Georgia to Progress Energy for \$188 million.

Williams' Alaska North Pole refinery and small stake in the Trans-Alaska Pipeline are among assets yet to find a buyer.

In its latest transaction, Williams said Loews would pay the company \$795 million in cash and assume \$250 million of Texas Gas debt. The sale is expected to close within 60 days, Williams said.

"We are quickly and carefully moving forward with our goal of creating a financially strengthened, more focused Williams," said Steve Malcolm, Williams' chairman and chief executive officer.

Williams transports about 12 percent of the natural gas consumed in the United States.

Loews, a holding company, is one of the largest diversified financial corporations in the United States. Its subsidiaries include CNA Financial, Lorillard, Diamond Offshore Drilling and Loews Hotels.

The Texas Gas pipeline system, with a capacity of 2.8 billion cubic feet per day, transports natural gas from the Gulf Coast, east

see **WILLIAMS** page A8

• J U N E A U , A L A S K A

Alaska boosts revenue forecast

State projects ANS crude average at \$28.14, adds 35 million to NPR-A production

By **KRISTEN NELSON**

Petroleum News Editor-in-Chief

The Alaska Department of Revenue is now projecting North Slope crude oil delivered to the West Coast to average \$28.14 a barrel for fiscal year 2003, up from the fall Revenue forecast of \$25.94 a barrel.

Commissioner of Revenue Bill Corbus said April 10 when the department presented its 2003 spring forecast that the increase is due to price volatility caused by the Iraq war and problems with production from not just Iraq, but also Venezuela and Nigeria.



BILL CORBUS

Corbus said the department expects production from all three countries to return to past levels. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, he said, will then face the challenge of preventing a worldwide oil glut.

The department is projecting an ANS West Coast price of \$25.28 a barrel for FY 2004 and \$21.67 for FY 2005. The FY 2004 projection is an increase from the \$23.25 a barrel the department projected in its fall forecast; the FY 2005 projection is down from \$22 a barrel projected last fall.

For 2006-10, Corbus said, the department

believes that the price will be about \$22 a barrel, the bottom of the \$22-\$28 per barrel OPEC range. These numbers are the same as the department's fall forecast.

There were two adjustments for NPR-A: production was shifted out two years "as the permitting timelines and construction planning have become clearer." The department also added 35 million barrels to its projected recovery from NPR-A.

The department had used a post-1985 average of \$16.50 to \$17.50 a barrel for long-term forecasting. Due to OPEC's success "over the past four years in maintaining the OPEC basket price within its target price band" of \$22 to \$28 per barrel, the department began with its fall forecast to use the \$22 per barrel bottom of OPEC's target range as the base case long-term oil price forecast.

Production: 21 percent from new fields by 2010

ANS production is expected to average just under a million barrels a day for FY 2003 and to remain at about that level through 2010, gradually rising to just a little more than a million barrels a day, virtually the

see **REVENUE** page A8

• C A L G A R Y , A L B E R T A

Alberta makes soft price forecasts

Natural resource revenues are projected to account for 22% of total revenues in 2003

By **GARY PARK**

Petroleum News Calgary Correspondent

The Alberta government has taken its customary cautious stance in forecasting oil and natural gas prices for the 2003-04 fiscal year.

In releasing its budget April 8, the province based its revenue projections on an average of US\$23.30 per barrel for West Texas Intermediate crude oil and C\$4.05 (US\$2.75) per thousand cubic feet for AECO spot gas, which most analysts placed at the low end of their estimates.



PATRICIA NELSON

Last year's predictions of US\$20 for oil and C\$3 for gas were hiked in late August to US\$25.50 and C\$3.25, which are expected to generate C\$6.43 billion in natural resource revenues for 2002-03 once the final numbers are released in June.

For the new fiscal year, Alberta has budgeted for C\$4.78 billion in resource revenue, or 21.8 percent of total revenues, with crude production

expected to average 1.67 million barrels per day and gas volumes at 5.03 tcf for the year. Alberta accounts for about 80 percent of all Canadian oil and gas production.

Non-conventional oil production, including oil sands and condensate, will represent 63 percent of total oil output, up from 56 percent in 2002-03. Non-conventional gas sources, such as coalbed methane, will edge up to 0.5 percent from 0.3 percent.

Sustainable budget plan

Finance Minister Patricia Nelson also unveiled a previously announced plan to spend no more than C\$3.5 billion a year from oil and gas revenues, with anything above that level being directed into a "sustainability fund" that will be drawn down when commodity prices fall.

"Instead of pegging our budgets and spending plans to best guesses about the price of oil and gas, we'll consistently count on C\$3.5 billion in oil and gas revenues," she said.

Government land sales are predicted to yield C\$679 million, up strongly from 2002's C\$502

see **ALBERTA** page A8

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PARIS

IEA says OPEC shouldn't cut production; OPEC leader disagrees

OPEC should think twice about cutting production to boost sagging oil prices because supplies remain short and the immediate outlook remains cloudy, the International Energy Agency said April 10.

But OPEC's president, Abdullah Hamad bin al-Attiyah of Qatar, said April 10 in Paris that the world's oil markets are glutted, and the resumption of Iraqi oil production could make that worse.

Officials at the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries said April 7 that oil ministers planned to meet April 24 in Vienna, Austria, whether or not the war in Iraq has ended.

Most OPEC members have been producing at maximum capacity to keep supplies plentiful during the war. However, oil ministers fear that OPEC might be oversupplying the market just as demand starts falling to its seasonal low.

The Paris-based IEA, which represents the world's wealthiest countries, said stocks were low in member nations, and there were doubts about the export situations in Iraq, Nigeria and Venezuela.

"Significant production curbs ... may impact upon the industry's ability to rebuild stocks," the report said.

Al-Attiyah said the current crude oil excess totals more than 2 million barrels a day.

IEA: managing falling prices tricky

The IEA said OPEC may find that managing falling oil prices will be as tricky as controlling recent high prices.

With oil prices over \$25 a barrel, the incentive for some OPEC members to cut output may fade, the IEA said.

Saudi Arabia pumped an extra 450,000 barrels per day in March compared to February, raising daily output to 9.32 million barrels, the IEA said. The Saudis have reportedly turned down requests for extra volumes of oil from customers, and there were unconfirmed signals that "the recent sharp ramp-up in production may be drawing to a close," the IEA said.

The report said supplies are uncertain because of unrest in Nigeria's main oil-producing region, which has cut the country's output by 40 percent. However, production is increasing in Venezuela following civil disturbances there.

The IEA cut its forecast for average demand in the second quarter, which it now sees at 76.38 million barrels per day, down 2 million barrels daily in the first quarter.

—THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

continued from page A7

ALBERTA

million, but well short of the record C\$1.08 billion in 2001.

For the first quarter of 2003, operators paid C\$174.5 million for exploration rights, with average prices surging to

C\$256 per hectare (2.471 acres) from C\$156 for the same period last year. But analysts are counting on land values easing once commodity prices dip.

Welcome news for the petroleum industry was a government pledge to lower the corporate tax rate this year to 12.5 percent from 13 percent and drop the rate to 11 percent in 2004. ●

Major North Slope fields in decline

Alaska's major oil fields, Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk, are in decline, but some new fields haven't yet reached peak production. Alaska Department of Revenue figures for average production per day show that Prudhoe Bay peaked in 1988 at 1.605 million barrels per day. Kuparuk River and Endicott peaked in 1993 at 322,000 bpd and 115,000 bpd respectively. Greater Point McIntyre (primarily Lisburne, Point McIntyre and Niakuk) peaked at 180,000 bpd in 1997.

Milne Point (includes Schrader Bluff and Sag River production) is projected to peak in 2006 at 62,000 bpd and Prudhoe Bay satellites (Midnight Sun, Polaris, Aurora, Borealis and Orion) at 89,000 bpd in 2008.

Kuparuk River satellites (West Sak, Tabasco, Tam, Meltwater and other potential Kuparuk satellites) show increasing production reaching 75,000 bpd in 2010.

Northstar is expected to be at peak production, 60,000 bpd, from 2004 through 2006, while Alpine will peak at 103,000 bpd from 2005 through 2007. Alpine satellites Nanuk and Fiord will peak at 14,000 bpd in 2007-09 and at 20,000 bpd in 2008-09, respectively. Point Thomson will peak at 75,000 bpd in 2009. Other known onshore fields, Liberty and the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska will begin production in 2008-2010.

continued from page A7

REVENUE

same as the fall 2002 forecast.

Corbus noted that by 2010 the department expects 21 percent of production to come from new fields — some of those already discovered, and some not yet discovered. He said the state expects the exploration program to continue and new fields to be discovered.

The department said its production forecast is "virtually unchanged" from the fall, but the spring numbers are a little lower.

The FY 2003-FY 2010 Alaska North Slope fall production forecast averaged more than a million barrels per day, ranging from 956,000 bpd in FY 2008 to 1,091,000 bpd in FY 2009. The average of the spring forecast for FY 2003-FY 2010, however, is 990,125 bpd, ranging from a low of 957,000 bpd in FY 2008 to a high of 1,031,000 bpd in FY 2009.

The 21 percent production from new fields by 2010 is also down from the department's fall forecast, which projected 26.9 percent of the state's production to come from new oil in FY 2010.

The significant change there is in projections for production from the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, which are now more conservative than they were in the

fall. The spring forecast includes NPR-A production beginning in FY 2009 at some 3,000 barrels per day and increasing to 20,000 bpd in FY 2010. The fall forecast, however, showed NPR-A production beginning a year earlier and coming on stronger: 30,000 bpd in FY 2008; 65,000 bpd in FY 2009; 90,000 bpd in FY 2010.

Production forecast more difficult

Production forecasting is "somewhat more difficult," the department said, because of "increased downtime in the newer, high-productivity fields at Alpine and Northstar. In order to keep production costs low and the footprint small, these fields are produced with very little equipment redundancy, so as a result, mechanical disruptions can affect production for the entire field." The department said it is continuing to monitor that situation and has adjusted its production forecast to take this into account.

The other change the department noted in its spring forecast is delayed development — beyond FY 2007 — of NPR-A discoveries. There were two adjustments for NPR-A: production was shifted out two years "as the permitting timelines and construction planning have become clearer." The department also added 35 million barrels to its projected recovery from NPR-A. ●

continued from page A7

WILLIAMS

Texas and north Louisiana to markets in the South and Midwest.

After the deal closes, Williams' subsidiaries would own and operate about 14,000 Miles of interstate pipelines, consist-

ing of the Transco and Northwest Pipeline systems. Williams also maintains a 50 percent stake in the 581-mile Gulfstream pipeline.

As a result of the sale, Williams said it expects to take a pre-tax impairment charge to earnings of about \$110-to-\$120 million in the 2003 first quarter.

—PETROLEUM NEWS HOUSTON STAFF



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• HOUSTON, TEXAS

Oilfield service sector's earnings lag

Earnings expected to be flat to down as service companies await windfall from surging exploration and production profits

PETROLEUM NEWS HOUSTON STAFF

A huge chasm has opened between U.S.-based oilfield service companies and the exploration and production spending on which they depend, according to projected 2003 first quarter earnings for both groups.

The run-up in commodity prices during the first quarter could boost profits for exploration and production companies more than 80 percent from the prior quarter, up from an estimated 60 percent increase just a few weeks ago. Companies are to begin reporting the week of April 20.

However, not much of the windfall seems to be filtering down the food chain. Investment bank Salomon Smith Barney said it expects two-thirds of the service companies it covers to report flat to reduced earnings compared to the previous quarter.

"Most companies should report negative sequential comparisons, following a series of mostly negative estimate revisions," the firm concluded in a report to investors.

Commodity prices reached extraordinary heights during the first quarter. NYMEX Henry Hub prices for natural gas averaged \$6.58 per million cubic feet, versus \$4.07 in the prior quarter and \$2.54 in first quarter 2002. West Texas Intermediate crude prices followed a similar path, rising on average to \$33.97 per barrel, compared to \$28.24 in the prior quarter and \$21.57 in the year-ago period.

Producers hedge on spending

Analysts note that exploration and production companies, because of economic uncertainties and a lack of viable prospects, have been using their cash reserves primarily to pay down debt, buy back company shares and invest in relatively safe mergers and acquisitions.

Nevertheless, service companies exposed to North American land drilling during the first quarter, such as Nabors Industries, BJ Services and Patterson-UTI, should show improvements over the prior quarter.

Helped by surging commodity prices and seasonal trends, U.S. and Canadian land drilling combined increased by 23 percent quarter-over-quarter. Canadian drilling was especially strong, up 74 percent sequentially and up 30 percent from first quarter 2002. U.S. land rig counts rose 6 percent sequentially and 10 percent from the year-over-year quarter. Still, U.S. natural gas production fell 3 to 5 percent last year and is expected to trail

demand by 3-to-1 this year.

One of the problems is the Gulf of Mexico. The offshore rig count during this year's first quarter fell by 2 percent compared to the prior quarter and by 10 percent compared to the same period last year.

Additionally, the international drilling environment was lackluster, down by 2 percent quarter-over-quarter and up just 2 percent year-over-year. Activity was particularly slow in Latin America, the North Sea and West Africa.

Nigeria uncertainty

Overseas, industry analysts seem to be particularly concerned about Nigeria, where increased civil unrest over the past few weeks forced Shell, ChevronTexaco and TotalFinaElf to shut in a cumulative 850,000 barrels per day, or 38 percent of the nation's total daily production.

Salomon Smith Barney estimates that while 3 to 5 percent of worldwide exploration and production spending occurs in Nigeria, only 1 percent of worldwide rigs is located in the region. However, service revenues are among the most concentrated of any geographic market, particularly offshore. Prolonged unrest could seriously disrupt service companies operating in Nigeria, particularly Noble, GlobalSantaFe and Schlumberger, Halliburton, Smith International and Baker Hughes. Already, two jackup rigs have been evacuated.

And offshore production is processed through onshore facilities where violent confrontations between Ijaw militants and Nigerian soldiers continue, creating more uncertainty.

Because of weaker activity than expected in offshore and international drilling in the first quarter, per-share earnings for service companies with exposure to these sectors are expected to decline 16 percent from the prior quarter and 21 percent from the year-ago period. For offshore drillers alone, per-share earnings are expected to fall 26 percent sequentially and 35 percent year-over-year.

However, it generally takes time for exploration and production spending to make its way to the service sector. Despite last quarter's weak drilling environment outside onshore United States, Salomon Smith Barney expects full-year per-share earnings for service companies to rise about 14 percent on the average.

"In our view, the first quarter will represent the earnings trough for most service and drilling companies," the firm said. ●



JUDY PATRICK

Investment bank Salomon Smith Barney said it expects two-thirds of the service companies it covers to report flat to reduced earnings compared to the previous quarter. Nevertheless, service companies exposed to North American land drilling during the first quarter, such as Nabors Industries, should show improvements over the prior quarter.



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CENTRAL NORTH SLOPE

AOGCC proposes rules for Prudhoe wells

The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission has published proposed rules for governing annular pressures in Prudhoe Bay development wells and set May 27 as a tentative hearing date. Annular pressures were determined as the cause of an Aug. 16 explosion at well A-22 at Prudhoe which seriously injured a worker.

The commission held a hearing in November on whether or not it should issue such rules.

Prudhoe Bay operator BP Exploration (Alaska) and the Alaska Oil and Gas Association told the commission that changes have been made in operating procedures and training following the A-22 explosion, and both said no new regulations are needed.

The commission said Jan. 16 that it had decided that a rule addressing annular pressure management in Prudhoe Bay field development wells is appropriate to protect worker safety. That rule, the commission said, would require BP to keep the commission informed about wells with pressure communication or leaks, and to get permission from the commission for the continued operation of such wells.

Rules proposed April 16 include: daily monitoring of Prudhoe Bay wells to detect sustained pressures and notification to the commission within three working days of any Prudhoe Bay unit "well that exhibits sustained inner annulus pressure or outer annulus pressure greater than 20 percent of the burst pressure rating of the annulus's outer tubular." The commission may require corrective action or increased surveillance for a well with sustained inner annulus or outer annulus pressure.

If a well has inner annulus or outer annulus pressure greater than 45 percent of the burst pressure rating of the annulus's outer tubular, the commission must be notified and the well must be immediately shut in.

At pressures not greater than 45 percent, the commission could sanction continued operation "if the well operator demonstrates, by mechanical integrity testing, the existence of two competent barriers to pressure communication" at testing which the commission has an opportunity to witness.

Want to know more?

If you'd like to read more about the annular pressure issue go to Petroleum News' web site: www.PetroleumNewsAlaska.com

2003

- **March 9** AOGCC, with ... tackles old and new business
- **Jan. 26** AOGCC will issue rule on annular pressure management
- **Jan. 26** Pressure exceeded design burst rating

2002

- **Nov. 24** OGCC hears from BP, AOGA
- **Sept. 29** BP reports to AOGCC
- **Sept. 15** BP begins bringing 137 Prudhoe Bay wells back on line
- **Sept. 1** BP halts production from 150 slope wells

—KRISTEN NELSON, Petroleum News editor-in-chief

● GULF OF MEXICO

Feds say no to Florida drilling

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An aide to President Bush has assured Florida's two senators that pending energy legislation would not be used to lift a moratorium on oil and natural gas drilling within 100 miles of the state's gulf coast.

Sen. Bill Nelson's office released a copy April 9 of a letter from Rebecca W. Watson, assistant secretary of interior for land and minerals management, that included a renewed commitment against such drilling. She was responding to an April 2 letter from Nelson and Sen. Bob Graham.

In the letter dated April 8, Watson wrote that the energy bill before the Senate does not affect moratoriums on new lease rights for drilling or exploration in the Gulf of Mexico off Florida, except for one small section south of Alabama, and President Bush's directive against drilling in existing lease areas off Florida.

The two Democratic senators, Republican Gov. Jeb Bush, the president's brother, and other Florida lawmakers are worried that the bill, which calls for a report to Congress analyzing "restrictions and impediments" to oil drilling, could reopen waters off Florida's coast to such activity.

Moratoriums will continue

Watson wrote that the Interior Department's budget request includes language to continue the moratoriums, in effect until 2012.

"Please be assured that the depart-

ment remains firm in that commitment," she wrote.

The governor, Nelson, Graham and 24 of Florida's 25 U.S. representatives, meanwhile, sent a letter to House and Senate leaders opposing any legislation that would open waters off Florida to drilling. Only Rep. John Mica, R-Winter Park, did not sign it.

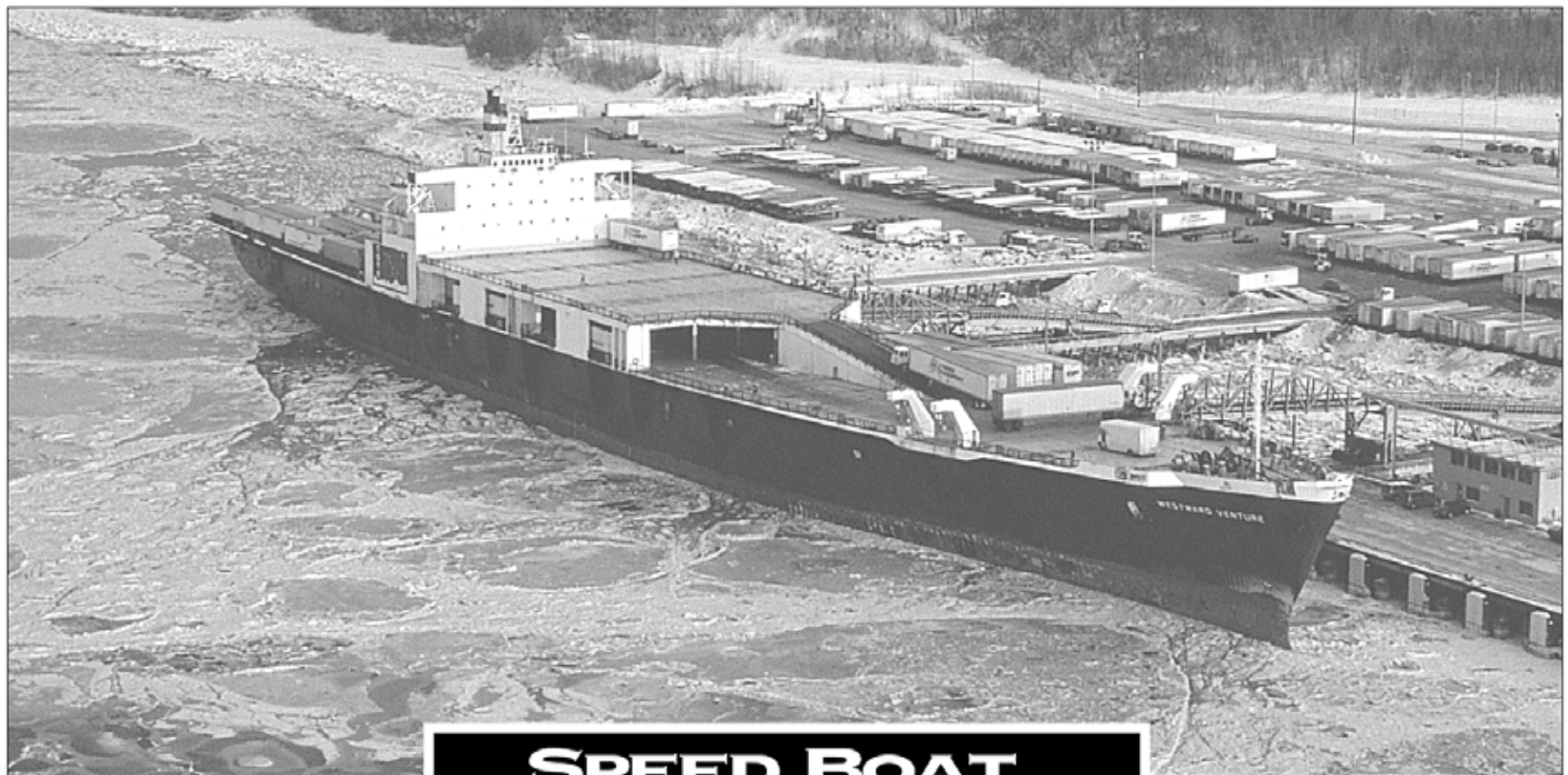
"The majority of Floridians oppose drilling in the Gulf of Mexico because of the threat to the tourism industry, which is vital to the state's economy," the letter says.

It also points out the eastern gulf is vital for military weapons testing and training, particularly because bombing ranges on the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico are being closed.

Also, Graham and Reps. Jeff Miller, R-Chumuckla, and Jim Davis, D-Tampa, introduced legislation to protect the moratoriums by removing the "impediment" inventory from the Senate bill and similar legislation in the House.

"It appears the language could be construed to open the doors for offshore drilling off Florida," Miller said. "The Department of the Interior says that's not what's intended by the language, but there is such a thing as the law of unintended consequences."

Graham's attempt, through an amendment to have the eastern gulf and nine other underwater blocs exempted from the proposed inventory, failed April 9 by a 17-6 vote. A Graham spokesman said he plans to reintroduce his amendment to the full Senate. ●



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MEXICO

Mexico boosts output targets, but slashes reserves

Mexico's stated-owned Pemex is targeting an 8 percent hike in crude oil production this year to 3.43 million barrels per day.

That would raise its export potential to the United States by 20 percent to 2 million barrels per day, supplanting Saudi Arabia, Canada and Venezuela as the leading external sources of U.S. crude.

Pemex's annual report also forecast 2 percent growth in natural gas output to 4.42 billion cubic feet per day.

The company said the increases are possible because of a surge in upstream investment that followed the election of President Vicente Fox in late 2000.

That momentum will continue this year if Pemex achieves its goal of 581 development wells, almost 50 percent ahead of 2002.

But tougher accounting standards have lowered Mexico's proven reserves of crude and equivalent and natural gas to 20.08 billion barrels, a dramatic drop from 30.8 billion barrels at the end of 2001.

Over the same period, proven probable and possible reserves dipped almost 3 billion barrels to 50 billion barrels.

—GARY PARK, Petroleum News Calgary correspondent

CENTRAL NORTH SLOPE

BP applies to expand Milne Point

BP Exploration (Alaska) applied April 7 to expand the Milne Point unit and the Schrader Bluff participating area on Alaska's North Slope. BP is operator and 100 percent working interest owner at Milne Point.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil and Gas, said the proposed expansion area is on the southeast border of the Milne Point unit and northwest of the Prudhoe Bay unit, sections 5 and 8 of township 12 north range 11 east, Umiat Meridian, and would include some 1,280 acres, the eastern half of ADL 380110. The western half of this lease is already in the unit.

BP told the state this is acreage where the Schrader Bluff formation is believed "to be commercially viable at this time" and said it estimates that gross proven Schrader Bluff reserves within the expansion area are 10.9 million barrels of oil "subject to oil-water contacts." BP said it does not currently anticipate any further expansion of the Schrader Bluff participating area.

The expansion request is based on the development plans of the Schrader Bluff horizon at BP's newly constructed Milne Point S pad. S pad was sanctioned in June of 2000 and "is on schedule to develop BP's viscous oil strategy in Alaska," BP told the state. Fourteen production wells and 20 injection wells with facilities infrastructure are under development at S pad. Plans this year call for drilling beyond current Milne Point unit and Schrader Bluff participating area boundaries "in order to fully develop the reserve potential," the company said.

One producer-injector pattern is planned in the expansion area. BP said it might drill a second pattern to increase ultimate recovery, depending on the location of the oil-water contact.

—KRISTEN NELSON, Petroleum News editor-in-chief

● CENTRAL NORTH SLOPE

Winstar gets Kuparuk deal

ConocoPhillips, other owners, agree to drill well on independent's lease

By KRISTEN NELSON

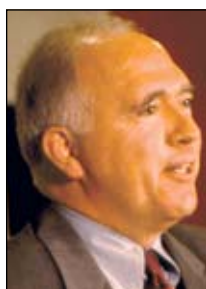
Petroleum News Editor-in-Chief

The paperwork is finally complete and Winstar Petroleum has the access it needs for drilling — and if that drilling is successful for production — at an oil and gas lease adjacent to the Kuparuk River field on Alaska's North Slope.

Meanwhile, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources is moving ahead with an application from Winstar to add the Winstar lease, which lies between the Kuparuk River and Milne Point units, to the Kuparuk unit.

The paperwork signed by the companies, a joinder agreement between Winstar and the Kuparuk River working interest owners, gives the Alaska-based independent access to Kuparuk facilities on the same basis as Kuparuk satellites, Winstar President Jim Weeks told Petroleum News April 16. The facilities are owned by the companies which developed the Kuparuk River field and unit operator ConocoPhillips Alaska will drill to the Winstar offshore lease from drill site 3-R on the northern edge of the Kuparuk unit.

All of the working interest owners at Kuparuk signed off on the joinder agreement, Weeks said. In addition to ConocoPhillips, they include BP Exploration (Alaska), Union Oil Company of California, ExxonMobil Alaska Production and ChevronTexaco.



JIM WEEKS

Access a long time coming

It has been a long time coming. Weeks told the Resource Development Council's annual conference in November that of the leases Winstar holds on the North Slope, the lease at Kuparuk, at Oliktok Point offshore just north of the Kuparuk unit, "has the highest potential of generating cash flow ...

"Based on 3-D seismic information we have, we believe there's a very high chance that the main Kuparuk River pool extends onto that lease," Weeks said. "We also believe there's a fair chance there's a substantial quantity of oil on another fault block offsetting the main pool."

Weeks said that Winstar, founded in 1996 by John Winther who teamed up with Dale Lindsey to buy leases at North Slope areawide sales in 1997

Want to know more?

If you'd like to read more about Winstar Petroleum, go to the Petroleum News Web site and search for some of the articles about the independent published in the last three and a half years.

Web site: www.PetroleumNewsAlaska.com

2003

- Jan. 19 Winstar Petroleum applies for expansion of Kuparuk River unit
- Jan. 5 What facilities owners can, can't do for new entrants on North Slope
- Jan. 5 Access to properties, facilities and Alaska Clean Seas necessary for independents to work in Alaska, say Bo Darrah and Jim Weeks

2002

- Oct. 20 Winstar, UltraStar sign exploration agreement with Chroma Energy
- Oct. 13 How many wells?
- July 28 Jim Weeks, Dale Lindsey form new independent, UltraStar
- April 7 Winstar wants year-round road to Badami; ice roads too costly
- Feb. 3 Affordable access to facilities key to attracting new oil companies

2001

- Oct. 28 North Slope, Beaufort Sea areawide lease sales bring in \$12.9 million
- March 28 Winstar blazes trail for independent producers on North Slope

2000

- Nov. 28 Jim Weeks joins Winstar Petroleum

and 1998, has "lined up the investment capital necessary to test these beliefs by drilling and we hope to do that in the next year."

A big advantage to that lease, he said, is that it can be drilled from Kuparuk drill site 3R, "about a mile and a half south of our intended drilling location (bottomhole)."

Charter, long-term negotiations

Weeks told the RDC conference that what makes the Winstar project possible is the Charter for Development of the Alaskan North Slope, signed by the state, BP and ARCO on Dec. 2, 1999. When Phillips Petroleum acquired ARCO's Alaska assets, it also signed on to the charter.

The charter, Weeks said, "obligates

see EXPANSION page A12



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continued from page A11

EXPANSION

ConocoPhillips and BP to furnish access to their facilities on — quote — reasonable terms. ... If we didn't have that charter I don't think we'd be in negotiations today and things wouldn't be as optimistic looking as they are," Weeks said.

North Slope drilling requires access to Alaska Clean Seas. "It costs half a million dollars to join," Weeks said, and you have to have a \$200 million net worth, which meant Winstar couldn't drill on its own.

"Based on 3-D seismic information we have, we believe there's a very high chance that the main Kuparuk River pool extends onto that lease."

— Jim Weeks, Winstar Petroleum

Winstar has been talking to the Kuparuk operator about drilling for three years, Weeks said, and finally in August of 2002 Phillips (now ConocoPhillips) agreed to drill.

"I'm optimistic that this will all get done and we will get our well drilled by the end of next year," he said in November.

One or more wells planned

Weeks described the planned drilling in the January application to the state: one or more wells would be drilled "to prove reserve potential" on lease ADL388584. ConocoPhillips will drill on Winstar's behalf from an existing gravel pad, Kuparuk River unit drill site 3R. Winstar Oliktok Point State No. 1 "will be drilled north into the down-thrown fault block," with a planned depth of some 6,700 feet true vertical depth, "or to a depth sufficient to penetrate the base of the Kuparuk River formation," Weeks said.

If the first well is successful, a second well would be drilled farther north "to further define reservoir extent."

If the first well is unsuccessful, a sidetrack would be drilled to the upthrown fault block. The expected true vertical depth of this well would be 6,900 feet.

ConocoPhillips will use Doyon Rig No. 141, currently under contract to

ConocoPhillips in the Kuparuk field. Winstar's plan of operations says drilling operations are planned to begin in mid-July. Drilling and completion are expected to take 13 days. Drilling operations, including a second well or a sidetrack, are expected to be complete by the end of August.

If a well to the Winstar lease finds commercial quantities of oil in the Kuparuk formation and in communication with the Kuparuk River reservoir, then Winstar can apply for an expansion of the Kuparuk participating area, the area within the unit from which oil and gas are produced. If there are commercial quantities, but not in the Kuparuk formation or not in communication with the Kuparuk reservoir within the unit, then Winstar can apply for formation of a separate participating area.

Tract participation

The joinder agreement allows for drilling a well on the Winstar tract and production from that tract if commercial quantities of oil and gas are found.

Winstar acquires no rights to the existing Kuparuk River unit properties — and the other owners acquire no rights to the Winstar lease.

If drilling is successful, Winstar will have access to Kuparuk River facilities on the same basis as Kuparuk River unit satellites and will have access to a minimum of five wellhead areas to Winstar.

Winstar is responsible for connecting its wells into drill site 3R facilities for transportation of its production.

The joinder agreement also says that drilling on this lease is a decision by Winstar: Winstar is responsible for its own review, analysis and interpretation of lease, geologic and geophysical data, and for oil and gas exploration, development and production operations and economic analysis.

And the agreement says the unit owners have a different view than Winstar: Winstar "acknowledges that its review, analysis and interpretation of its geologic and geophysical data have yielded an interpretation or result significantly different and substantially more optimistic than that of the Kuparuk owners," the agreement says.

If Winstar is successful in finding commercial quantities of oil in Oliktok Point State No. 1, it will be the first Alaska-owned independent to produce oil on the North Slope. ●

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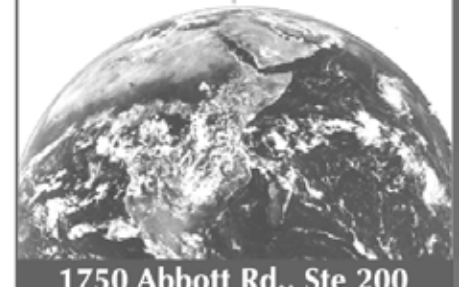
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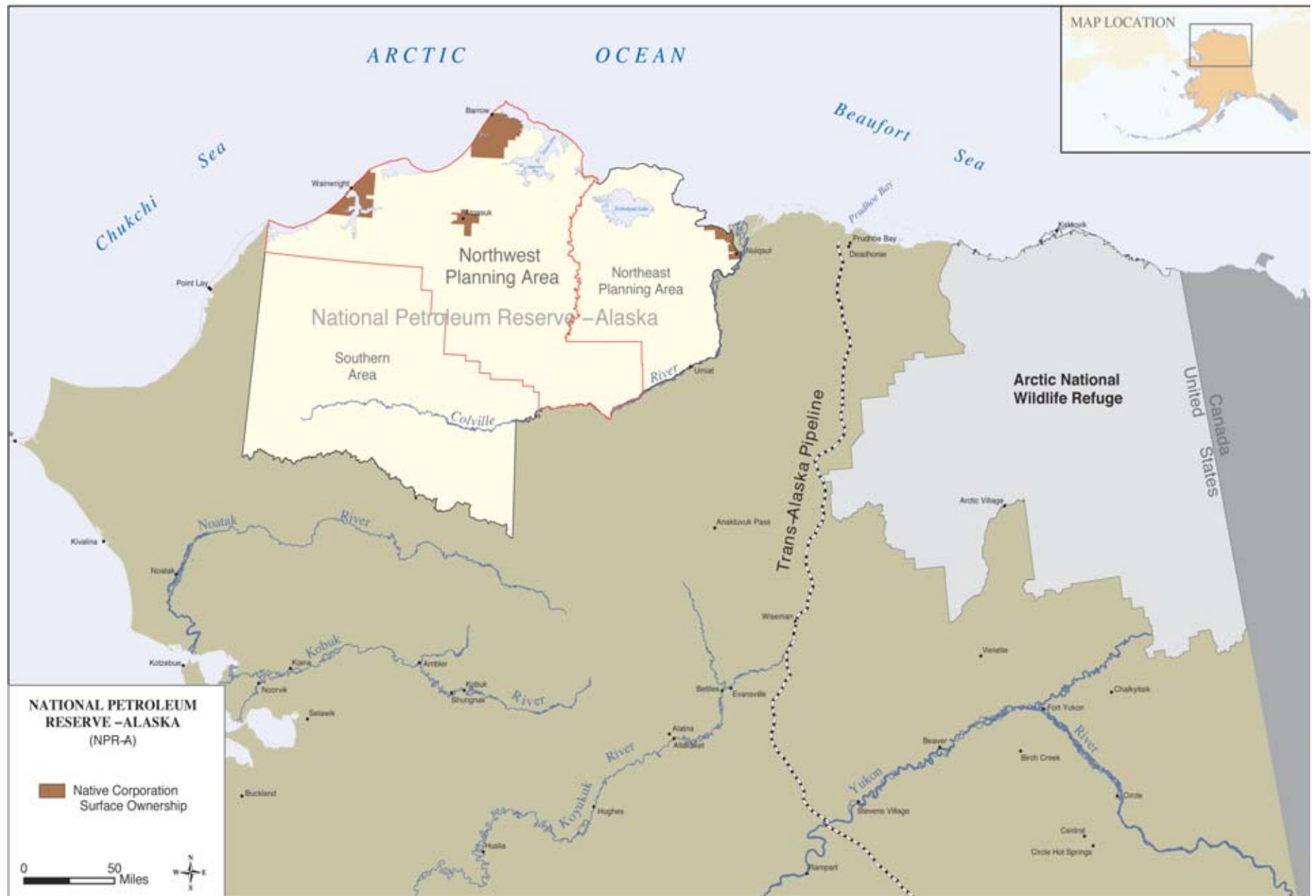


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Source: USDOI, BLM, 2002

National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) and the North Slope

continued from page A1

NPR-A

lease, but no surface occupancy was allowed. Peter Ditton, BLM's associate state director for Alaska, said the area is important both for oil resources and as a development base.

While the Teshekpuk Lake area is both "an important caribou habitat" and "a significant breeding and molting ground for several sensitive waterfowl species," Ditton said, the result of withholding the Teshekpuk Lake area from leasing was to

What BLM is considering, Ditton said, is performance-based stipulations, based on objectives rather than fixed rules, allowing the agency to adapt to changing technology.

exclude from leasing the "Barrow Arch east plays" estimated to contain some 2 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil.

Ditton said industry actions support the agency's view: A ConocoPhillips (Alaska)-Anadarko Petroleum partnership and BP bidding separately leased a perimeter around the withdrawn area and ConocoPhillips-Anadarko also leased the outer continental shelf portion of the Barrow Arch.

He also said that Teshekpuk Lake development is connected to development of the surrounding area: the OCS Barrow arch play depends on "an intermediate onshore facility," as is development of "smaller discontinuous reservoirs" in the northwest planning area of NPR-A.

Performance based stipulations

Bisson said knowledge gained during four years of exploration work in the north-

east NPR-A gives the agency confidence that the area can be explored safely "without significant impact to sensitive wildlife and subsistence resources. We also believe that we can develop critical hydrocarbon resources in a manner that protects these same values."

Technology for developing oil and gas has improved since Prudhoe Bay was developed. The agency's model for surface development in the Teshekpuk Lake area is Alpine, said Ditton. This most recent of onshore North Slope developments — it began producing in 2000 — is a roadless development, with drilling and production on a main compact pad with an adjacent runway.

The plan for the northeast NPR-A contains specific stipulations.

What BLM is considering, Ditton said, is performance-based stipulations, based on objectives rather than fixed rules, allowing the agency to adapt to changing technology.

He said an example of current requirements is that pipelines to be five feet off the ground to allow caribou passage. Performance based requirement would require pipelines to be high enough to allow free movement of caribou, setting the goal to be met rather than requiring a method which could become outmoded as technology changes.

Money is also an issue, Bisson said. BLM looks at plans every five years, but funding is such that they can only be revised every 10 to 15 years. Goal-based requirements, he said, could give plans a long and useful life by providing more flexibility up front.

Another goal for the North Slope is to have one uniform plan across the NPR-A, Bisson said. The proposed plan for the northwest NPR-A, out now in draft form, is different than the 1998 plan for the northeast.

Supplemental EIS

An environmental impact statement was prepared for the NPR-A northeast planning area, and Bisson said a supplemental EIS will be prepared for amendments to the plan. The agency will release a schedule for revising the plan and there will be opportu-

nities for public comment. He said opportunities for North Slope residents to comment will be scheduled to allow for subsistence activities. The amendments are expected to include both prescriptive and performance-based stipulations.

Bisson said he expects the process to be complete by the end of 2004. ●

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NORWAY

Marathon bounces back

Houston-based Marathon Oil, criticized by analysts for its poor exploration record in the Gulf of Mexico, has come back with an oil discovery in one of its other core areas, offshore Norway.

The company operated Kneler 25/4-7 well, located in 390 feet of water about 140 miles from Stavanger, encountered a 155-foot gross oil column, Marathon said April 15. Reserve estimates were not provided. Marathon said core and wireline logs were collected and are being analyzed.

"The success realized with the Kneler prospect demonstrates the potential of this Marathon core area," said Philip Behrman, Marathon's senior vice president of worldwide exploration. The company has not been nearly as fortunate in deepwater Gulf of Mexico, where it has drilled or participated in six dry holes or non-commercial finds during the past two years. Those disappointments have led the company to "de-emphasize" its deepwater program in the region.

It was Marathon's first operated well in Norway, drilled to a total depth of 7,425 feet and located 7.5 miles west of the producing Heimdal platform.

Marathon said the Kneler discovery is part of a three-well program to evaluate the West Heimdal area. The next exploration well would be drilled on the nearby Boa prospect and into the same formation probed by the Kneler well, the company added.

Marathon holds a 65 percent interest in the Production License 203 area, followed by ConocoPhillips with a 20 percent stake and Norway's Det Norske Oljeselskap.

Through its subsidiary Marathon Petroleum Norge, Marathon last year acquired Norsk Hydro's interest in PL 203 and 150, marking Marathon's fifth acquisition on the Norwegian shelf during the previous year.

—PETROLEUM NEWS HOUSTON STAFF

CHINA

Oil output of China's top producer drops slightly, gas production increases 12%

PetroChina, China's largest oil producer, said it produced 191.1 million barrels of crude oil during the first quarter of this year, down 1 million barrels from the same period in 2002. At the same time, the company's output of natural gas increased 12.8 percent to 184.5 billion cubic feet, China Daily reported in mid-April, quoting a statement from PetroChina.

An industry analyst with a Beijing investment bank said the drop in oil production is due to maturing oil fields and is in line with market expectations.

RUSSIA

Syntroleum to conduct preliminary investigation of GTL industry for Russia

PETROLEUM NEWS ANCHORAGE STAFF

Tulsa, Okla.-based Syntroleum Corp. signed a contract March 26 to do a preliminary investment analysis to support efforts by OAO Gazprom to build a gas-to-liquids industry in Russia.

Gazprom is the world's largest gas company, Syntroleum said March 27. The contract is with Gazprom's research and development affiliate, the Scientific and Research Institute of Natural Gas and Gas Technologies in Moscow.

The study includes 12 specific locations in the Russian Federation selected by Gazprom as potential sites for GTL units using Syntroleum's GTL technology. The locations gas feedstock from four sources: stranded, underutilized associated gas; natural gas from remote discovered, but undeveloped large gas fields; pipeline quality gas from Gazprom-operated transmission lines in proximity to centers for export and/or consumption; and gas well gas from fields with flowing pressures too low to be economic when compressing to normal transmission line operating pressures.

Gas supplies would be dedicated

Syntroleum said the natural gas supplies are owned or controlled by Gazprom and could be dedicated to GTL plants under long-term contracts.

The analysis will consider three types

of clean hydrocarbon liquid products: synthetic liquid fuels such as low viscosity Arctic-grade diesel and other fuels meeting Russian standards; petrochemical feedstock; and specialty products such as lubricants.

Syntroleum said plant sizes could range from input rates of 1 billion cubic meters per year to 10 billion cubic meters per year.

The first deliverable under the agreement will be an investment memorandum suitable for presenting to financing institutions.

Twenty percent of world's proved gas

Syntroleum said Gazprom holds 20 percent of the world's proved gas reserves and in presentations in Houston during the October 2002 U.S.-Russia Commercial Energy Summit, Gazprom indicated that it intends to become even more of an international energy concern in the coming years and that GTL, along with independent power and petrochemical projects, are a natural fit for this strategy.

Jack Holmes, Syntroleum president and chief operating officer, said Gazprom began assessing Syntroleum's GTL technology more than a year ago. Syntroleum is the developer and licensor of proprietary GTL technology for converting natural gas into synthetic liquid hydrocarbons. ●

VENEZUELA

Venezuela discovers new oil field

Venezuela has discovered a new oil field with reserves of over 350 million barrels of light crude oil, state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA has said.

Preliminary drilling on the Chaguaramal oil field in the eastern state of Monagas also revealed deposits of 870 billion cubic feet of natural gas, the company said in a statement over the weekend.

Total deposits may be as high as 460 million barrels of oil and 1.6 trillion cubic feet of gas, depending on the results of more drilling at the field.

PDVSA is still smarting from a two-month strike by thousands of oil workers in December and January that devastated production.

The government fired the strikers and has gradually regained control of the company.

In March PDVSA said it had found two new deposits with over 1 billion barrels of oil that could be developed by foreign oil companies.

Venezuela has the largest oil reserves outside the Middle East and is a major supplier of oil and gasoline to the United States.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sen. Murkowski gets ethanol exemption for Alaska

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, has convinced U.S. Senate Energy and Public Works Committee members to exempt Alaska and Hawaii from a proposed nationwide requirement that refineries add ethanol to their gasoline.

The U.S. Senate Energy and Public Works Committee approved Murkowski's exemption April 10 as part of a proposed revision of the nation's Clean Air Act.

The committee bill would require refiners to put 5 billion gallons of ethanol in the nation's gasoline supply annually by 2012. The nation uses about 1.7 billion gallons now.

While ethanol can reduce production of carbon monoxide, the main goal is to boost usage of a domestic, renewable fuel, according to Michael Catanzaro, spokesman for committee Republicans.

However, Murkowski, R-Alaska, said the ethanol requirement would make Alaska gas more expensive by 2 to 5 cents per gallon. And she said it is impractical, given the state's remoteness, to add ethanol.

The bill now goes to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, where it will likely be added to a national energy policy bill expected to come to the Senate floor in May.

Ethanol currently is one option that Alaska or its cities can use to help meet existing federal air quality rules.

However, the Senate bill also phases out the federal mandate that ethanol, or any other "oxygenated fuel," be used as a method to combat air quality problems, Catanzaro said.

The House energy bill, passed April 11, also would boost the ethanol requirement in gasoline and repeal the oxygenated fuel requirement.

So, if either bill becomes law, it would eliminate ethanol as a remedy for air problems in specific places but simultaneously encourage its use everywhere.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough, despite historic difficulties meeting federal carbon monoxide standards, has never required the use of ethanol.

In contrast, Anchorage motorists have pumped a 10 percent ethanol blend into their cars each year between Nov. 1 and the end of February since 1995.

Alice Edwards, with the state Department of Environmental Conservation, said Anchorage burns 3.5 million to 4 million gallons of ethanol each winter.

Steve Morris, Anchorage's environmental quality program supervisor, said federal and state governments give tax credits to dealers to compensate for the added expense.

"I think that comes close to offsetting the cost," Morris said.

However, Gov. Frank Murkowski's budget proposes to eliminate the tax credit, Morris said.

—THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



SEN. LISA MURKOWSKI

• NIKISKI, ALASKA

Step one successful at BP's gas-to-liquids plant

First of three-stage chemical process is operating at BP's GTL plant in Nikiski, final "white crude" product remains to be produced

By PATRICIA JONES

Petroleum News Contributing Writer

BP Exploration (Alaska) is producing synthetic gas at its gas-to-liquids demonstration plant in Nikiski, Alaska; the first of the three-stage chemical process for converting natural gas to a clean-burning diesel fuel.

"At this point, we've successfully demonstrated that the compact reformer can manufacture syngas," BP spokesman Dave MacDowell told Petroleum News April 14. "Obviously we're real excited ... everybody is very enthused about what we're doing."

One quarter of the size

BP's design for the compact reformer, where natural gas is chemically altered into a carbon monoxide and hydrogen-rich substance called syn-

At this time, BP does not plan to use the technology for commercial gas production in Alaska: "Our focus for North Slope gas is concentrated on building a pipeline from Alaska's North Slope to Canada and the U.S. That's the most viable option."

—Dave MacDowell, BP Exploration (Alaska)

gas, is roughly one-quarter of the size of conventional technology used in existing GTL plants.

The GTL project is designed to test and prove up two pieces of proprietary technology, MacDowell said, and the compact reformer is one of the two.

The second secret technology that BP will be testing is contained in the next step of the GTL

see **GTL PLANT** page A16

• PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Converting tires to oil

Plant's production cost will be \$15 a barrel, compared with \$5-13 to produce new oil

By BILL BERGSTROM

The Associated Press

Making oil from tires and turkey parts is one of the first projects planned by an entrepreneur who demonstrated a waste-eating maze of pipes and tanks April 15 at a Philadelphia industrial site.

"It's a mini-refinery, that's all it is," Brian S. Appel, chief executive officer of Changing World Technologies, said of the pilot plant at the Philadelphia Naval Business Center on the Delaware River.

In one end went tires, ground to quarter-inch bits by a giant industrial shredder. Out the other end came a caramel-colored liquid Appel said compares with a light crude oil.

The product can be refined into fuels like those made from crude oil, he said.

"This looks like gasoline and diesel, it acts like it,

In one end went tires, ground to quarter-inch bits by a giant industrial shredder. Out the other end came a caramel-colored liquid Appel said compares with a light crude oil.

smells like it. It is it," Appel said.

The demonstration at the Philadelphia plant, built in 1999, was a prelude to starting up the first commercial use of the process, a \$20 million facility at ConAgra's Butterball turkey processing plant at Carthage, Mo.

Two hundred tons of leftover turkey parts

The Missouri plant, expected to start operating in May or June, is designed to process 200 tons a day of leftover turkey bones, feathers, fats, grease and oils into 600 barrels of light oil.

see **TIRES TO OIL** page A16

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• ALASKA / CONTINENTAL U.S.

DOE grant calls for diesel generator fueled by GTL

Syntroleum/Marathon gas-to-liquids plant near Tulsa more than half complete; Koniag subsidiary main contractor, fuel tests in Denali

By PATRICIA JONES

Petroleum News Contributing Writer

Under a U.S. Department of Energy research grant approved this spring, University of Alaska Fairbanks researchers will investigate waste heat recovery techniques in a diesel generator powered by gas-to-liquids fuel.

Work on the two-year, \$375,000 research project will be incorporated with an existing \$300,000 diesel engine performance test at UAF, and both are included in a \$16 million DOE-funded GTL fuel evaluation process.

Most of those DOE funds will cover a portion of construction costs of a GTL demonstration plant in the Port of Catoosa, located just a few miles east of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Syntroleum's conversion process already proven

Industry partners Syntroleum Corporation, which holds a proprietary license for converting natural gas to synthetic fuels, and Marathon Oil are making up the rest of the estimated \$36 million cost for the GTL plant.

"This demonstration project, under the DOE contract, is not to demonstrate the technology. The purpose is to produce the fuels and deliver them and demonstrate them in a commercial setting," Branch Russell said. Russell is Syntroleum's former director of the Catoosa GTL demonstration program.

Syntroleum's proprietary conversion process is already proven, he said, and some of the key equipment currently being installed in the Oklahoma plant operated for about a year in the Cherry Point, Washington GTL project, originally operated by ARCO.

Construction of the Oklahoma GTL plant, designed to produce 100 barrels a day of the synthetic, clean-burning diesel and jet fuel, is a little more than 50 percent complete, Russell said. Completion is anticipated in mid-September, with start-up about a month later.

"The opportunity to make our dates is very good. We've already run our plant in Cherry Point and it had its break-in trials then," Russell said. "We anticipate there's no show stoppers."

Koniag subsidiary main contractor for project

Integrated Concepts and Research Corporation, a subsidiary of Koniag, an Alaska Native corporation based in Kodiak, is the prime contractor for the

GTL project.

ICRC will manage the fuel test programs, which involve shipping clean-burning diesel to Washington D.C. and Denali National Park and Preserve for testing in existing diesel fleet vehicles, in addition to the UAF diesel generator tests. ICRC is also conducting cold weather tests in its research facilities in Michigan, said Steve Bergin, ICRC's project manager.

"Evaluating the fuel is very important piece in the sense that, okay you've produced something — what can it be used for? The real thrust of the evaluation side is to demonstrate how great a fuel this is," he said.

Waste heat tests approve

In a competitive evaluation process for DOE funding held in March, the UAF-led diesel engine research project was selected for \$125,000 in funding this year, with \$250,000 requested for the 2004 fiscal year.

This project will evaluate methods of capturing and using waste heat generated by a 300-kilowatt diesel generator powered by synthetic diesel, said Dennis Witmer, coordinator for UAF's Arctic Energy Technology Development Laboratory.

Diesel engines design in recent years has increased electrical efficiency but eliminated a portion of waste heat generated, Witmer said. While that heat can be valuable in a stationary generator application — particularly in rural Alaska locations — it can be excessive for vehicle applications.

"This project is designed to figure out a way to recover that heat," he said. "There's no reason for engine manufacturers to capture that heat ... in stationary applications, when your diesel fuel costs \$3 gallon, you can find a use for the heat. By not burning heating oil, you save yourself money."

The waste heat research, approved this spring by DOE's Arctic Energy Office of the National Energy Technology Laboratory, will be incorporated in another diesel generator test selected for funding last fall.

That \$300,000 research will compare and evaluate diesel engine performance using conventional fuel and the clean-burning GTL product, a project outlined last fall by Dr. Chuen-Sen Lin, assistant professor in UAF's mechanical engineering department.

"Essentially it's an add-on project," Witmer said. "We're going to combine those two projects in terms of experimentation, and use the same generator." ●

continued from page A15

TIRES TO OIL

Potential customers, according to Appel, are fuel blenders that would use the oil for home heating or power-generating fuel, refineries that would buy and refine it as they now refine crude oil, and utilities that would use it to generate power.

Oil from waste isn't yet price competitive with crude oil, Appel acknowledged.

Cost is \$15 per barrel

The Missouri plant's production cost will be \$15 a barrel, compared with \$13 a barrel for a small petroleum exploration and production company and \$5 a barrel for a major company, he said.

The cost will fall as more plants are built, said Appel, 44, formerly president of Atlantis International, a trading company, and executive vice president of Ticket World USA, predecessor of Ticketmaster.

In the meantime, he said Changing World Technology is urging Congress to approve a clean-fuel subsidy to make its oil competitive with crude from small production companies.

The company received a \$5 million Environmental Protection Agency grant for the Missouri plant.

CWT and the \$27 billion ConAgra Foods conglomerate formed a partnership, Renewable Environmental Solutions, to commercialize the waste-to-oil process, and are sharing the rest of the

\$20 million cost.

ConAgra was interested in CWT not only because of the potential for disposing of its own food processing and agricultural wastes, "but as a business," said Julie DeYoung, a ConAgra spokeswoman.

"Having an actual operating facility is the thing that will convince people that this is not just a pilot project," said former CIA Director James Woolsey, an adviser to the CWT.

Woolsey said converting waste to oil could reduce the dependence on Middle Eastern oil by the United States, which has only 3 percent of the world's proven oil reserves but accounts for 25 percent of the world's consumption.

Eleven more projects in planning stages

Eleven more projects are in the planning stages, Appel said, including one at a ConAgra turkey plant in Longmont, Colo., that has won a \$2.5 million Department of Energy grant; one at a poultry plant in Enterprise, Ala., that has won a \$3 million grant, and one at an onion dehydration plant in Fernley, Nev., that has won a \$4 million grant.

The process also produces a fuel made up mainly of methane, propane and butane, which is piped in the Philadelphia plant to two 75-kilowatt turbines that generate its electricity.

On the net, you can find Changing World Technologies at <http://www.changingworldtech.com> ●

continued from page A15

GTL PLANT

conversion process, where syngas is chemically changed to a "waxy hydrocarbon," MacDowell said.

BP's patented catalyst for that conversion is based on using cobalt as the active component, he said. While other GTL plants based on the Fischer-Tropsch process developed during World War II also use cobalt, BP's proprietary technology involves how the element is used, MacDowell said.

The final step in producing syncrude (also called "white crude" because of its sulfur-free, environmentally friendly characteristics) is the conventional refining process — where the waxy hydrocarbon is hydrocracked to produce useable synthetic fuels, such as diesel, naphtha and lubricating oils.

Final product yet to be produced

BP's \$86 million demonstration plant is designed to convert 3 million cubic feet of natural gas to 300 barrels of liquid products on a daily basis, once the entire plant is up and operating. MacDowell could not say when that would occur.

"We have no rigid timelines ... we're learning from every aspect," he said. "We're looking at the entire conversion process and how all those pieces will

come together."

Construction at the Nikiski plant was complete about a year ago. Originally, BP said start-up of the GTL demonstration plant would occur in May 2002.

Following construction, components in all three steps of the process have been mechanically tested. In addition, the plant has had short duration start-ups for a number of months, but has yet to produce any of the final syncrude products, he said.

"This design will help us learn, and we're doing just that," MacDowell said. "Commissioning a chemical plant is much more complex than commissioning an oil production facility ... the conversion process is changing the molecular structure of a compound into something else."

Fuel cell project canceled

The Nikiski plant will not be put into commercial production to provide white crude products for Alaska. MacDowell said the estimated length of the test plant's operation should be 12 to 18 months, less if the technology can be proven in a shorter period of time.

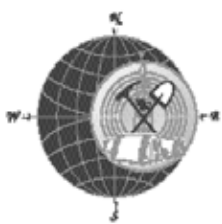
Following that demonstration period, BP plans to disassemble the GTL plant and remediate the site, he said.

"We are testing proprietary technologies and once we prove them up, they will have application any where in the world with stranded gas," he said.

At this time, BP does not plan to use the technology for commercial gas production in Alaska.

"Our focus for North Slope gas is concentrated on building a pipeline from Alaska's North Slope to Canada and the U.S. That's the most viable option," he said.

A fuel cell project planned to produce electricity at the Nikiski GTL plant has been canceled, MacDowell said. "It became clear that the fuel cell manufacturing process would not match up with our testing process." ●



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WESTERN ALASKA

Placer Dome hikes Donlin Creek estimates

Placer Dome has boosted its gold resource estimates for its Donlin Creek joint venture in western Alaska, while advancing it to a pre-feasibility stage project.

The Vancouver-based company, through its subsidiary, Placer Dome U.S., said April 9 that the measured and indicated gold resource at the project totals 11.1 million ounces, a 62 percent increase over its original estimate in December.

Another 14.3 million ounces of gold are included in the inferred resource category, bringing the total to 25.4 million ounces. Those estimates are based on an economic mine cutoff of 1.5 grams or .044 ounces of gold per ton of rock.

Average grade of Donlin Creek is three grams, or .08 ounces of gold per ton of rock, richer than the .025 ounces per ton grade average at the start-up of Fort Knox, Alaska's largest gold mine.

Donlin Creek is a joint venture owned 30 percent by Placer Dome and 70 percent by NovaGold Resources, although Placer Dome is raising its stake to 70 percent. To do so, Placer Dome must spend \$30 million, complete a bankable feasibility study and make a decision to build a mine producing at least 600,000 ounces by Nov. 14, 2007, to earn its additional interest. A complete pre-feasibility study is expected by late 2003. Studies are under way on detailed pit designs, mill process work and the layout of site facilities.

On-going environmental monitoring is also being conducted in anticipation of future permitting requirements.

—PATRICIA JONES, Petroleum News contributing writer

Average grade of Donlin Creek is three grams, or .08 ounces of gold per ton of rock, richer than the .025 ounces per ton grade average at the start-up of Fort Knox, Alaska's largest gold mine.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Barrick Gold defeats EPA in toxic waste court case

Barrick Gold has won a court challenge to have itself removed from a "worst polluters list" published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

A 1999 document alleged Barrick's Goldstrike mine in Nevada produced 398 million pounds of toxic material the previous year.

Barrick fought back, saying the EPA unfairly included non-treated waste rock, which it moved out of the way to access gold deposits, in the calculations.

Judge Penfield Jackson of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia said April 9 the EPA went too far when it included waste rock in the definition of toxic waste.

The verdict also was welcomed by another Canadian company, Placer Dome, which the EPA accused of producing 106 million pounds of waste in 1998 at three U.S. mines.

—GARY PARK, Petroleum News Calgary correspondent

A 1999 document alleged Barrick's Goldstrike mine in Nevada produced 398 million pounds of toxic material the previous year.

SASKATCHEWAN

Uranium mine shut by flood

Cameco, the world's largest uranium producer, said its flagship McArthur River mine in Saskatchewan will be shut down for at least six months following an April 7 cave-in and flood.

The mine, located 370 miles north of Saskatoon, is a joint venture owned 70 percent by Cameco and 30 percent by privately held Cogema Resources. It has more than 70 supply contracts. Cameco will supply customers from its nine-month inventory stockpile and with uranium it buys from other suppliers.

The closure is expected to cost C\$30 million in lost profits and will likely result in layoffs, the company said April 14.

The mine collapse took place when tunnel workers were digging to prepare part of the deposit for future production. Initially water poured into the mine at a rate of 900 cubic yards an hour, but a concrete dam has been built to contain the water.

—GARY PARK, Petroleum News Calgary correspondent

● INTERIOR ALASKA



The Fort Knox gold mine, March 2003

COURTESY FAIRBANKS GOLD MINING INC.

Looking for more gold

In an effort to extend life of Interior Alaska gold mine, Fairbanks Gold Mining geologists plan to drill closed Ryan Lode mine, NOAA prospect

By PATRICIA JONES

Petroleum News Contributing Writer

Fairbanks Gold Mining, operator of the Fort Knox gold mine, plans to complete exploration drilling this summer at the shuttered and partially reclaimed Ryan Lode mine located on Ester Dome, about 10 miles west of Fairbanks, Alaska.

Drilling crews are currently working on a grass-roots exploration property located less than a mile west from the existing Fort Knox pit on federal land used by the National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service. NESDIS operates satellites and processes their data for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service.

"We're putting a lot of energy into exploration ... we've changed our focus and priorities," Rick Dye, general manager of the 400,000-plus ounce per year Fort Knox gold mine, told Petroleum News April 10.

Finding mineralization that could replace those gold ounces mined and milled before the end of the mine's expected life in 2010 is the new exploration goal, he said. The company plans to spend \$3.2 million this year on exploration.

"If it's going to take six years to drill up, it won't fit in Fort Knox's expected life," Dye said, referring to neighboring prospects that are not being worked this year. "There's no point in spending money on those until we get our holdings in order."

Gil prospect will get \$850,000

In addition to spending an undisclosed amount on the Ryan Lode and the NOAA properties, Fairbanks Gold plans to invest with its partner Teryl Resources \$850,000 on the Gil prospect located about six miles east of the Fort Knox mill.

Another \$285,000 is budgeted for exploration on the True North mine, where crews are currently digging up and trucking ore to Fort Knox.

Geologists working for Fairbanks Gold, a subsidiary of Kinross Gold, are also focused on the existing pit at Fort Knox, with plans to spend \$710,000.

It's all part of an effort to extend the life of the 425-employee operation, and the chances of doing so are "good," Dye said. "We think it will, especially if the gold price stays where it is."

New look at Ryan Lode

In 1999, Fairbanks Gold took over Ryan Lode, a shuttered heap leach mill and mine on Ester Dome, as part of Kinross Gold's acquisition of the property's owner, LaTeko Resources.

Company geologists conducted some exploratory drilling then and in 2000, but opted not to continue that effort in the last two years. Instead, more than \$800,000 worth of reclamation and cleanup began at Ryan Lode, work that will continue this year.

The company submitted plans last year to state regulators to close the process facilities at Ryan Lode, but told Petroleum News in January that higher gold prices could spark interest in additional exploration.

Fairbanks Gold submitted to state regulators on April 14 final plans for this year's exploration program on Ryan Lode, scheduled to begin as early as June 1. An informational meeting outlining the company's plans, which is not required, is scheduled for April 23, starting at 7 p.m. at the Noel Wien Library in Fairbanks.

Plans call for 68 drill holes, involving both diamond core and reverse-circulation rigs, spaced on either end of an existing trench-like pit that formerly provided ore for the mine's heap leach pads.

"The drilling is essentially a step out from where we know mineralization is at this point," Ted Wilton, chief geologist for Fairbanks Gold, told Petroleum News April 15.

The maximum depth of drill holes will be 300 feet, shallow for typical mining exploration holes. However, portions of the Ryan Lode deposit previously mined were less than 100 feet from the surface, Wilton said.

"That's part of the nature of that mineral system ... there's no great advantage to drilling at great depth," Wilton said. "Below the base of oxidation there may be some mineralization ... but gold occurs in a more complex fashion and is not economic to process it. All sorts of gold deposits have that same problem."

Access will be from existing roads and trails on the property. How long the work will take this summer is unknown, Wilton said.

"It's driven by three things: how hard is the rock, is it going to rain or snow some time while we're in there and will we have any breakdowns on the drill

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Senior Instrument Engineer - Anchorage, Alaska 10+ years in instrumentation and controls engineering related to oil and gas or the petrochemical industries. Detailed experience in project work working with other instrument engineers and designers, writing scopes of work, doing engineering estimates, and creating schedules for the work to be performed. All of the scopes, schedules, and budgets shall be based on standard templates we have for each. Candidate should have experience coordinating with project engineering and management as well as good interpersonal skills (very important). Technical competence required in instrument engineering. Candidate should have experience with DCS and PLC systems. Experience with AB Controllogix, Siemens APACS and Quadlog, and Bailey Infi90 a plus. Candidate should have good experience sizing valves, orifice plates, and specifying a wide array of instruments (flow,

level, pressure, temperature, and analyzers). Candidate will preferably have a technical degree in Electrical, Mechanical, or Chemical Engineering. PE a plus. Please submit your resume to: Recruiting Department 949 E. 36th Avenue Suite 500 Anchorage, AK. 99508 Email Resume to: Careers@VECO.com or fax (907) 762-1040 VECO Alaska Job Website: www.veco.com VECO Alaska is an Equal Opportunity Employer that Supports a Diverse Workforce. Positions Require U.S. Work Authorization



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experience with DCS and PLC systems. Experience with AB Controllogix, Siemens APACS and Quadlog, and Bailey Infi90 a plus. Candidate should have good experience sizing valves, orifice plates, and specifying a wide array of instruments (flow, level, pressure, temperature, and analyzers). Principal engineer shall be capable of leading an instrument project team. This person shall be the lead engineer for several projects for a specific customer site. Positions will require some travel to the North Slope, and is based in our Anchorage office. Candidate will preferably have a technical degree in Electrical, Mechanical, or Chemical Engineering. PE a plus. Please submit your resume to: Recruiting Department 949 E. 36th Avenue Suite 500 Anchorage, AK. 99508 Email Resume to: Careers@VECO.com or fax (907) 762-1040 VECO Alaska Job Website: www.veco.com VECO Alaska is an Equal Opportunity Employer that Supports a Diverse Workforce. Positions Require U.S. Work Authorization

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Fire Maintenance Technician- Prudhoe Bay, Alaska Recruiting Authorization

No.1329 Summary: Provides hands-on maintenance, repair, testing and inspection of fixed and portable fire protection systems and equipment. Responsible for the operational readiness and maintenance of assigned mobile fire fighting apparatus and equipment. Trains client and contractor employees in the use of safety and fire fighting equipment and procedures. Essential Functions: Inspects, services, maintains and repairs portable and wheeled fire extinguishers, installed fire protection systems (Halon, Dry Chemical, CO2,Deluge, Foam, Sprinkler, Standpipes, Hydrants, Division Valves), respiratory protection and breathing air equipment (SCBA, Air Line, Escape Paks, B/A Cylinders, and B/A Compressors).Conducts performance tests on facility firewater systems and mobile fire apparatus. Conducts classroom and fireground training activities for the Emergency Response Team and employee training on fire protection and respiratory protection equipment. Assists Safety Specialists and Industrial Hygienists in the performance of their duties. Functions as crew chief on mobile fire fighting apparatus and as a member of the Rescue Team and/or Hazardous Materials Response Team. Directs emergency response crews during training and emergency operations. Maintains records and reports. Routinely performs safety and productivity observations; shop, field, and vehicle inspections; and is required to attend various components of technical, developmental and safety training. Must demonstrate support for the company's environmental management system objectives. Respiratory Specialist Functions: Inspects, repairs and tests airline supply respiratory equipment and systems field wide for safe operation. Trains employees in use and operation in respiratory protection equipment. Performs respiratory fit testing; service and maintenance on breathing air compressors; service and maintenance on personal protective equipment; and maintenance on fire extinguishers, division valves, halon, deluge, CO2 and dry chemical extinguishing systems. Flow test and calibrates SCBA regulators. Flow test, repair or replace SCBA and SAR masks. Service, repair, and hydrotesting of breathing air, SCBA, fire extinguisher, halon and other high and low pressure cylinders. Collects quarterly air sample on all breathing air compressors and ships to Independent Lab for analysis. Inspects, repairs and tests eyewash units field wide for safe operation. Maintains inventory for respiratory equipment and assigned eyewash units. Functions as crew chief during emergency responses, fire-ground operations and training exercises. Qualifications: Five (5) years related experience preferred. Must be able to work as part of a team; communicate effectively with fellow workers and alternate; and demonstrate adherence to established safety policies and procedures. Must possess a good working knowledge of fixed and portable fire protection equipment; installed fire extinguishing systems with emphasis on Halon 1301 systems; and mobile fire apparatus operations and related equipment. Must have keen working knowledge of fireground operations and be capable of directing fire fighting crews during emergencies, drills and routine training activities. Must have working knowledge of crane hand signals. Must obtain a State of Alaska Class III A certification for maintenance of special hazards systems and a State of Alaska Level III permit for maintenance, service, inspection and hydrotesting of portable fire extinguishers and obtain DOT registration for use of high-pressure hydrotest equipment. Must possess a current driver's license. Arctic experience preferred. Note: Skills tests may be required of new hires to demonstrate core proficiencies, or of existing employees to advance to a new job level Please submit your resume to: Recruiting Department 949 E. 36th Avenue Suite 500 Anchorage, AK. 99508 Email Resume to: Alaska.Careers@VECO.com or fax (907) 550-8890 VECO Alaska is an Equal Opportunity Employer that Supports a Diverse Workforce. Positions Require U.S. Work Authorization

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· Maintains training records (both computer and hard-copy files) and provides necessary database reports to safety staff and field supervisors
· Produces and distributes monthly injury / incident reports to client
· Produces and distributes monthly safety training compliance reports
· Faxes injury, incident and spill reports to appropriate agencies and company personnel
· Assists with the facilitation of new hire orientation and training on an as needed basis
· Enters data regarding employee traffic citations into the traffic citation tracking log
· Tracks contract safety performance measures
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· Other duties as assigned
· Maintain/update desk procedures
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· Establishes and maintains office filing system for technical and safety related personnel records
· Performs various administrative assignments in support of VECO contract supervision. These assignments may include, but are not limited to: correspondence, preparation for assorted presentation materials, special reports, and routine typing and administrative duties.
· Handles confidential material regarding employee medical histories and medical questionnaires. Restricts access to this information to only those having a need to know.
Qualifications and Experience Requirements
Three (3) years safety and administrative experience preferred. Must become familiar with applicable OSHA Regulations. Must have strong working knowledge of PC computer systems including the following software: Windows, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Word. Experience in other software programs such as Microsoft Access, Power Point, tdVantage, Filemaker Pro and relational databases a plus. Strong interpersonal/communication skills and proven ability to work well with others required, with emphasis on tact and discretion due to the confidential nature of much of the information handled. Must be a self-starter, capable of working with minimal direction/supervision. Flexibility to adapt to a changing work environment required. Proven initiative in developing and automating processes is required as well as the ability to perform a variety of administrative assignments requiring independent judgment. Must have working knowledge of general office procedures, with ability to organize and prioritize voluminous work efforts. Knowledge of VECO and client departmental functions and organization a plus. Experience with audit trail documentation processes a plus. Must be accurate in all duties performed.
Physical Requirements
The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.
MOBILITY: Employee required to sit; stand; walk; reach with hands and arms; and stoop or kneel.
HEARING: Must be able to hear audible safety warnings and alarms.
VISUAL ACUITY: Vision must be adequate to perform above listed tasks in a safe manner.
LIFTING: Must occasionally lift and/or move up to 30 lbs.
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Legal Notice

Notice of Public Hearing STATE OF ALASKA Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. Re: The application of Union Oil Company of California ("Unocal") for an order authorizing the underground storage of hydrocarbons by injection into the Tyonek Formation in proposed well Swanson River Unit KGSF #3. Union Oil Company of California ("Unocal") by letter dated April 1, 2003, has applied for an injection order for storage injection well, Kenai Gas Storage Facility #3 ("KDSF #3"). The Commission has tentatively set a public hearing on this application for May 13, 2003 at 9:00 am at the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission at 333 West 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. A person may request that the tentatively scheduled hearing be held by filing a written request with the Commission no later than 4:30 pm on April 28, 2003. If a request for a hearing is not timely filed, the Commission will consider the issuance of an order without a hearing. To learn if the Commission will hold the public hearing, please call 793-1221. In addition, a person may submit written comments regarding this application to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission at 333 West 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. Written comments must be received no later than 4:30 pm on May 12, 2003, except that if the Commission decides to hold a public hearing, written comments must be received no later than 9:00 am on May 13, 2003. If you are a person with a disability who may need a special modification in order to comment or to attend the public hearing, please contact Jody Colombie at 793-1221 before May 1, 2003. Sarah Palin, Chair, Published Date: April 11, 2003 ADN AO# 02314042

Legal Notice

Notice of Public Hearing STATE OF ALASKA Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. Re: Beaver Creek Unit BC-3RD, ADL 028083, Section 34, T7N, R10W, SM, AK, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska Marathon Oil Company by letter dated March 19, 2003 and received by the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (Commission) on March 20, 2003, has requested the Commission to issue an order in conformance with 20 AAC 25.055 allowing regular production of the Beaver Creek Unit 3-DPN Gas Development Well from a location within 1500 feet of the external boundary of the Beaver Creek Unit. The surface location of the proposed well is 1400' from the north line and 1500' from the west line of Section 34, T7N, R10W Seward Meridian (SM). The top of the productive interval is estimated to be encountered 1952' from the south line (FSL) and 634' from the east line (FEL) of Section 27, T7N, R10W, S.M. The proposed bottomhole location is 2172' FSL and 413' FEL of Section 27, T7N, R10W S.M. The Commission has tentatively set a public hearing on this application for April 29, 2003 at 9:00 am at the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission at 333 West 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. A person may request that the tentatively scheduled hearing be held by filing a written request with the Commission no later than 4:30 pm on April 10, 2003. If a request for a hearing is not timely filed, the Commission will consider the issuance of an order without a hearing. To learn if the Commission will hold the public hearing, please call 793-1230. In addition, a person may submit written comments regarding this application to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission at 333 West 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. Written comments must be received no later than 4:30 pm on April 28, 2003. If you are a person with a disability who may need a special modification in order to comment or to attend the public hearing, please contact Jody Colombie at 793-1230 no later than April 21, 2003. Daniel T. Seamount, Jr. Commissioner, Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. Published Date: March 28, 2003 Clarion AO # 02314040

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STATE OF ALASKA ANNOUNCES TWO OIL AND GAS LEASE SALES

NORTH SLOPE FOOTHILLS AREAWIDE 2003
COOK INLET AREAWIDE 2003

The Alaska Division of Oil and Gas (DO&G), will offer lands for competitive leasing in North Slope Foothills Areawide 2003 and Cook Inlet Areawide 2003 oil and gas lease sales on May 7, 2003. Sealed bids must be received by DO&G by 4:00 p.m. local time on May 5.

North Slope Foothills Areawide 2003
Bidding Method: Cash bonus – minimum bid on all tracts – \$5 per acre.
Fixed Royalty Rate: 12.5% – all leases.
Term: 10 years – all leases.

Cook Inlet Areawide 2003
Bidding Method: Cash bonus – minimum bid on all tracts – \$5 per acre
Fixed Royalty Rate: 12.5% – all leases.
Term: 7 years – all leases.

Annual Lease Rental
\$1.00/acre for the first year, \$1.50/acre for the second year, \$2.00/acre for the third year, \$2.50/acre for the fourth year, and \$3.00/acre for the fifth and following years.

Bidder's Information
Visit division's website, www.dog.dnr.state.ak.us/oil for complete Sale Announcements, Instructions to Bidders, Bid Forms, and Regional Tract Maps. If unable to access this information, contact Suzanne Gaguzis, (907) 269-8803, email at msg@dnr.state.ak.us.

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Employment Discrimination

Training: A full-day seminar designed for employers, Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at the Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage. Tips to help you survive and thrive in your business/agency. You will receive updates on recent legal developments in EEO. Workshops will be presented by Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, Anchorage Equal Rights Commission, and US Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission staff and feature Anchorage area attorneys. News Reporter Joy Mapaye, KTUU-TV Channel 2, is presenting "Race and the News" in her luncheon Keynote.

Registration: on-line registration at www.eeoc.gov, follow links under Quick Start Employer-Training, \$265. For information call Rodolfo Hurtado, EEOC Program

Analyst, (206) 220-6877.

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Meetings/Events

YOU'RE INVITED Vision Anchorage Public Forum If you care about our city's economic future, join us May 13th. **VISION ANCHORAGE**, a group of business and community leaders, has a common vision for Anchorage's economic future. Join us May 13th to hear how Anchorage's key development leaders are accomplishing the "Call to Action" plan goals designed to address our city's: Educated work force environment for new and existing businesses, quality of life through a healthy economy **SPEAKERS PANEL:** Representatives of the following organizations will present goals and progress to date in five key economic development areas: (1) Collaborative Leadership (2) Readiness (3) Education (4) Workforce Development and (5) Business Development. Vision Anchorage, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau, Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, Anchorage School District, Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce, Municipality of Anchorage, University of Alaska Anchorage. Reserve your seat by calling 258-3700, or email aedc@aedcweb.com, Tuesday, May 13, 2003, noon till 1:30pm, (doors open at 11:30am), Sheraton Hotel, \$20.00, includes lunch.

Meetings/Events

POGO GOLD MINE PROJECT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT The draft EIS for Teck-Pogo, Inc.'s proposed Gold Mine Project has been released. Individuals interested in commenting may do so via one of the following: **PUBLIC MEETINGS:** 1. Delta Junction Tuesday, April 29, 2003 Delta Junction Community Center (across from City Hall) 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Informational Open House 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Project Presentation followed by Public Testimony 2. Fairbanks Wednesday, April 30, 2003 Chena River Convention Center 109 Clay Street 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Information Open House 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Project presentation followed by Public Testimony Comments and input may be mailed, emailed, or faxed no later than May 13, 2003 to: Hanh Gold, NEPA Compliance Coordinator U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 1200 Sixth Avenue, OW-130 Seattle, WA 98101 Phone: (206) 553-0171 Toll Free: 1/(800) 424-4372 extension 0171 Fax: (206) 553-0165 Email: gold.hanh@epa.gov A copy or online review of the D-EIS can be obtained at: www.pogomineeis.com. ..for responsible development of Alaska's oil, gas and mineral resources. 4220 B Street, Suite 200 Anchorage, AK 99503 Phone: (907) 563-2226 Fax: (907) 561-8870 Website: www.akalliance.org



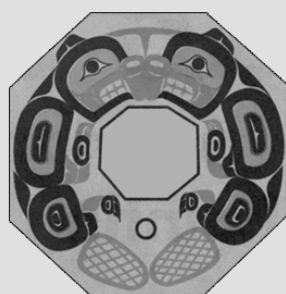
HRIS/Benefits Coordinator - Anchorage, Alaska VECO Corporation Vacancy

Notice Position: HRIS/Benefits Coordinator Department: Corporate Human Resources Department/Corporate Benefits Group Qualifications: The ideal candidate will have: * 3-5 years of progressively responsible accounting or information technology experience. Benefits or human resources experience, a plus; * Superior problem solving, strategizing and planning skills, with ability to produce a suitable final product; * Well-developed analytical skills necessary to interpret legal rules/regulations, benefit plan structure and internal policies to work independently and productively; * Strong interpersonal and communication skills (both oral and written) necessary to work effectively as a liaison between employees, regional HR staff and vendors regarding benefit inquiries and problem resolution with a high level of maturity, discretion, tact and judgment; * Ability to effectively organize, prioritize and complete projects under deadline constraints, while working with minimal supervision in a busy environment; * Ability to be flexible in dealing with a variety of situations and must demonstrate enthusiasm, initiative, creativity and pride in work; * Proven ability to maintain strict confidentiality of sensitive information; * Exceptional communications skills, preferred, along with writing, proof reading and editing skills; * Knowledge and understanding of Excel, Access and other Microsoft Office products; and * Bachelor's degree, preferred. Primary Duties and Responsibilities: Audits data entry into the company's HRIS system for accuracy and completeness. Validates data used for various company reporting requirements such as benefits eligibility, open enrollment, EEO-1, VETS-100, Service Award programs, etc. Evaluates additional or new system requirements, makes recommendations to management for enhancements and coordinates changes across multiple companies and locations. Creates reports with Microsoft Access or Crystal Reports. Understanding of OLAP cubes a plus. Please submit your resume to: Recruiting Department 949 E. 36th Avenue Suite 500 Anchorage, AK. 99508 Email Resume to: Careers@VECO.com or fax (907) 762-1040 VECO Alaska Job Website: www.veco.com VECO Alaska is an Equal Opportunity Employer that Supports a Diverse Workforce. Positions Require U.S. Work Authorization

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Notice of Public Hearing STATE OF ALASKA Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation

Commission Re: The petition of Daniel K. Donkel to unitize leases ADL 380066 and 28249 or, in the alternative, to expand the Kuparuk Unit to include lease ADL 380066. A petition has been filed under AS 31.05.110 by Daniel K. Donkel, seeking to unitize leases ADL 380066 and 29249 or, in the alternative, to expand the Kuparuk Unit to include lease ADL 380066. A public hearing on the petition will be held before the Commission at its offices, 333 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. The hearing will commence on May 15, 2003, at 9:00 a.m., and may continue from day to day until completed or may recess and resume at a later date to be specified at the hearing. If you are a person with a disability who may need a special modification in order to participate, please contact Jody Colombie at 793-1221 before May 1, 2003. Sarah Palin, Chair Published Date: March 19, 2003

Legal Notice

Notice of Public Hearing STATE OF ALASKA Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation

Commission. Re: Proposed Amendment of Conservation Order No. 457(Aurora Oil Pool, Prudhoe Bay Field)and Proposed Revocation of Conservation Order No. 98-A (Prudhoe Bay Kuparuk River Oil Pool, Prudhoe Bay Field)The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission on its own motion proposes to amend Conservation Order No. 457 and to revoke Conservation Order No. 98-A. Among the changes to Conservation Order No. 457 that the Commission may consider are: 1. Adding a definition of the Aurora Oil Pool, which is currently contained in Conservation Order No. 98-A; 2. Revising Rule 4 to recognize the applicability of the PBU Western Satellite Production Metering Plan, for allocation of production, well test frequency, and reporting requirements, as adopted within Conservation Order 471; 3. Revising Rule 5 to require wells S-100, S-102, S-105, S-106, and S-108 to be temporarily shut in for reservoir pressure measurements, to require those wells to remain shut in if the pressure is below 2700 psi, and to require the submission for Commission approval of a plan for water injection, repressurization, and enriched gas injection; 4. Revising Rule 7 to provide for approval of a waterflood program and to require the reservoir pressure to be maintained above 2700 psi; 5. Revising Rule 8 to require submission for Commission approval of a reservoir depletion plan that provides for reservoir repressurization to a level that will allow for future miscible gas injection and will ensure greater ultimate recovery under waterflood. A public hearing on this proposal will be held before the Commission at 9:00 a.m. on May 8, 2003, at the Commission's offices, 333 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. If you are a person with a disability who may need a special modification in order to attend the public hearing, please contact Jody Colombie at 793-1230 no later than April 30, 2003.Sarah Palin, Chair, Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, Published Date: April 4, 2003 ADN AO # 02314041

Legal Notice

Notice of Public Meetings Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

Under the Open Meetings Act (AS 44.62.310), notice is given that the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission will meet in public meetings on March 5, 12, 19, 26, 2003, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 2003 and May 7, 14, 21, 28, 2003 at 9:00 AM in the Commission's Conference Room in Anchorage, Alaska at the address below. The Agenda may include: general commission business including personnel; regulation matters; policy and budget matters; oil and gas conservation issues; legislative issues; and agenda items deferred from prior meetings. The public is invited to attend the meetings, however, commission business meetings do not provide for public testimony. A finalized agenda will be prepared and posted at the Commission's office by noon of the workday before each of the scheduled meetings. Circumstances may cause items to be either added or deleted from an agenda. If you have any questions about the agenda, please contact Jody Colombie at the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, 333 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501, (907) 793-1221. If you are a person with a disability who may need special accommodation in order to attend the public meeting, please contact Jody Colombie at the address or phone number indicated above as soon as possible but at least 72 hours before the accommodation is needed, to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided. Cammy Oechlsi Taylor, Chair. Published February 13, 2003, ADN AO# 02314033.

Legal Notice

Corrected Notice of Public Hearing STATE OF ALASKA Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation

Commission Re: Rules governing annular pressures in Prudhoe Bay Unit development wells. The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission ("Commission") resolved to establish rules regulating sustained casing pressures in Prudhoe Bay Unit ("PBU") development wells. The Commission has tentatively set a public hearing on this application for May 27, 2003 at 9:00 am at the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission at 333 West 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. A person may request that the tentatively scheduled hearing be held by filing a written request with the Commission no later than 4:30 pm on May 5, 2003. (This May 5 deadline replaces the erroneous April 1 deadline set out in the original notice of public hearing.) If a request for a hearing is not timely filed, the Commission will consider the issuance of an order without a hearing. To learn if the Commission will hold the public hearing, please call 793-1221. In addition, a person may submit written comments regarding this application to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission at 333 West 7th Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. Written comments must be received no later than 4:30 pm on May 19, 2003 (this May 19 deadline replaces the May 15 deadline set out in the original notice of public hearing) except that if the Commission decides to hold a public hearing, written comments must be received no later than 9:00 am on May 27, 2003. A copy of the proposed rule may be obtained from the Commission at the address set out above, or on the Commission's website at <http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/ADMIN/ogc/homeogc.htm> If you are a person with a disability who may need a special modification in order to comment or to attend the public hearing, please contact Jody Colombie at 793-1221 before May 9, 2003. (This May 9 deadline replaces the May 6 deadline set out in the original notice of public hearing). Sarah Palin, Chair Published Date: April 17, 2003 ADN AO# 02314044

continued from page A17

GOLD

rings. Those things we cannot predict," he said.

Prospecting on NOAA

Unlike the Ryan Lode property Fairbanks Gold said the NOAA-Gilmore Tracking Station prospect is more of a grass-roots or early-stage project.

Managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land

Management, the NOAA property adjoins the west side of the Fort Knox claim block, less than a mile from the existing mine pit on the east side of Gilmore Dome.

Fairbanks Gold received permission from BLM to drill seven reverse circulation drill holes on the property this spring, starting in late February. The company has until June 30 to complete work, which is currently partially finished, Wilton said. "We're fighting wet ground conditions."

Access is via the Gilmore Creek road and existing roads along the west side of

Gilmore Dome, with short sections of new roads constructed for the project, according to the permit application.

Soil samples previously taken at one of the drill prospects show some areas with more than 80 parts per billion of gold, according to Kinross Gold's website. Wilton said it is too early to talk about the size of the NOAA property's geologic formation.

"We have no information at this point to be able to make an educated guess," he said.

While close to the existing Fort Knox deposit, Wilton said that the NOAA explo-

ration property is not necessarily a step out.

"Fort Knox does not have a trend, not to speak of," Wilton said. "We understood there might be some geologic features that were worth a look — essentially that was what attracted us over there."

Mineralization is similar to that found in other areas of the Fairbanks Mining District, he added. "There's a small granite exposure on the north, and spread hornfels. For every mine, there's going to be 1,000 prospects. This is a prospect and until we do our work, we don't know any more than that." ●

continued from page A1

MEND

over, without any lasting damage to the most lucrative two-way trade in the world valued at C\$1.4 billion a day.

Gwyn Morgan, CEO of EnCana and vice chairman of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, said the "longstanding friendship" between the two countries will survive current strains provided Canada understands that its dealings with the United States must be handled differently during a period when the United States is more concerned about security than economics.

"We have the opportunity to do fence-mending, and if we don't, that impact could be more severe," he said.

Morgan acknowledged that Canada's refusal to participate directly in the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq "is an issue ... obviously, there's some disappointment. Security has become paramount, and economic relationships have to work within that new security world."

Tim Faithful, CEO of Shell Canada, agreed there has been no indication of any punitive U.S. actions affecting Canada's oil, natural gas and electricity exports that are worth about C\$50 billion a year. He said the fact that there is an integrated North American energy market embracing the United States, Canada and Mexico means there is a "strong common interest" in achieving seamless trade.

Interdependent economies

Other trade experts also have argued it is not in the interests of the United States to use anti-dumping or cross-border security measures to impede the flow of any Canadian products across the 49th parallel, especially energy. Even if Washington did retaliate, the North American Free Trade Agreement should prevent conflict or overt protectionist measures, they said.

Manley, in a luncheon speech, said the extent to which the U.S. and Canadian economies are intertwined makes "it pretty hard to figure out exactly how to target Canadian businesses and not affect U.S.

Trade ties between the United States and Canada remain strong, but some say the jury's still out on the long-term impacts of disagreements over Iraq.

interests as well."

James Blanchard, a former Michigan governor and U.S. ambassador to Canada, said any lingering concerns that Canada's corporate sector might be punished for the actions of its government were dispelled at the meetings.

"I don't think there's anybody suggesting that there will be any kind of trade retaliation," he said.

However, other prominent Washington insiders suggested the real test is yet to come.

Richard Perle, former U.S. assistant secretary of defense, bluntly warned that Canadian companies could miss out on contracts if the Canadian government does not contribute financially to the reconstruction of post-war Iraq, a project that some have estimated carries a price tag of US\$100 billion.

"When reconstruction flows from government contributions, the money is likely to be spent with national companies," he told reporters. Perle also hinted the next Iraqi government may be reluctant to award business to companies from countries that refused to join the military coalition.

"You can forgive the Iraqis for distinguishing between countries that helped in their liberation and those that opposed their liberation," he said. "I would not want to be a French entrepreneur in Baghdad with the next administration."

Thomas Niles, also a former U.S. ambassador to Canada, said there "might well be a problem" if Canada decides it will only participate in a reconstruction effort led by the United Nations.

Eyeing reconstruction

The prospect of landing work in the multibillion-dollar restoration of Iraq's dilapidated oil industry is a matter of special

interest to several Canadian E&P and service companies.

Oilexco Inc., a tiny Calgary-based outfit, was the first Canadian company to market Iraqi crude, including some destined for North American refineries, under the United Nations Oil-for-Food program. It also has dabbled in some exploration projects in Iraq.

Oilexco CEO Arthur Milholland, who once described the sanctions imposed on Iraq as a "terrible burden," is hopeful the rebuilding of oil infrastructure will be a major prize to many companies.

Nexen, which produces almost 120,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day in Yemen, close to half its total output, is certain its almost trouble-free relationships through tumultuous times in the Middle East leave it "well positioned" to take advantage of Iraqi opportunities.

President and CEO Charlie Fischer said Nexen has "knowledge, experience and reputation that will allow us to do business in the region.

"Will we be interested in doing something? Absolutely," he told the Canadian Press news agency.

Petro-Canada also has a chance of landing some Iraqi business because of its joint venture in Syria with ChevronTexaco, which is rated as one of the leading contenders to dominate Iraq's rebuilt oil industry along with TotalFinaElf, BP, Royal Dutch/Shell and ExxonMobil.

Other Calgary-based E&P companies with strong global operations — EnCana, Talisman Energy and Canadian Natural Resources — are seen as contenders, although all are taking a measured view of their ability to get involved.

Huge prize

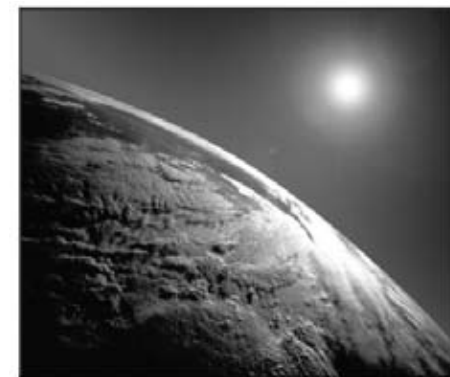
The scope of the potential riches has many companies salivating. Iraq is estimated to have oil reserves of 112 billion barrels, although only 15 of its 73 known fields have been developed with a mere 2,000 wells. Iraqi crude can be pumped for less than US\$1 per barrel, a far better proposition than any conventional oil in North America and well ahead of the US\$7-\$10-per-barrel

range being pursued by Alberta's oil sands operators.

U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney indicated earlier this month that Iraq could be producing 3 million barrels per day by late 2003, almost three times its output under Oil-for-Food.

If the largest slice of that vast crude resource ended up in the United States, it could quickly upset Canada's hopes of remaining a long-term supplier to the U.S. through expansion of Alberta's oil sands deposits, despite a 90 percent rise in Canadian crude exports from 1991 to 2001 and a doubling of gas exports over the same period.

However, many analysts think it's unlikely the United States will flood its market with Iraqi crude, driving prices through the floor, pounding high-cost producers and actually endangering efforts to improve North American energy security. ●



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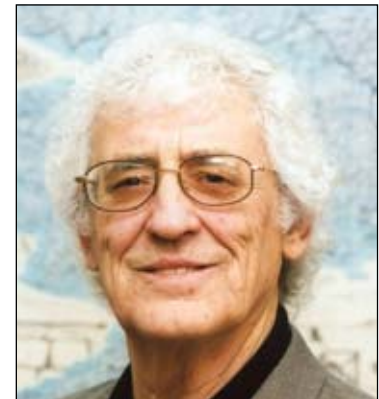
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Phil Snisarenko, operations manager

Nordic Calista

After constructing a winterized workover rig in 1982 for Conoco, Nordic Calista mobilized the first single-module self-propelled North Slope rig four years later. A joint venture with Schlumberger in 1996 involved converting an existing rig into a single unit coil tubing drilling rig. A second similar rig was recently put in service with Schlumberger as partner.

Operations manager Phil Snisarenko has been employed by Nordic and its affiliates for 25 years. His oil patch career of four decades includes roughnecking in Canada, Oklahoma and Texas. Phil says the competitive but friendly spirit of Alaska's oil industry lured him and his family north; their second home on the Kenai and love for fishing suggests they might stay a decade or two longer.



Janeece Higgins, general manager

Alaska Rubber and Supply Inc.

Alaska Rubber and Supply was incorporated in 1981 and specializes in hose, fittings and rubber products. ARS is a major supplier to the oil industry as well as military installations within Alaska and the mining, fishing and construction industries. ARS has provided products for projects of all sizes including the Whittier tunnel and the Sakhalin oil explorations in Russia. The company also supplies Arctic hose to some destinations in the continental U.S.

Janeece Higgins, general manager since 1995, began working in the oil industry as a mechanic's helper then oiler in 1973. Born in Fairbanks and raised on a homestead near Clear, Janeece relocated to Anchorage and attended East High and UAA. She and her husband developed an interest in scuba diving while in Alaska but have enjoyed the warmer climates of FIJI and Aruba in recent years. They hope to make their next dives near the Caribbean Islands.

FORREST CRANE

HEATHER YATES

continued from page A1

MMS

magnetic tapes and ship them to the MMS Gulf regional office. Then additional time is needed to read the tapes and to load the data into computers.

Dedicated line

Under the new system, MMS said it will receive the data it needs directly from seismic company WesternGeco through a dedicated line called DS3/T-3. The process will allow MMS to

Under the new system, MMS said it will receive the data it needs directly from seismic company WesternGeco through a dedicated line called DS3/T-3.

download seismic data in a matter of hours, compared to the 30-day turnaround time with digital linear tape, the agency said.

Moreover, the process will eliminate the need of reading tapes for incorporation, saving one-third the time and effort required to do lease evaluations, MMS said.

"This development will fit nicely into our e-government initiative for all our offshore oil and gas operations," MMS Director Johnnie Burton said.

While MMS accepts the lion's share of high bids in any given Gulf of Mexico lease sale, it generally rejects at least a few when they don't meet the agency's standard for fair market value. Leases under the heaviest scrutiny can take up to 90 days to settle.

MMS is currently reviewing last month's Central Gulf Lease Sale 185, which drew 561 winning bids and generated \$315.5-mil in apparent high bids. MMS likely will take a close look at two blocks on the gas-prone continental shelf that received an unheard of 18 bids, the most competitively bid blocks in the entire sale. ●

continued from page A1

MACKENZIE

Resources Canada Energy land 75 miles northwest of Inuvik following a three-dimensional seismic program shot last year.

EnCana also completed seismic work last month in the Delta/Beaufort Sea area.

NWT drilling programs

The list of other NWT drilling programs included:

- Nine wells completed by Anadarko Canada despite a late freeze-up, with seven drilled in the Arrowhead River

EnCana also completed seismic work last month in the Delta/Beaufort Sea area.

area northeast of Fort Liard and close to where Anadarko drilled an exploration well last year.

The National Energy Board has authorized another three wells, but

With hopes high that the project will start deliveries by 2008, companies have been actively staking out interests along the pipeline route.

Anadarko has yet to decide whether they will be drilled next winter.

- Paramount Resources has rig-released 10 wells, nine of them at Cameron Hills, just north of the Alberta border. The last two were released on April 6 and 8. The 10th well was an exploration hole east of Fort Liard.

The company said that as a result of three-dimensional seismic shot last year, it is targeting deep Devonian plays. Paramount's average production from the northeast British Columbia-NWT core area increased by 32 percent last year.

- A partnership of Chevron Canada Resources and Purcell Energy rig-released a C\$6 million delineation well after reaching a depth of about 11,800 feet.

Purcell is hopeful production from the well will be as much as 40 million cubic feet per day, resulting in a boost to current Liard reserves of 750 billion cubic feet.

- Canadian Natural Resources drilled two shallow-gas exploration wells at Colville Lake north of Norman Wells in the Central Mackenzie Valley region, while Paramount and Apache Canada have completed an exploratory well in the same area.

- Partners Devlan Exploration and Vintage Petroleum completed and tested three exploration gas wells in the Grandview Hills area of the Central Mackenzie Valley, returning to an area that Devlan first drilled two years ago. Devlan also completed a new exploration well about five miles from a well that was drilled and cased two years ago.

- Canadian Forest Oil and its partners plan to drill and test a well about five miles southwest of Fort Liard. They are targeting a depth of about 15,600 feet.

—GARY PARK
Petroleum News Calgary correspondent



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B

SECTION

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Volume 8, No. 16

April 2003

UpFront

Nabors Alaska Drilling Rig 7ES at ConocoPhillips' Palm discovery. West of the Kuparuk field on Alaska's North Slope, Palm was recently included in the Kuparuk River unit. A new pad which will support up to 20 wells was recently constructed in the area. DS 35 began production in October and is currently producing more than 19,000 barrels of oil per day.

Photo by **Judy Patrick**

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Lounsbury and Associates tackles a wide variety of engineering projects

The company's surveyors and engineers have amassed vast experience in overcoming Alaska's civil engineering challenges

By ALAN BAILEY

Petroleum Directory Contributing Writer

Whether you're moving a drilling rig along a gravel road on Alaska's North Slope or driving along a state highway, it's easy to overlook the expert planning and design that goes into the roads, highways and other engineered structures that people use every day.

Since 1949, Lounsbury and Associates Inc. has planned and designed roads, commercial developments and residential neighborhoods in Alaska. Although originally specializing in surveying, the company expanded into civil engineering in the late 1950s. The company now operates offices in Anchorage and Wasilla.

Lounsbury and Associates has provided services for the oil industry since the early oil and gas developments on the Kenai Peninsula.

"We're still primarily a surveying firm, as far as the oil field work goes ... we also do civil engineering," Jim Sawhill, vice president of Lounsbury and Associates told Petroleum News.

North Slope infrastructure

During the initial development of Prudhoe Bay, Lounsbury and Associates pioneered the surveying and design for some of the infrastructure on the North Slope.

"We've been up there ever since," Sawhill said.

The bulk of Lounsbury and Associates' engineering work on the North Slope has consisted of the design and construction management of the gravel roads and pads that link and support oilfield facilities.

"We've been providing road and pad design for the satellite fields at Kuparuk," Sawhill said. "I worked on the Palm project last year, which was very successful, and the Tarn project before that."

In the company's latest project, Lounsbury and Associates has started designing the pad for the Colville Delta North satellite.

"We've been working with ConocoPhillips on the preliminary design of that development," Sawhill said. "It's north of Alpine, about five or six miles out in the delta. That's a challenging project because it'll be roadless ... just a single pad and an airstrip."



Loading gravel at the gravel quarry for the ConocoPhillips Palm project at Kuparuk.

New gravel pads and roads

In a project such as Colville Delta North, reservoir engineers use subsurface exploration and seismic data to determine the latitude and longitude of an optimum well location. Lounsbury and Associates then has to find a surface site where it's feasible to lay gravel and where impact to the environment is minimal.

In a project requiring an access road, routing also may impact the location of the well. For example, an awkward river crossing might rule out an otherwise suitable well pad location.

"We've got to work with the reservoir engineers to get the best location," Sawhill said. "We're balancing the road and pad costs with the drilling costs."

Once Lounsbury and Associates has identified the best location for a pad or an approximate routing for a road, a team prepares a detailed design for the project. The company brings specialists into the team for tasks such as designing culverts, drainage and bridges.

"Choosing a route is a big part of it," Sawhill said. "There's a lot of ponds, and you try to stay on the best ground you can."

Laying gravel

During construction, Lounsbury and Associates assesses and monitors the supply of suitable gravel to lay onto the tundra. Construction takes place during the winter.



Jim Sawhill, vice president of Lounsbury and Associates.

"Placing gravel on the slope is difficult because it's winter construction, so the gravel is frozen," Sawhill said.

The high water content of the North Slope gravel can result in as much as 20 to 30 percent settlement during the spring thaw, so a road that looks fine during the winter may become impassable after the thaw.

"Knowing how to work gravel — to get it thawed, drained, healed up and passable — is a very challenging process," Sawhill said. It's especially important to minimize sand and silt content so the thawed gravel will drain quickly.

"The gravel pit quality control is a pretty key element in road construction," Sawhill said.

This quality control brings its own set of challenges on the Slope.

"You're in the dark, the wind's blowing, the snow's piling up, you're blasting — it's a tough environment," Sawhill said.

Once the gravel has thawed and drained in the spring, the contractor can compact and grade it. Lounsbury and Associates then works with the construction contractor to ensure the completed project meets the required standards.

"We measure to make sure they reach the optimum compaction," Sawhill said. "We're putting big loads on these roads — we're running drilling rigs down them — so we need to have a good solid base that will support them."

Highway design

In addition to designing gravel roads on the North Slope, Lounsbury and Associates has established a long history of designing highways and roads elsewhere in Alaska.

"We do Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities highway work and Municipality of Anchorage road improvement projects," Sawhill said.

Past assignments have included reconstruction of the section of the Sterling Highway leading down the hill into Homer. The company currently is working on a road project in Ambler and the environmental assessment for the upgrade of Trunk Road in Wasilla.

"Right now one of our large DOT projects is the new construction at Dowling Road," Sawhill said. "They're going to put roundabouts at the Seward Highway off ramp

intersections."

The impact of these big public projects on the local communities requires careful and thoughtful planning. Public involvement early on has become critical to success — people need to know what is proposed, and they need the opportunity to say what they want out of the project.

"The public involvement process has become quite challenging and very important," Sawhill said. "I think projects always end up better for it."

Commercial and residential construction

Surveying and civil engineering for both commercial and residential urban developments has remained at the core of Lounsbury and Associates' business since the inception of the company. Over the years, the company has designed many subdivisions in Anchorage.

A developer starts by assessing the target market for the development area. Depending on the market, the development might involve anything from entry-level condominiums to high-end, single-family homes.

"Then we'll study the property, figure out how many units it will hold and what the streetscape might be and come up with a preliminary concept," Sawhill said.

If the developers decide the project is viable, they'll close on the land purchase and commission Lounsbury and Associates to complete the detailed site design, including street and utility layouts. Lounsbury and Associates will seek the necessary approvals and monitor construction.

"It's really fun — it's really creative," Sawhill said. "You get to lay the streets out ... to create a nice



Placing gravel on the access road for the Tarn project at Kuparuk.

streetscape and a good development."

In fact, Sawhill enjoys most of the assignments that his company tackles, whether they're gravel roads on the North Slope or residential neighborhoods in Anchorage.

"One of the things I like about Lounsbury is that we do have a pretty good variety of work, and that keeps it interesting," he said. ●

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COURTESY OF LYNDEN

The newest addition to the Lynden group, Alaska-Railbelt-Marine provides rail barge service and regularly scheduled service between Seattle and Whittier. Three new upgraded barges feature overhead racks to allow additional cargo above the rail cars.

Lynden's focus: Multi-modal transportation

Lynden serves a global market with a focus on Alaska, serving the oil and gas, mining, construction, retail and manufacturing industries by land, sea and air

By **SUSAN BRAUND**

Petroleum Directory Contributing Writer

When newlyweds Ed and Ethel Austin founded Lynden Transfer in 1906, their one-wagon, two-horse freight hauling company based in Lynden, Wash., was progressive for its time. But it would have taken a quantum leap for the young entrepreneurs to imagine the major transportation system they were setting in motion.

The fledgling business cut its teeth and built its reputation on regular mail and freight hauls, maneuvering wheel-deep muddy roads to towns 20 miles away. Business growth began to accelerate in 1921 when they purchased a two-and-one-half-ton Mack truck, added regular Seattle runs, bought more trucks and hired new drivers.

Two of the drivers, Walter Craig and Henry "Hank" Jansen, eventually purchased the growing freight company, which became Lynden Transport.

When the opening of the Alaska Highway made road travel to the north possible, the new owners recognized further expansion possibilities. They scheduled their first trip over the highway in 1954, loading a van with 36,000 pounds of fresh beef hanging from hooks in the roof. The trip took four days over the steep, icy and curving road to Fairbanks — the beginnings of the first regular dependable trucking service to Alaska.

Global market, Alaska focus

Today, Lynden serves a global market with a focus on Alaska, serving the oil and gas, mining, construction, retail and manufacturing industries by land, sea and air.

"The Lynden family of companies delivers a completely integrated freight transportation package," Lynden Vice President Dave Haugen told Petroleum News. "Our people have the knowledge to quickly respond and solve multi-modal transportation problems from origin to destination, over any terrain."

The companies' capabilities include truckload and less-than-truckload transportation, scheduled and charter barges, inter-modal bulk chemical hauls, scheduled



Lynden Inc. Vice President Dave Haugen



COURTESY OF LYNDEN

Alaska West Express specializes in transporting liquid and dry-bulk products, hazardous and non-hazardous chemicals and petroleum products to and from Alaska.

and chartered air freighters, domestic and international air forwarding, international ocean forwarding, customs brokerage, trade show shipping, logistics for the rail industry, remote site construction, sanitary bulk commodities hauling and multi-modal logistics.

"The Lynden companies know their way around the oil patch," Haugen said. "We know what it takes to hot-shot a load of pipe from Houston to Prudhoe, or get a workover rig delivered to Kazakhstan.

"We know what it takes to manage the entire inventory supply system for a national gas company or a multinational oil operation. When it comes to the oil patch, the Lynden companies are the logical service partner."

From Alaska to Italy and back

Periodically, Lynden takes on special projects, like moving seven oilfield turbines from the Kuparuk oil field to Massa, Italy, for upgrades.

The turbines required special handling. In January,

Lynden International took on the task of moving them from ConocoPhillips' Kuparuk oil field to the Nuovo Pignone plant in Massa for rebuilding. Timing was key. First a new turbine was brought from Italy to Kuparuk to keep operations going smoothly while the original turbines headed for Italy, one by one.

For the Italy-to-Alaska move, Lynden used a Russian-built IL-76 to carry the 19-foot-long turbine, which, with the settle cover, lifting beam and spare parts, weighs 72,000 pounds.

The aircraft flew the turbine from Pisa, Italy, to Fairbanks, using a system of winches and rails inside the plane to load and unload the heavy turbine. Two Alaska West Express tractor trailer units transported the turbine and components to Kuparuk.

For the second move, an Alaska West Express truck hauled the turbine from Kuparuk to Chicago to meet a scheduled Air France 747-200 freighter flight to Paris. Then the turbine traveled overland to the Nuovo

see **LYNDEN** page B11

COURTESY OF LYNDEN



Lynden's first motorized vehicle, purchased in 1921, operated out of Lynden, Wash. Lynden Transfer later became Lynden Transport.

"The Lynden companies know their way around the oil patch. We know what it takes to hot-shot a load of pipe from Houston to Prudhoe, or get a workover rig delivered to Kazakhstan."

—Dave Haugen, Lynden Inc. vice president

continued from page B10

LYNDEN

Pignone plant.

"This was the first time we shipped something of this size and weight on a commercial carrier," said Scott Hicks, former Lynden Logistics coordinator who now works for Alaska West Express.

"The move went like clockwork. This combination of truck-air-truck transport saved us about 20 days over putting the load on an ocean vessel, which we'd normally do with something this size."

The Lynden family of companies

"We have built up a family of companies that are capable of handling or coordinating virtually any shipment," Haugen said.

"We realize that the details of our companies and their operations can be hard to grasp, but it really boils down to a pretty simple concept — we can provide cargo transportation and related information services throughout Alaska and around the world."

The list of Lynden operating companies includes Lynden Transport, Lynden Air Freight, NANA/Lynden Logistics, Alaska Railbelt Marine, Alaska West Express, Alaska Marine Lines, Lynden Logistics, Lynden Air Cargo, LTI Inc. and Knik Construction.

Lynden in the Lower 48 and Canada

With offices in more than 40 cities across the Lower 48 and a domestic agent network blanketing North America and serving more than 6,000 U.S. cities, the Lynden companies offer door-to-door and point-to-point transport. Lynden can offer specialized services tailored to specific needs, solve complex multi-modal transportation challenges or simply pick up freight and deliver it safely to a customer across the country.

California: daily motor carrier truckload and less-than-truckload service to the Pacific Northwest, Western Canada and Alaska.

Texas: expedited through motor carrier service to Alberta and Northwest Territories, Canada, and all points in Alaska, as well as weekly truck service between Alberta and Alaska. Special emphasis on the oil, mining and construction industries.

Canada: Serving primarily Western Canada, Edmonton, Calgary, Whitehorse and Vancouver, the Lynden companies have the expertise to move freight to, from and within Canada, combining advanced logistical services with specialized over-the-road hauling, air freight and heavy air cargo lifting to remote sites.

Alaska, oil industry focus

A number of Lynden companies focus primarily on Alaska and the oil and gas industry:

Alaska Railbelt Marine is the newest addition to the Lynden group, providing rail-barge service and regularly scheduled and weekly service between Seattle and Whittier. The service supports Alaska Railroad's service to Southcentral Alaska. Three new upgraded barges were specifically designed for Alaska waters and conditions, with overhead racks to allow additional cargo over the top of the rail cars.

Lynden Transport is a complete multi-

modal, regional, common and contract carrier primarily serving Alaska, offering truckload capabilities for refrigerated, flatbed and heavy-haul commodities and less-than-truckload cargo service on motor-water-motor routes.

Alaska West Express specializes in transporting liquid and dry bulk products, hazardous and non-hazardous chemicals and petroleum products to and from Alaska. An inter-modal transfer facility with a complete vapor recovery system in Fairbanks facilitates safe and efficient railcar transfers.

Alaska West Training Center is a division of Alaska West Express, providing

workplace safety training in hazardous materials transportation, emergency response for hazardous materials and the Incident Command System. The center uses course materials that meet or exceed emergency management, emergency response, environmental, safety and health law, statutes, regulations and standards. Customized training courses, drills and professional safety and contingency planning services also are available.

Lynden Air Freight is a full-service domestic and international freight forwarder with more than 50 offices throughout the world. The company focus is on consistent, reliable and competitive transport. Lynden International, a Lynden Air Freight division, offers expanded import-export services.

Lynden Air Cargo runs regularly scheduled operations within Alaska, transporting everything from groceries to automobiles. The company has the equipment and the expertise to move cargo to remote locations throughout the world and offers charter services to transport oversized cargo. The company's fleet of L-382 Hercules can land on packed earth, gravel, ice or short runways.

Lynden Logistics has targeted the domestic market with logistics solutions since 1984, offering management systems to streamline the flow of materials and information.

Tying together all of the companies electronically, Lynden's E-Commerce Center lets customers request pickups, generate documents, trace shipments, view delivery receipts, download reports of shipment activities — any time, any day, without making a phone call.

The future

"We have built a tremendous transportation network in Alaska, poised to grow and to provide extraordinary service throughout the state," Haugen said. "But it is all for naught if the jobs and the industry are not there to support it."

"Transportation is a bellwether for any state's economic well being, and we have seen consolidation and the very real signs of a decline in Alaska. Lynden and others in the industry have made substantial investments in equipment, terminals, vessels and information technology in the last several years, and we hope to see these pay off, most importantly for the state and the people of Alaska." ●

Lynden

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Hazmat trainees in a simulated response exercise at Lynden's Alaska West Training Center, a division of Alaska West Express. The center provides workplace safety training in hazardous materials transportation, emergency response for hazardous materials and the Incident Command System.

COURTESY UNIQUE MACHINE



COURTESY UNIQUE MACHINE

At left, Chris Shumate programs the MoriSekai SL-603 four-axis, computer numerically controlled lathe to machine a UMI Cementrailzer™. Above, Ken Bystedt, owner and founder of Unique Machine Inc.

A Well-Oiled Machine

From intricate oilfield tools to dental caps for elephants, Unique Machine Inc. handles the most challenging machining tasks

By **SUSAN BRAUND**

Petroleum Directory Contributing Writer

Pick up any man-made item and you can be sure that a machinist has had a hand in its creation, says Ken Bystedt, owner of Unique Machine Inc. "Someone made the machine or the part — some machinist somewhere down the line had something to do with it."

Bystedt employs a cadre of technically skilled machinists, welders and manufacturing specialists at his 23,000-square-foot plant and office compound in Anchorage. Founded in 1975 and now the largest machine shop in Alaska, Unique Machine specializes in oilfield manufacturing and proprietary threading.

"Unique Machine performs repairs, machining, welding and manufacturing of oilfield, construction, mining, fishing, and government parts to industry-specific standards," said Chief Operating Officer Pat Hanley. "We are a four-part business: oil product manufacturing, proprietary and American Petroleum Institute threading, print work and general machining/welding."

Oil product manufacturing

Unique manufactures and/or threads many of the parts used by the oil and gas industry. Pup joints, wireline entry guides, overshots and connectors are just a few of the items produced on any given day. It also has extensive capabilities for threading oilfield casing, tubing and drill pipe.

"We manufacture many of the parts for a typical oil well," said owner and long-time machinist and designer Bystedt. "We manufacture and/or thread 30 pieces of the well, from the bottom to the top."

Rick Montgomery, drilling manager for BP contractor Alaska Supply Chain Inc., counts on Unique's attentive customer service.

"They supply us with connections at Prudhoe. Reaction time from the Lower 48 is slow; if Unique weren't here, we would have a problem," he said. "The oil patch has changing demands. With well schedules constantly being revised, pipe needs to be reconfigured, so we often need a quick turnaround."

Added Hanley, "We can provide local support and deliver finished product faster than most Outside vendors. Because there are not as many people in the supply chain, we can normally produce finished parts quickly and manage our customers' needs more effectively. In many cases, we complete emergency orders within 24 hours."

Unique Machine consistently has shown a very high level of professionalism, whether it's a quick turnaround job or a long-term project, said Pete Jackson, Halliburton Energy Services Completion Products & Wireline account representative.

"Pat and Ken are jewels, great to work with," said Lissa Scott, drilling project coordinator for ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc. "Usually time is of the essence; if I call in a bind, they take care of it."

Emphasis on precision and innovation

But hurry doesn't translate to scurry at Unique. There's

constant calibrating, checking, rechecking and measuring at every product stage. "It's a testament to the skill level of the employees," Bystedt said. "I have a lot of faith that they will do it right and produce it efficiently without a lot of cost. Some parts are very expensive, and scrapping one would be significant."

Research and development is ongoing at Unique, both in-house and in tandem with the oil companies. Bystedt has patents on some of his own oilfield products, like the non-sealing overshot, which won a BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. Innovation Award in 1995.

The overshot saves considerable time and money by removing only failing sections of well pipe, connecting a new section of pipe to a lower section of good pipe deep in an oil well.

Another of his innovative products, the Cementralizer™, recently received a patent, and already is in use by several oil companies. The device centralizes the casing in oil wells, reducing friction and allowing pipe to be installed as much as 20 percent further into horizontal pay zones of reservoirs. Multiple sizes and threads offer flexibility and latitude.

Staying on the 'cutting' edge

To stay competitive with Lower 48 production costs, the Alaska-born entrepreneur is continually fine-tuning his operations. His philosophy: "Understand your business and continuously improve. Study, learn and upgrade to new technology."

One of his major recent investments is a MoriSekai SL-603 four-axis, computer-numerically-controlled lathe. The boxy and imposing equipment turns out accessory items for oil rigs 20 times faster than standard, non-computerized equipment and allows Unique to meet the precision demands of premium threading.

The oil and gas industry recognizes both proprietary and API casing, tubing and drill pipe connections. Unique holds proprietary technology licenses for this specialty work from around the world, including Japan, France, Indonesia and England.

"Proprietary threading is a complete science," Bystedt said. "Technology companies have designed and developed threading specific to the industry. Each company has different threading specifications that require technical licenses to manufacture their threads."

Working with the different cultures, languages and measurement systems can keep things interesting, "especially Texas measurements," he quipped.

The company holds licenses for proprietary threading from Vallourec, France; Nippon Steel, Japan/Indonesia; Hunting Energy Services, London/Houston; Atlas Bradford, Houston, and Hydriil, Houston. It also is licensed to machine HT and XT connections from Grant Prideco, the world's largest drill pipe company.

"With each license, we are held to high quality standards and annual technical audits," Hanley explained. "To perform this work requires special equipment, training, an elaborate quality system and skilled machinists and inspectors."

Meeting international standards

The company has been working toward dual certification through API and the International Standards Organization. Company officials expect certification later this year.

API-Q1 and ISO have separate standards. The certification process has been demanding, but ultimately will be worthwhile, according to Bystedt.

"Companies doing business with us as an ISO company will have immediate confidence and be assured of a certain level of quality, performance and relationship. Everything we do that affects quality is defined. People are trained, and we have an assurance methods that the work is getting done."

To Bystedt, the ISO way of doing business makes sense. "My business mirrors my vision of an ISO accreditation," he said. "The organized way of doing business IS the ISO way. You say what you do and do what you say — that's exactly what we're about!"

Variety of services

Unique manufactures parts from drawings, which requires a significant knowledge base, quality system and high machinist skill levels. It has performed print work for almost every major industry in Alaska.

"Our machinists take great pride in machining parts per customers' drawings and specifications," Hanley said. "It allows them to express the skills of the trade that generally are not required of overhaul and repair work."

Serving both industry and the general public, Unique provides pipe and valve repair, surface grinding, general milling up to three feet square, turning to five-foot diameters and welding on most metals and applications.

Walk-in clients for fix-it and fabrication jobs generate a lot of interesting challenges for the machinists and welders. They've been asked to modify a prosthetic hip, make a dental cap for an elephant and fabricate stainless steel tombstones, titanium wedding rings and specialty items for surgeons.

"We had to draw the line with the elephant," Bystedt said. "We were adamant that installation was not included!"

Manufacturing in Alaska

A manufacturing pioneer in Alaska, Unique's owner and founder sees hope for manufacturing in the state. The company already manufactures and exports heavy parts internationally and offers competitive in-shop rates.

"In Alaska, there's no reason why it cannot be done," Bystedt said. "We're living in an economic area with a good lifestyle. When we put energy and resources into educating and developing professionals here in the state, there's no reason we cannot manufacture here."

"We are in the international transportation capital of the world. If we can ship auto parts from Japan to Detroit, we shouldn't have a problem in Alaska. You just work on your efficiencies." ●

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Travco Housing: Home away from home

Need a modular structure for the city, country or wilderness? Travco will manufacture to suit your needs

By **SUSAN BRAUND**

Petroleum Directory Contributing Writer

Rolling Stones musicians Mick Jagger and Keith Richards may not have had remote bush sites in mind when they penned the tune Two Thousand Light Years from Home, but to the crews who toil in these locations, it may strike a resonant chord.

Comfortable shelter, warm food, hot water and a comfortable bed are no doubt top priorities to these hard-working folks and Travco Industrial Housing stands ready to meet some of these basic needs. Travco is a subsidiary of PTI Group Inc., which is owned by Oil States International of Houston, Texas.

Travco custom manufactures industrial and commercial modular structures used worldwide as temporary or permanent work camps, laboratories, offices, well sites, resorts, hotels and motels, schools, gyms and camp support systems (sewage and water treatment plants and power generation). The custom units are built for relocation on site by truck, train, ship, aircraft, or helicopter.

According to company promotional materials, "Travco specializes in custom-designed and built structures, meeting building standards and specific construction techniques for areas as diverse as the far North, the oceans of the Middle East and the deserts of Chile. The company is the preferred supplier for GE Capital Modular space office trailers for Western Canada. GE has over 80,000 modular offices around the world. Since 1979, industry has looked to Travco for innovation and quality in all types of industrial modular shelter applications."



Jim Cebuliak, president, Travco Industrial Housing Ltd

Warm, self-contained camps

The company, located in Nisku, Alberta, Canada, has extensive experience in remote locations and harsh environments. "We know how to build a cold weather structure and comply to the new Alaska IBC 2000 building code," says company President Jim Cebuliak. "Generally, the structures are fabricated of wood frames and steel exteriors, but if more strength and outside heat resistance are needed we can build for it — we design for the on- or off-shore oil patch, mining and logging in remote areas where rugged and warm self-contained camps are required."



COURTESY OF TRAVCO

Travco's 85-person custom seismic sleigh camp fabricated for PGS Onshore Inc. The mobile camp trains are completely self-sufficient, including kitchen, showers, lavatories and recreation center.

The mobile camp of six five-unit strings of trailers on sleighs snake their way across the tundra on Alaska's North Slope. "The trains travel seven to 10 miles a day. They are very, very mobile," says Larry Watt, Alaska area manager for the geophysical contractor. "They have to be specially built to hold up, especially the subframe, to take the strain encountered pulling them through the foothills. We're very satisfied with the camps. Travco is always willing to use our input and suggestions for upgrades and modifications."

Self-sufficient train strings

The train strings are completely self sufficient and mobile, with kitchen, diner, two wash cars, offices, mechanic shops, a recreation hall and six-man sleepers.

Travco also supplied generator modules, incinerators and snow melters for the trains.

"Where we go is not easy — otherwise our clients would be housing workers in nearby villages or hotels, and wouldn't need camps. We like to build 12 foot by 60 foot units, but they may be nine foot by 30 foot or knocked down into panels, depending on shipping, site access, local work force level of experience and equipment available at the remote site," says Cebuliak. "For the 1,000-person Kumtor Mining camp in Kyrgyzstan Russia at a 12,500 foot elevation, it was simply more practical to ship knock-down panels."

"We've also just completed a large, 400-person construction camp and 250-person permanent camp for a Northwest Territories diamond mine 200 miles north of Yellowknife, which entailed transporting the modules 100 miles on an ice road."

Other recent design, manufacturing, shipment and installation projects include:

- Two-story housing and office facility with support modules installed on the Anadarko platform at the Hot Ice project;
- Two-story barge camp for Crowley Marine;
- 40-person Hercules transportable camp for Catco;
- Three-story emergency response center for Phillips Alaska with Nanuq Inc.;
- Drill rig camp mounted on low bed for Nordic Calista;
- 120-room modular hotel in Nizhnevartovski, Siberia, and a 60-room modular hotel in Vladivostok, Russia.

The research difference

Ninety percent of Travco's projects have distinct challenges, so pre-bid research becomes an integral part of the design process. "Our company has flexibility enough to do the research, design and manufacturing for different applications throughout the world; we are not a cookie cutter operation, not an assembly line product," says Cebuliak. "We make sure we have the right modular design for final use at site, and that may change based on how many times they want to move it, insulation factors, where it's going, how it will be used and means of transportation available to final site."

Design and manufacturing facilities

Once the research is compiled — to ensure clients get cost effective products that meet their requirements — all major projects are designed by a team of professional consultants familiar with modular relocatable structures.

Travco's main manufacturing plant, located on nine acres of land in Nisku, consists of 40,000 square feet of plant and office area. The fenced and paved outside space is utilized for storage of lease fleet, packaging and final check out of all units. For large projects a second plant, located nearby, provides an additional 45,000 square feet of manufacturing space. The two plants employ 500 skilled union workers on two shifts.

Camp installations and support

For installations, the company sends in supervisory personnel and hires local work force and equipment where available. Complete crews and installation equipment are available for remote areas.

Under the PTI umbrella, Travco has access to PTI fleet rental, food services and camp management for the resource industry. Full capability one-contract turnkey services can be arranged. ●



Travco modules built for Phillips Alaska's three-story emergency response center. The units were site installed by Nanuq Inc.

Cebuliak has 40 years business experience in resource-related industries, 29 years in the industrial housing industry and founded Territorial Trailer Industries, a manufacturer of large construction camps.

General Manager Robert Stocki, P.E., brings more than 15 years experience in design construction management of civil works and industrial facilities to the Travco team. He has logged seven years working on Travco domestic and international resource projects.

Travco's ability to customize is evident in the 85-person seismic sleigh camp fabricated for PGS Onshore Inc.

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