Petroleum



page EIA forecasts Brent in \$50s nextyear on excess supply over demand

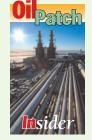
Vol. 30, No. 33 • www.PetroleumNews.com

A weekly oil & gas newspaper based in Anchorage, Alaska

Week of August 17, 2025 • \$2.50

AOGA industry award winners named; icebreaker commissioned

EACH YEAR THE ALASKA Oil and Gas Association recognizes individuals, contractors and projects for achievements in the oil and gas industry in the state. The AOGA Industry Awards celebration will be Aug. 27-28 at the Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center in Anchorage.



2025 AOGA Industry Award winners are:
•Contractor of the Year, Denali Universal Services

- •Rising Star Award, Sydney Long, ConocoPhillips Alaska •Marilyn Crockett Lifetime Achievement Award, Mark
- •Project of the Year, horizontal directional drilling under the Colville River by ConocoPhillips Alaska

About awards, winners

Contractor of the Year Award for Safety Performance recognizes a support company for its commitment to safety. For more than 30 years, AOGA said, Denali Universal Services has been a cornerstone contractor for ConocoPhillips Alaska

see INSIDER page 8

Hilcorp completes its largest TAR at Prudhoe; Alpine also has work

North Slope production volumes dropped over the summer as major maintenance projects were underway by Hilcorp North Slope at Prudhoe Bay and by ConocoPhillips Alaska at Alpine.

The change is noticeable in the throughput volumes published by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. for the trans-Alaska oil pipeline: The June average was 463,066 barrels per day, dropping to 388,244 bpd in July.

Prudhoe TAR

The largest volume decline was from Prudhoe Bay, the North Slope's largest field, where operator Hilcorp North Slope was doing major planned maintenance, resulting in production downtime at both Gathering Center 1 and Gathering Center 2.

Matt Shuckerow, Hilcorp's corporate manager, Alaska government and public affairs, told Petroleum News in an Aug. 13 email that the summer's work was complete.

"Hilcorp is proud to reach completion of its largest ever see **PRUDHOE TURNAROUND** page 6

2Q earnings from ConocoPhillips; Willow Ops Center on schedule

In connection with ConocoPhillips' quarterly 2025 earnings released on Aug. 7, ConocoPhillips Alaska reported a net income of \$135 million in the second quarter.

During the quarter, ConocoPhillips Alaska incurred an estimated \$311 million in taxes and royalties, which includes \$261 million to the state of Alaska and \$50 million to the federal government.

lion to the federal government. Year-to-date, ConocoPhillips Alaska has invested more than \$2 billion in capital.

"The Willow Operations Center remains on schedule for yearend commissioning and permanent camp occupancy, and the Willow Construction Camp is operational, enabling year-round construction activities," said Erec Isaacson, president of ConocoPhillips Alaska. "This significant investment in the

see CONOCO EARNINGS page 6



Yukon Flats exploration

AOGCC issues permit for Hilcorp to drill well near village of Birch Creek

By ALAN BAILEY

For Petroleum News

The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission has issued a permit to Hilcorp Alaska for the drilling of an exploration well in the Yukon Flats Basin in Interior Alaska. As previously reported by Petroleum News, in September 2024 Hilcorp filed an oil spill contingency plan for the potential drilling of two wells adjacent to Lower Mouth Birch Creek, a tributary of the Yukon River. The permitted well, the Canvasback 4A well would presumably be drilled from one of these sites, the 4A site, about 10 miles west of the village of Birch Creek.

The spill response plan indicated that the wells

In 2019 Doyon signed an agreement with Hilcorp for renewed exploration in 1.6 million acres of Doyon owned land in the basin.

would be drilled from surface land belonging to Tihteet'aii, the Native corporation for the Birch Creek village, into subsurface land owned by Alaska Native regional corporation Doyon Limited. Data for the well permit indicates that the well would be drilled vertically. The spill response plan says that the overall exploration drilling program would be conducted during the summer, beginning this year. The plan

see YUKON FLATS page 6

EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

New pad for Prudhoe

Westernmost Omega Pad to support 60 new wells, O&G production facility, more

By KAY CASHMAN

Petroleum News

Prudhoe Bay unit on Alaska's North Slope, is seeking authorization to build yet another oil and gas production pad in order to access undeveloped oil reserves in the Schrader Bluff reservoir. In its proposed unit plan of operations for the new Omega Pad the company says it wants to drill approximately 60 new wells, including 27 production wells, 27 injection wells, four source water wells and two disposal wells.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil and Gas issued a public notice on Aug. 6 in order to give interested parties and agen-

Omega Pad is anticipated to be operational in December 2027.

cies an opportunity to comment on Hilcorp's Omega Pad development and infrastructure plans, which involve ADL 028239, west of L Pad, currently the most western Prudhoe Bay pad.

All comments must be received by the comment deadline: 4:30 p.m., Alaska Daylight Time, Sept. 6, 2025.

Project description, scope

The new Omega Pad (also referred to as O Pad) will be 23 miles northwest of the Deadhorse

see OMEGA PAD page 8

FINANCE & ECONOMY

ANS slips into \$60s

Market awaits results of talks between Trump and Putin set for Aug. 15

By STEVE SUTHERLIN

Petroleum News

After spending most of the summer in the \$70s, Alaska North Slope crude joined West Texas Intermediate and Brent in the \$60s and spent a trading week there.

On Aug. 12, ANS shed 53 cents to close at \$68.29 per barrel, WTI dropped 79 cents to close at \$63.17 and Brent shed 51 cents to close at \$66.12.

Crude futures continued lower Aug. 13, taking WTI down 52 cents to close at \$62.65, and taking Brent down 49 cents to close at \$65.63. Price action was subdued due to uncertainty of the outcome of Russia/Ukraine peace talks between President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin

scheduled for Aug. 15 in Alaska.

ING said in an Aug. 14 note that "hopes are high" that the meeting between Putin and Trump "might remove much of the sanction risk hanging over the market."

But there is upside risk for the market if little progress is made, which could spur Trump to extend secondary tariffs on other buyers of Russian energy, ING said

"The expected oil surplus through the latter part of this year and 2026, combined with OPEC spare capacity, means that the market should be able to manage the impact of secondary tariffs on India," ING said, "But things become more difficult if we see secondary tariffs on other key buyers of Russian

see **OIL PRICES** page 7



EREC ISAACSON

EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Hilcorp applies for Whiskey Gulch line

Gas pipeline would connect pad with Enstar system less than a mile to the west, allowing production from 3 wells on existing pad

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

ilcorp Alaska has applied for a lease plan of oper-Lations amendment to install a gas production pipeline on the existing Whiskey Gulch Pad near Anchor Point to connect existing production to the Enstar natural gas transmission pipeline.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil and Gas said in an Aug. 6 public notice that the company is proposing a 6-inch natural gas pipeline using both trenching and horizontal directional drilling methods. Comments on the application are due by 4:30 p.m. Sept. 5.

In its Aug. 1 application the company said the pipeline would connect the Whiskey Gulch Pad and road, constructed in 2021, with production facilities scheduled for installation this year.

The division approved installation of gas production facilities at Whiskey Gulch on May 29. The pad is on the Kenai Peninsula east of the Sterling Highway some 2.5

miles north of the Anchor Point Post Office. The production facilities work was scheduled for May through the end of July and includes installation of an enclosed separator package, a 200-barrel produced water tank, an enclosed compressor package, an enclosed glycol dehydration package, a control building and a utility building. On pad work also includes piping, valves and associated structural support, along with heat trace, instrumentation cables, electrical cables, instrument, air and fuel gas

Pipeline

In its application Hilcorp said commissioning Whiskey Gulch would require completion of the installation of gas production facilities on the pad and construction of the new pipeline to support gas production from Whiskey Gulch.

The proposed schedule for pipeline installation is Aug. 25 through Oct. 1.

The buried 6-inch line will originate at the northeast corner of the Whiskey Gulch Pad and run westward to

connect with the Enstar system. The line from Whiskey Gulch will use both trenching and horizontal directional drilling, avoiding wetlands by employing horizontal directional drilling where necessary.

A map illustrating the pipeline's route indicates a total length of 4.002 feet.

Earlier work

Drilling began at Whiskey Gulch in 2019 with a series of stratigraphic wells, work which continued through 2024. Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission records show all the stratigraphic test wells as plugged and abandoned.

Hilcorp also drilled three exploration wells: Whiskey Gulch No. 1 was completed in 2021; Whiskey Gulch 14 and 15 were both completed in 2024. Whiskey Gulch 1 flowed 4,877 thousand cubic feet over a 24-hour test in February 2022. Results of Whiskey Gulch 14 and 15 are confidential, but AOGCC records show them at single

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August outlook says global supply expected to exceed demand growth; Brent to be below \$60 in 4th quarter, lowest average since 2020





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3

EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Hilcorp applies for work at Sterling field

Hilcorp Alaska has applied to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil and Gas for a lease plan of operations for two grassroots wells and installation of infrastructure on the existing Sterling Pad near Soldotna on the Kenai Peninsula.

Sterling is a gas field discovered in the early 1960s which has not been in production since 2015.

In an Aug. 6 public notice the division said comments on the proposal are due by 4:30 p.m. Sept. 5.

Hilcorp said in its July 28 application that the requested approval is for drilling of two grassroots wells and installation of necessary associated infrastructure including gas flowlines, electrical instrumentation, line heaters, separators, compressors and well cellars. Wellhouses may be installed to facilitate production.

Work will be on the existing pad and road footprint.

The company said drilling is projected for October and November, subject to weather, permitting and the company's schedule.

Drilling and testing of the wells is estimated at eight weeks per well.

Drilling permits

Hilcorp is in the process of applying for drilling permits from the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, which on July 14 approved spacing exceptions for two of three Sterling wells; drilling permits had not yet been issued when this issue of Petroleum News went to press.

The commission said in conservation orders issued in mid-July that one of the three is a backup in the event of an unsuccessful well.

Targets include Sterling and Beluga reservoir sands in the SU 32-16 well and the Tyonek undefined gas pool in SU 43-10RD, the backup well to SU 43-10.

Sterling was a federal oil and gas unit, approved in 1961. Between May 1962 and April 2015 the field produced 14.47 trillion cubic feet of natural gas from five undefined gas pools — Sterling, Upper Beluga, Beluga, Lower Beluga/Tyonek and Tyonek.

Hilcorp Alaska became operator in 2013. Sterling wells have not produced in paying quantities since May 2015 and in December 2017 the U.S. Bureau of Land Management terminated the federal Sterling unit agreement.

—KRISTEN NELSON

● EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Hilcorp files GPMA '25 plan of development

Greater Point McIntyre area plans include rotary sidetrack near Raven PA, up to 3 rotary grassroots, 2 potential CTD sidetracks

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

In a 2025 plan of development for the Prudhoe Bay Greater Point McIntyre area operator Hilcorp North Slope said it plans a rotary sidetrack near the Raven participating area "targeting the Undefined Sag River and Ivishak." In the July 24 POD, covering Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, 2026, Hilcorp said it also anticipates drilling as many as three rotary grassroots wells, two within the Point McIntyre PA and one into the 2023 Point McIntyre PA expansion area. Potential drilling candidates also include two coil tubing sidetracks within the Point McIntyre PA.

Hilcorp said it will continue to evaluate future drilling opportunities and potential undeveloped resources although those activities are not targeted for a specific POD period.

Two tract operations have expiration dates and Hilcorp said that prior to those expirations it will pursue expansion of Raven PA.

Participating areas

The Point McIntyre PA is currently the most prolific of the participating areas within the GPMA. It was formed in 1993, Hilcorp said, and includes the Point McIntyre and Stump Lake reservoirs. There are two drill sites, PM1 and PM2. Annual volumes provided by Hilcorp in its POD show more than 57% of GMPA current production coming from Point McIntyre.

Lisburne PA is the second most prolific

producer at GPMA, accounting for more than 38% of volume. Lisburne was discovered in early 1968 with the drilling of Prudhoe Bay State No. 1. Development drilling at Lisburne started in 1985; the field came on-line at the end of 1986.

The combined Niakuk PA currently contributes less than 3% of GPMA volume, tract operations just over 1% and Raven less than 0.5%.

The North Prudhoe Bay and West Beach PAs currently have no production.

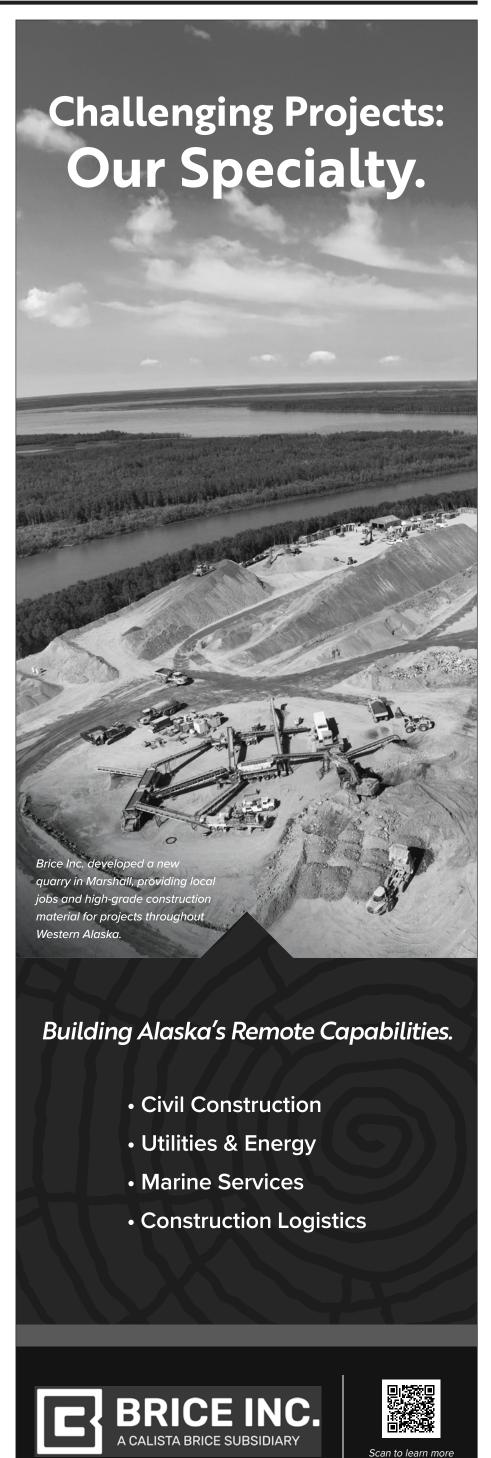
2024 POD

Hilcorp said it had proposed drilling as many as nine new wells in the 2024 POD, with two rotary wells targeting the Raven PA. One rotary well was drilled during the plan period targeting Raven but the well had to be sidetracked twice, the company said, "and was still unable to reach the target depth after two months of effort." Hilcorp said it did not anticipate another well during the 2024 POD period, ending in September.

There was no other drilling "as the drilling rigs under contract were deployed on other projects."

While no workovers were anticipated in the 2024 POD, Hilcorp said two rig workovers were drilled before the end of the 2023 POD period, one an integrity repair at P1-17, completed in August 2024, and an initial completion at P2-55 also in August 2024. P1-17 came online at some 800 barrels per day. P2-55, following a December 2024 fracture treatment, came online at some 600 bpd.

see GPMA PLAN page 5





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Petroleum News and its supplement, Petroleum Directory, are owned by Petroleum Newspapers of Alaska LLC. The newspaper is published listed above work for independent companies that contract services to Petroleum Newspapers of Alaska



OWNER: Petroleum Newspapers of Alaska LLC (PNA) Petroleum News (ISSN 1544-3612) • Vol. 30, No. 33 • Week of August 17, 2025

Published weekly. Address: P.O. Box 231647 Anchorage, AK 99523-1647 Subscription prices in U.S. — \$118.00 1 year, \$216.00 2 years Canada — \$206.00 1 year, \$375.00 2 years Overseas (sent air mail) — \$240.00 1 year, \$436.00 2 years

"Periodicals postage paid at Anchorage, AK 99502-9986." POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Petroleum News, P.O. Box 231647 Anchorage, AK 99523-1647. EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Baker Hughes US rig count down 1 to 539

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

Baker Hughes' U.S. rotary drilling rig count was 539 on Aug. 8, down by one from the previous week — a continuing return to the recent trend of decreases in the rig count after a gain of seven rigs, all targeting natural gas, three weeks ago. Over the past 15 weeks, only one week had an increase, with the overall count down 45 over the period. The count was down by 49 from 588 a year ago and down three from two weeks ago. This is the lowest the rig count has been since October 2021.

A drop of 17 to 731 on May 12, 2023, was the steepest weekly drop since June of 2020, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the count also dropped by 17 to 284 on June 5, following drops as steep as 73 rigs in one week in April. The count continued down to 251 at the end of July 2020, reaching an all-time low of 244 in mid-August 2020.

For 2024, the count peaked March 1 (and again March 15) at 629, hitting its low point June 28 at 581. In 2023 the count peaked early in the year at 775 on Jan. 13, bottoming out Nov. 10 at 616.

When the count dropped to 244 in mid-August 2020, it was the lowest the domestic rotary rig count had been since the Houston based oilfield services company began issuing weekly U.S. numbers in 1944.

Prior to 2020, the low was 404 rigs in May 2016. The count peaked at 4,530 in 1981.

The count was in the low 790s at the beginning of 2020 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, where it remained through mid-March of that year when it began to fall, dropping below what had been the historic low in early May with a count of 374 and continuing to drop through the

Baker Hughes shows Alaska with nine rotary rigs active Aug. 8, unchanged from the previous week and down by one from a year ago when the state's count was 10.

third week of August 2020 when it gained back 10 rigs.

The Aug. 8 count includes 411 rigs targeting oil, up by one from the previous week and down 74 from 485 a year ago, with 123 rigs targeting natural gas, down one from the previous week and up 26 from 97 a year ago, and five miscellaneous rigs, down one from the previous week and down one from a year ago.

Fifty-four of the rigs reported Aug. 8 were drilling directional wells, 471 were drilling horizontal wells and 14 were drilling vertical wells.

Alaska rig count unchanged

Oklahoma (43) was up two rigs from the previous week while California (7) was up by one.

Texas (243) was down by two rigs. New Mexico (95) and Wyoming (14) were each down one.

Rig counts in other states were unchanged from the previous week: Alaska (9), Colorado (12), Louisiana (34), North Dakota (29), Ohio (11), Pennsylvania (18), Utah (10) and West Virginia (7).

Baker Hughes shows Alaska with nine rotary rigs active Aug. 8, unchanged from the previous week and down by one from a year ago when the state's count was 10.

The rig count in the Permian, the most active basin in the country, was down by three from the previous week at 256 and down by 48 from 304 a year ago. ●

> Contact Kristen Nelson at knelson@petroleumnews.com

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WHISKEY GULCH

completion gas wells; WG1 and WG14 are shown as single completion gas wells completed in the Whiskey Gulch undefined gas pool; WG15 is shown as a single completion gas well completed in an unknown gas pool.

The 2.75-acre Whiskey Gulch pad was built in 2021 on private surface lands at the end of Cape Ninilchik Avenue about 1 mile east of the Sterling Highway.

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FINANCE & ECONOMY

EIA forecasts Brent price in \$50s in 2026

August outlook says global supply expected to exceed demand growth; Brent to be below \$60 in 4th quarter, lowest average since 2020

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

he major takeaway from the U.S. Energy Information Administration's August Short-Term Energy Outlook, released Aug. 12, is the agency's forecast that the crude oil price will fall below \$60 per barrel by the end of this year and average "near \$50 per barrel through 2026."

The agency said this significant drop in oil price is based on growth in global oil supplies "vastly" surpassing growth in demand.

EIA said the Aug. 3 announcement by OPEC+ members that the organization would unwind its oil production cuts by

September, a year ahead of its previous schedule, is expected to increase already large inventory builds through next year, resulting in "significant downward pressure on oil prices."



"There is a lot of uncertainty in the STEVE NALLEY

petroleum market. In the past, we have seen significant drops in oil price when inventories grow as quickly as we are expecting in the coming months," said EIA Acting Administrator Steve Nalley.

In EIA's July Outlook Brent was forecast to average \$69 this year and \$58 in 2026; this month's forecast is for an average of \$67 in 2025 and \$51 per barrel in 2026, drops of 2.4% and 12% respectively.

For the change in global oil inventory, the July forecast was 1.1 million bpd for this year and the same for 2026; the August forecast is for 1.6 million bpd this year and 1.4 million bpd in 2026, increases of 0.6% and 0.3% respectively.

OPEC+ oil production for this year was forecast at 43.2 million bpd in July, and 43.8 million bpd in 2026. The August forecast is 43.7 million bpd this year, up 1%, and 44.2 million bpd in 2026, up 0.9%.

EIA's July forecast was for Brent to average \$71 per barrel in the fourth quarter; the August average falls to \$58 per barrel, and around \$50 per barrel in early 2026.

The agency said it now expects Brent to fall to \$49 per barrel in March and April of next year.

Global liquid fuels production is forecast to rise by 2 million bpd on average in the second half of this year compared to the first half of the year, with OPEC+ contributing half of the increase and non-OPEC producers led by the United States, Brazil, Norway, Canada and Guyana providing the other half of the increase.

Demand, on the other hand, is expected

continued from page 3

GPMA PLAN

Hilcorp said all long-range reservoir evaluation activities included in the 2024 POD were begun and are continuing, including analysis of data from recently drilled wells and reevaluation of older interpretive data.

The tract-operating status of two wells producing from the Sag River formation outside Raven PA was extended through April and May of 2027. ●

Contact Kristen Nelson

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to be up 1.6 million bpd in the second half of the year compared to the first half, leading to inventory build growing by almost half a million bpd in the second half, on top of the 1.4 million build rate in the first half, resulting in a build of 1.9 million bpd in the second half of the year and 2.3 million bpd in the first quarter of 2026.

EIA said that in similar periods of global inventory build exceeding 1 million bpd for a sustained period, such as in 2020, 2015 and 1998, "crude oil prices declined by 25%-50% from the previous year."

That level of inventory build will result in increasingly expensive storage options for crude, with floating storage or strategic stock building possibly "increasingly used to match imbalances between supply and demand" and crude oil prices falling to reflect the higher marginal cost of storage as available storage on land is filled.

As prices drop below \$50 per barrel, the agency said, some producers will reduce supply, with OPEC+ expected to reduce production by 0.2 million bpd in 2026 compared to the fourth quarter of this year.

Non-OPEC countries dependent on supply from short investment cycles, such as the United States, "will also see oil production drop," with U.S. annual average production for 2026 expected to decline by 0.1 million bpd on average from the record 13.4 million bpd in 2025, a 0.7% drop to an average of 13.3 million bpd.

Henry Hub averaged almost \$3.20 per million British thermal units from April through July, EIA said, 80 cents below the April forecast. In contrast to the April forecast, natural gas working storage inventories are expected to be 2% higher than the five-year average, not 3% lower.

The end-of-season storage forecast is largely the result of more production and fewer liquefied natural gas exports than expected in April, "with maintenance at multiple terminals extending over the second quarter."

Brent is forecast to average \$3.60 per

million Btu this year, up from \$2.20 in 2024 and rising to \$4.30 in 2026.

Natural gas production has risen in recent months and is expected to grow 3% above 2024 volumes, with growth in the Permian of 2 bcf per day and 0.9 bcf per day each in the Haynesville and Appalachia regions this year, "sustained in part by the deployment of drilling rigs to natural gasintensive shale plays," EIA said.

Marketed natural gas production is expected to be largely unchanged in 2025, although falling oil prices will reduce associated production, particularly in the Permian.

EIA said natural gas "production declines will be muted as producers strategically position themselves to meet rising demand from several LNG projects that are set to enter service in late 2025 and 2026." ●

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continued from page 1

CONOCO EARNINGS

Willow project highlights our commitment to responsibly developing Alaska's North Slope resources, delivering new production, and making substantial contributions to the state's economy through job creation and revenue generation. In addition, the Nuna project in the Greater Kuparuk area, which commenced oil production in December 2024, has completed six of the 28 planned wells, which adds more barrels of oil to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS)."

"Legacy assets in the Greater Kuparuk Area and Western North Slope continue to provide value and support future opportunities, and ConocoPhillips remains committed to investing in the North Slope. Alaska's current fiscal policies are essential in fostering a stable environment for ongoing investments and generating continued revenue for the state."

Since 2007, ConocoPhillips Alaska has incurred more

than \$46 billion in taxes and royalties to the State of Alaska and the federal government. Of that amount, approximately \$36 billion went directly to the state. In that same period, ConocoPhillips Alaska's earnings were approximately \$28

Winter work

As reported in the July 20 issue of Petroleum News and first reported by Bloomberg on July 14, the company is seeking authorization from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, to conduct exploration activities in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, or NPR-A, during the winter season of 2025-26.

Any oil discovered will be processed through the company's Willow project, which is under construction and is already expected to produce some 600 million barrels over a period of 30 years, beginning in 2029 and peaking at around 180,000 barrels per day.

Following an exploration campaign, the company began pursuing the large Willow discovery at the Bear Tooth unit in 2018 and sanctioned the \$7.5 billion project in late 2023.

ConocoPhillips Alaska operates two units in the petroleum reserve: Greater Mooses Tooth and Bear Tooth.

The Anchorage-based company has applied for a seismic program south of the Greater Mooses Tooth and the Bear Tooth units and a one-well exploration program in the Greater Mooses Tooth unit.

ConocoPhillips Alaska has also requested authorization for a three-well exploration program with one well in the Bear Tooth unit and two wells to the west.

The company has invested billions of dollars to acquire leases in the NPR-A, conduct exploration activities, and develop its leases under some of the most stringent environmental protections in the world.

The NPR-A is a petroleum reserve that was set aside by Congress for oil development.

—KAY CASHMAN

Contact Kay Cashman at publisher@petroleumnews.com

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YUKON FLATS

indicates that both of Hilcorp's planned drilling sites have been cleared and leveled, and that there are helicopter landing zones in existing clearings near the sites. Access to the sites could be by helicopter, barge or skiff, depending on the weather conditions. There is a fixed-wing aircraft runway at Birch Creek.

According to a July 25 Doyon update on the project a drilling rig custom designed to operate in the Yukon Flats with minimum footprint had been transported to Nikiski on the Kenai Peninsula for final setup, system checks and commissioning.

"From there the rig began its journey north to the Yukon River Bridge, where it will be transported by barge and helicopter to its project site near Birch Creek," the update said.

In 2021 Hilcorp drilled 13 shallow stratigraphic test wells in the Yukon Flats Basin, to evaluate the potential for deeper exploration drilling in the basin. Some of these test wells were drilled near the now planned exploration

A major basin with oil and gas potential

The Yukon Flats consist of a 11.1 million acre lowland area around the Yukon River between the trans-Alaska oil pipeline and the Canadian border. Although the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge encompasses much of the land in the flats, Doyon owns some blocks of subsurface land while Native village corporations, such as Tihteet'aii, own some of the surface land.

Under the surface of the flats lies the deep Yukon Flats Basin, with several sub-basins. The temperatures in these sub-basins have likely been elevated to temperatures that could result in the generation of oil and natural gas. A 2004 oil and gas assessment of the overall basin by the U.S. Geological Survey suggested that there could be up to 600 million barrels of technically recoverable oil in the basin, with a mean of about 173 million barrels. Natural gas resources could be as much as 15 trillion cubic feet. However, in the absence of exploratory drilling, it is not possible to definitively state whether there are any viably recoverable hydrocarbon resources in the basin.

On the other hand, a number of years ago consultancy firm Petrotechnical Resources of Alaska conducted an assessment that indicated that there could be an oil field on the scale of the North Slope Alpine field somewhere in the basin. Presumably, were an oilfield to be developed, oil could be delivered to market via the nearby trans-Alaska pipeline.

Doyon and Hilcorp interest

Doyon has long been interested in the potential for the discovery and development of oil and gas in its subsurface land holdings in the basin. And in 2011 the Native corporation commented that seismic surveying had revealed the presence of a Birch Creek sub-basin with subsurface structures that could have trapped oil and gas. In 2019 Doyon signed an agreement with Hilcorp for renewed exploration in 1.6 million acres of Doyon owned land in the basin. Hilcorp seems to be relying on existing seismic data to identify subsurface exploration targets. However, in 2020 the company conducted an aerial gravity survey of the entire Yukon Flats basin.

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PRUDHOE TURNAROUND

turnaround, TAR, at Prudhoe Bay, which was supported by our team of employees and hundreds of contractors and operators working around the clock this summer.

"This five-week turnaround at GC1 and GC2 — which included 76,000-man hours, hundreds of permits, various facility upgrades and maintenance projects — was completed safely and ahead of schedule.

"This project was critical to future production and development at Prudhoe Bay and underscores Hilcorp's deep commitment to the field," he said.

Hilcorp did not specify the work undertaken, but the company's 2025 plan of development for the initial participating areas at Prudhoe Bay, covering July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, lists major facility projects which the company said it was evaluating, some of which could have required facility shutdowns: CCP compressor upgrades, 2025 scope; GC2 Interstage Separator; GC2 LPS compressor upgrades; FS-2 De-Oiler, 2025 scope; and CCP air inlet ensuring more sustained performance. housing replacement, 2025 scope.

Alpine

At Alpine, ConocoPhillips' Alaska-based spokeswoman Rebecca Boys told Petroleum News in an email, the field was down beginning Aug. 1 for a planned maintenance shutdown at the Alpine Central Facility. The facility processes crude from the Colville River unit and from Greater Mooses Tooth in the National Petroleum Reserve-

Boys said the field was scheduled to be back up the week ending Aug. 15.

Alaska Department of Revenue Tax Division data show that Alpine averaged 42,896 barrels per day in July, with volumes dropping to zero in August.

ConocoPhillips Alaska operates Alpine and the much larger Kuparuk River unit east of Alpine.

"We have equipment maintenance shutdowns as needed across our North Slope assets. At this time, Kuparuk is not scheduled for a maintenance shutdown," Boys said.

In its 2025 plan of development for Alpine, ConocoPhillips said that during the 2025 turnaround at the Alpine Central Facility it planned "to install new internals in the C1 1st Stage Knock Out Drum vessel. This upgrade aims to reduce liquid carryover into the 1st Stage Compressor, thereby enhancing compressor efficiency and

TAR production impacts

Daily production volumes for the North Slope as reported by Revenue's Tax Division began to dip in July.

Volumes reported under the header Prudhoe Bay include other Slope units - Northstar, Milne Point, Endicott and Badami. Only Milne Point has substantial output, with Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission data showing that in June Milne Point averaged 42,962 bpd, accounting for 15% of the total under the Prudhoe Bay header. That leaves 245,084 bpd, the majority of which comes from Prudhoe as Badami, Endicott and Northstar combined in June for an average of 12,621 bpd, 4.4% of the total.

So basically 80% of the volume shown under the Tax Division's Prudhoe Bay header is from Prudhoe Bay.

In July the volumes shown for Prudhoe Bay begin at 290,224 bpd on July 1 and end the month at 191,671 bpd, with a dip in the middle of the month to a low of 140,989 on July 14.

If the four smaller fields included in the total averaged 55,583 bpd in July, as they did in June — unknown at this point — Prudhoe output could have dropped to less than 100,000 bpd in mid-month.

By Aug. 12, the most recent date for which Tax Division data was available when this issue of Petroleum News went to press, the column for Prudhoe Bay was back to volumes in the normal range — 291,169 barrels, for example, on Aug. 11, up from 177,559 barrels on Aug. 1, while Alpine shows zero production through Aug. 12.

—KRISTEN NELSON

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OIL PRICES

crude oil, including China and Turkey."

Such upside risk blunted the bearish effects of a surprise build in U.S. crude inventories.

U.S. commercial crude oil inventories over the week ended Aug. 8 jumped 3 million barrels from the previous week to 426.7 million barrels — 6% below the fiveyear average for the time of year, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said in its Aug. 16 petroleum report.

Analysts in a Reuters poll had expected a 275,000-barrel draw.

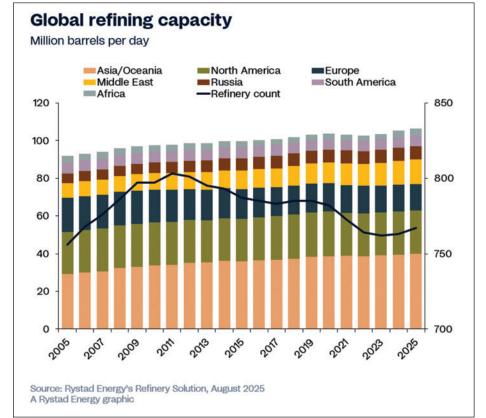
Total motor gasoline inventories shed 0.8 million barrels on the week to 226.3 million barrels — average for the time of year, the EIA said. Distillate fuel inventories increased by 0.7 million barrels to 113.7 million barrels — 15% below the five-year average for the season.

ANS rose 44 cents Aug. 11 to close at \$68.82, as WTI rose 8 cents to close at \$63.96 and Brent edged 4 cents higher to close at \$66.63.

ANS fell 28 cents Aug. 8 to close at \$68.38, but WTI was unchanged at \$63.88 and Brent gained 16 cents to close at \$66.59.

Price action was negative Aug. 7. ANS shed 29 cents to close at \$68.58, WTI fell 47 cents to close at \$63.88 and Brent fell 46 cents to close at \$66.43.

ANS dropped 88 cents Aug. 6 to close at



\$68.87, while WTI plunged \$1.02 to close at \$64.21 and Brent dropped 85 cents to close at \$66.83.

ANS shed \$1.46 over five trading days from its close of \$69.75 Aug. 5 to \$68.29

On Aug. 12, ANS closed at a \$5.12 premium over WTI and at a \$2.17 premium over Brent.

China, India, and the Middle East are

leading growth in global refining capacity, according to Rystad Energy.

Rystad's news is significant for North Slope crude, because Asia competes for Pacific waterborne crude cargos with the West Coast — where most of ANS is sold. Strong demand in Asia has historically lifted West Coast prices.

"In the last two decades, global primary refining capacity has increased by about

Doyon welcomes Marna Sanford

PAGE AD APPEARS

13.5 million barrels per day, or roughly 15%," Rystad said in an Aug. 11 release. "In contrast, the absolute number of refineries peaked in 2011 and has been in steady decline since, driven by aging infrastructure, shrinking profit margins and weakening fuel demand as electrification advances."

China has almost doubled its refining capacity over the period, jumping from 10.6 million bpd in 2005 to 18.8 million bpd in 2025 to meet rising domestic demand, improve energy security and position the country as a key exporter of refined products, Rystad said. India's refining capacity jumped from 2.9 million bpd in 2005 to 5.2 million bpd today. supported by similar drivers.

Middle Eastern refiners have boosted refining capacity from some 8 million bpd in 2005 to 13 million bpd now, with major additions in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, Rystad added.

"The Middle East and Asia are driving global refining growth by focusing on large, integrated mega-refineries that secure energy supplies and meet rapidly rising demand," said Arne Skjaeveland, Rystad vice president, oil and gas research, energy. "In contrast, Europe and the U.S. are retreating, with older, less efficient plants closing due to high costs and uncertainty over future fuel needs." •

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Patch Bits



Lynden No. 1 in Quest for Quality awards

As reported by Lynden News Aug. 11, for the third consecutive year, Lynden Transport and Lynden Logistics were voted No. 1 overall in the annual Quest for Quality awards. Lynden Transport received its 29th award with a top score in the western regional category and earned first in customer service, equipment and operations. Lynden Logistics was also awarded the highest average overall score in the air freight forwarders category and was ranked first in equipment and operations. It is the 19th Quest for Quality award for

The Quest for Quality program, now in its 42nd year, recognizes the highest level of service and performance excellence for carriers, ports and logistics providers worldwide. The awards are the culmination of a six-month research project conducted by Peerless Research Group. To determine the "best of the best," transportation and supply chain decision makers rate carriers, third-party logistics service providers and U.S. port operators strictly on the basis of service quality. This year, 3,107 ballots were cast, resulting in 160 transportation and logistics providers earning Quest for Quality gold. For more information, visit https://info.lynden.com/blog.

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ADVERTISER

As reported by Doyon News Aug. 11, Doyon Limited is pleased to announce that Marna Sanford has joined its leadership team as senior vice president of administration.

"Marna has spent her career advocating for Alaskans and working to improve systems that serve our communities," said Aaron M. Schutt, Doyon's president and CEO. "We are proud to have her join Doyon in a role where she can continue making a difference.

Sanford started her career at the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and subsequently spent over a decade working for Alaskans as a public advocate and guardian ad litem. Prior to join-



MARNA SANFORD

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ing Doyon, she was at the Tanana Chiefs Conference for 10 years, working with tribes on legislative coordination, policy development and legal advocacy. She graduated with her Bachelor of Science in natural resources management from Colorado State University and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Montana. Sanford is a lifelong Alaskan, growing

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All of the companies listed above advertise on a regular basis with Petroleum News

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INSIDER

and is recognized for consistently demonstrating safety leadership.

The Rising Star Award honors a young professional under the age of 35 who has made an immediate and definitive impact on the industry in Alaska. Sydney Long, a senior ana-



MARK IRELAND

lytics engineer, has advanced swiftly through key roles in engineering and analytics at ConocoPhillips Alaska, working as a mentor within the company to share industry knowledge with professionals in every area of the company.

The Marilyn Crockett Lifetime Achievement Award is named in honor of the former AOGA executive director who dedicated her 41-year career to "growing Alaska's economy through a vibrant oil and gas sector in the state." Mark Ireland's 40-year career, which ends in November when he retires, includes leadership in nearly every major oil field west of the Kuparuk River and international technical leadership roles.

The Alaska Oil and Gas Project of the Year for Environmental Stewardship and Innovation Award honors an industry project that demonstrates superior environmental stewardship in design, construction or operation and/or an innovative approach. ConocoPhillips Alaska's use of horizontal directional drilling to install dual pipelines under the Colville River during a single winter construction season set a new precedent in sustainable engineering, setting a new benchmark for environmental accountability.

Arctic icebreaker commissioned

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND Security Deputy Secretary Troy Edgar and U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, were among those attending commissioning of the polar icebreaker USCGC Storis in Juneau Aug. 11. Homeland Security said in an Aug. 11 release that the commissioning marks a crucial step in Homeland Security

Secretary Kristi Noem's mission to transport the U.S. Coast Guard into a more agile, capable fighting force ready for the challenges of the 21st century.

"The commissioning of the Storis marks a new beginning for the U.S Coast Guard," Edgar said, citing President Donald Trump's recapitalization of the USCG with \$25 billion.



DAN SULLIVAN

The Storis is America's first polar icebreaker in 25 years. The medium polar icebreaker expands the U.S. operational presence in the Arctic and will support Coast Guard missions while the Coast Guard awaits delivery of the new Polar Security Cutter class.

Adm. Kevin Lunday, acting commandant of the Coast Guard, said: "The commissioning of USCGC Storis immediately strengthens our ability to control, secure and defend the U.S. border around Alaska and maritime approaches in the Arctic. Storis is the first step of a historic investment in the Coast Guard to add critical capacity to our polar icebreaker fleet to protect U.S. sovereignty and counter malign influence throughout the Arctic."

The \$25 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard includes:

•\$4.3 billion for polar security cutters, extending U.S.

reach in the Arctic;

- •\$3.5 billion for three Arctic security cutters;
- •816 million for might and medium domestic icebreaking cutters; and
 - •\$300 million for USCGC homeporting in Juneau.

The Storis, formerly the motor vessel Aiviq, was acquired on Dec. 20, 2024, and subsequently renamed after modifications to enhance its communications and defense capabilities.

Storis is manned by a hybrid crew of Coast Guard and civilian mariners.

This marks the second vessel in Coast Guard history to bear the name Storis, with the original "Galloping Ghost of the Alaskan Coast" having served 64 years of icebreaking operations in the Arctic.

Alliance board nominations call

THE ALLIANCE HAS ISSUED a call for board nominations.

In-coming Alliance Board of Directors President Skeet Black said there are seven 3-year terms available in the fiscal year 2026 election, with one incumbent running. Election results will be announced at The Alliance annual meeting Oct. 23 at the Anchorage Downtown Marriott, with terms of newly elected members beginning Oct. 24.

Nominations must reach The Alliance office by Sept. 9 and require: a written statement of candidacy; a brief history of employment, involvement in industry and/or business-related organizations and other pertinent information; a photograph, with an electronic headshot preferred.

—Oil Patch Insider is compiled by Kay Cashman

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OMEGA PAD

Airport.

Hilcorp plans to construct a new road and the pad with drilling and production infrastructure.

An ice road will be constructed connecting the Mine Site E gravel source in the Milne Point Unit to the project area. Hilcorp plans to place 450,000 cubic yards of gravel fill for a total footprint of 33 acres.

The current project scope will involve the construction of the production pad, drilling of new wells, construction of a processing facility, and tie-ins to existing production transport pipelines and gas lift pipelines, electrical infrastructure, and other facilities.

The wells will be constructed in two rows to allow access to the targeted reservoir and avoid subsurface congestion A new 3-phase production flowline, fuel gas line, access road, and on-pad infrastructure will be installed to support pad operations.

To connect the new Omega Pad to existing L Pad, a new road is required that can accommodate a larger drill rig and construction traffic. The access road will be approximately 5,500 feet in length and 32 feet top of road width.

Gravel will be placed with a minimum compacted depth of 6 feet and will utilize a 2:1 edge slope.

The access road is designed to safely allow bypass around existing L Pad facilities for project construction and operational activities.

Culverts will be installed as necessary to avoid disrupting the natural drainage in the area and to allow adequate fish passage. Culverts will be installed along the new access road between Omega Pad and L Pad.

Fish Habitat permits will be acquired for all locations impacting anadromous waterbodies.

Larger drill rigs

Extended reach drilling, which is needed to access identified targets from the Omega Pad, requires the use of larger drill rigs, Hilcorp said in its application.

Larger drill rigs need extra pad space and drilling laydown areas. Therefore, the gravel pad footprint must be large enough to accommodate simultaneous drilling and construction activities.

Pad operations

Omega Pad operations will require various on pad support infrastructure, including primary service headers for production, well testing, water injection, and power fluid; a pig launcher building; electrical buildings; hydraulic and inhibitor control buildings; and source

To connect the new Omega Pad to existing L Pad, a new road is required that can accommodate a larger drill rig and construction traffic.

water wells.

These source water wells will supply water injection headers and waterflood will begin after start-up to maintain reservoir pressure and maximize oil recovery.

The artificial lift system on Omega Pad will be by jet pumps driven by power fluid. Power fluid will be locally separated with an on-pad separation train.

Water separated from the production wells will have oil removed, and then pressure boosted to power fluid header pressure.

Gas lift gas is dehydrated and compressed at Gathering Center 1 and sent westward through existing pipelines to L Pad. The lift gas distribution system will be extended from L Pad to Omega Pad via pipeline. Due to the cold production of the Schrader Bluff reservoir, heat is required in the process stream for effective separation.

A series of shell and tube heat exchangers will be staged on-pad to heat process fluid.

Operational December 2027

Ice road construction and mining operations are anticipated to begin in December.

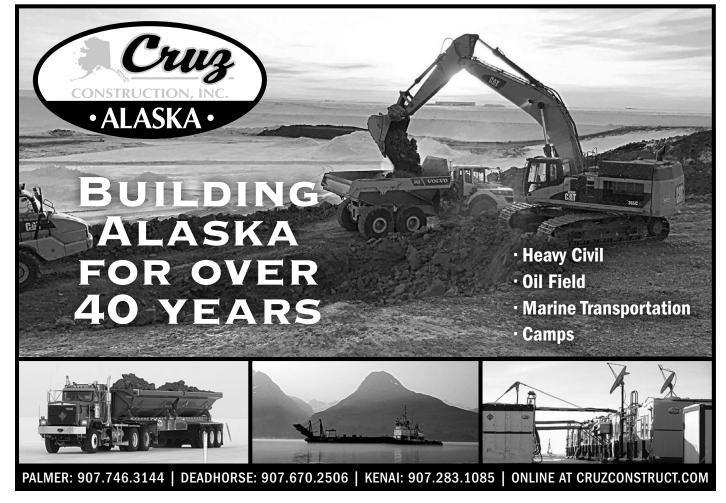
Pad and access road construction would begin in January 2026 and be complete by April 2026.

Pipeline construction is anticipated to occur over the following winter ice road season, from February 2027 to April 2027

Omega Pad is anticipated to be operational in December 2027.

Summer installation of the on-pad facility components is expected.

No gravel will be placed, nor will any ground disturbing activities occur during the summer bird nesting season. ●



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