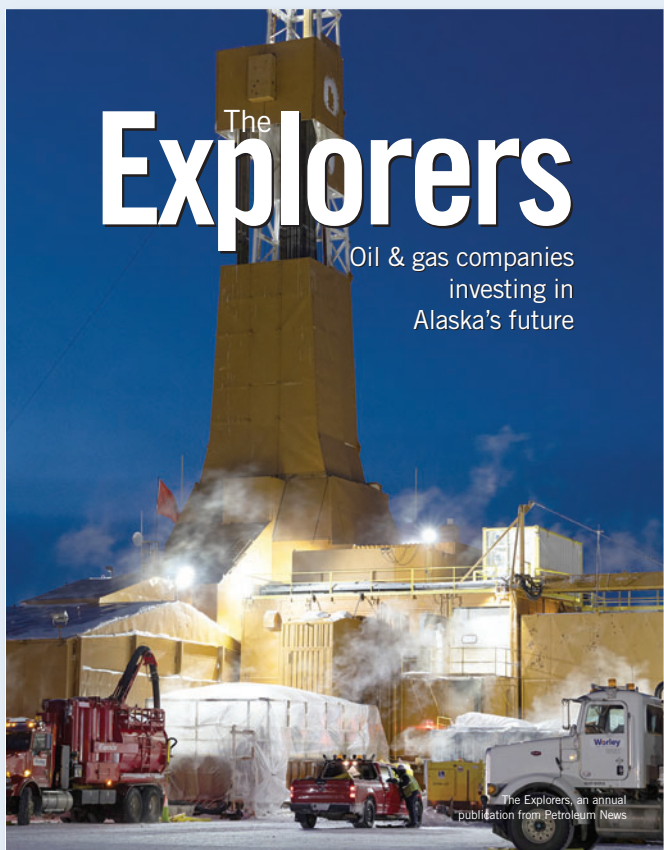




2025 Explorers inside



Inside this week's issue is the annual Explorers magazine, a look at oil and gas companies investing in Alaska's future.

State issues notice of proposed Yukon Flats exploration license

Alaska's Division of Oil and Gas has issued a notice of intent to evaluate a proposed exploration license for state lands in the Yukon Flats area in the Alaska Interior. As is required under state law, the division is requesting any additional proposals for exploration in the region and is also requesting comments regarding potential exploration activities. At this stage of the process the state has not indicated what entity has applied for the license.

Oil and gas potential

The Yukon Flats consist of an 11.1 million acre lowland area around the Yukon River, between the trans-Alaska oil pipeline and the Canadian border. Under the flats lies a geologic basin with oil and gas potential. In 2004 the U.S. Geological Survey published an assessment of the basin suggesting that there may be

see **YUKON FLATS** page 6

Glenfarne draws \$115 billion in potential interest for Alaska LNG

Glenfarne Alaska LNG "has completed the first round of its Strategic Partner selection process" for the Alaska LNG Project, the company said June 3, with participation from more than 50 companies from the United States, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the European Union. Collectively, those potential partners "formally expressed interest for over \$115 billion of contract value for various partnerships with the Project, including equipment and material supply, services, investment, and customer agreements."

Glenfarne Alaska became the 75% owner of 8 Star Alaska on March 27. 8 Star Alaska is the subsidiary created by the Alaska Gasline Development Corp. to hold the assets AGDC has in the Alaska LNG Project; AGDC, on the state's behalf, retains a 25% interest.

Glenfarne said the economic fundamentals of Alaska LNG

see **GLENFARNE UPDATE** page 4

GOVERNMENT

NPR-A rule change

BLM says it exceeds legal limits, hindering petroleum reserve development

By KAY CASHMAN

Petroleum News

The U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management has proposed rescinding a rule put in place last year that added new restrictions on oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, per a June 2 press release from BLM.

After a thorough legal and policy review, BLM and Interior officials concluded that the 2024 rule entitled "Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska" exceeds the agency's statutory authority under the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976, con-



NAGRUK HARCHAREK

flicts with the Act's purpose and imposes unnecessary barriers to responsible energy development in the NPR-A.

The petroleum reserve, encompassing approximately 23 million acres on Alaska's North Slope, was set aside by Congress for oil and gas exploration and development as a matter of national energy security and policy in reaction to the oil crisis in the 1970s. BLM administers the reserve pursuant to the Naval Petroleum Reserves

Production Act, which mandates an "expeditious program of competitive leasing" while balancing the protection of surface resources.

"Congress was clear: the National Petroleum

see **NPR-A RULE** page 7

GOVERNMENT

'Dream Team' mission

Federal cabinet members say goal of visit to free Alaska to energize humanity

By STEVE SUTHERLIN

Petroleum News

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, Energy Secretary Chris Wright and EPA administrator Lee Zeldin are on a mission to reduce federal overreach, to allow states to develop the resources needed for the nation's future.

Energy is the key to success, they said, and Alaska is at the forefront of the effort to safely and efficiently expand and maintain U.S. energy security.

The trio shared the specifics of their mission in remarks to the Alaska Sustainable Energy Conference June 3 in Anchorage, a day after complet-



DOUG BURGUM



CHRIS WRIGHT



LEE ZELDIN

ing a North Slope tour with Gov. Mike Dunleavy and U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan.

"You can't continue to have the exceptionalism

see **CABINET VISIT** page 8

FINANCE & ECONOMY

Geopolitics boost ANS

ANS near \$70 as Ukraine drones gut Russia's fleet of strategic aircraft

By STEVE SUTHERLIN

Petroleum News

Alaska North Slope crude fell 71 cents June 4 to close at \$68.29 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate slid 56 cents to close at \$62.85 and Brent fell 77 cents to close at \$64.86.

The day's slide interrupted a two-day rally prompted by geopolitical supply disruption worries after Ukraine unleashed a devastating June 1 drone attack which destroyed valuable Russian military aircraft in far-flung locations around Russia.

Crude's losses may have sprung in part due to a report "indicating that Saudi Arabia is exerting considerable pressure for a more aggressive

increase in oil supply by OPEC+," XS.com's Antonio Di Giacomo told the Wall Street Journal.

The "kingdom is actively seeking to regain market share, a goal that is driving its desire to accelerate production increases in the coming months," Di Giacomo said.

Even after the drop, ANS scored a Wednesday-to-Wednesday gain of \$1.16 from its May 27 close of \$67.13 to \$68.29 on June 4.

A 4.3 million-barrel drawdown of U.S. commercial crude oil inventories for the week ended May 30, reported by the U.S. Energy Information Administration June 4, was overshadowed by a surprise 5.2 million-barrel jump in total motor

see **OIL PRICES** page 5

North Slope facility projects approved

By KRISTEN NELSON
Petroleum News

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Oil and Gas has approved four North Slope facility projects, three by ConocoPhillips Alaska at the Colville River and Kuparuk River units and one by Hilcorp Alaska at the Milne Point unit.

On June 2 the division approved a unit plan of operations amendment by ConocoPhillips to update the portable fluid storage tank inventory at six pads in the Colville River Unit: CD1, CD2, CD3, CD4, CD5 and the Kuukpik Pad.

In its approval the division said each fluid storage tank will have a capacity of up to 600 barrels. The tanks will hold “various liquids such as diesel, gasoline, crude, drilling waste, and other substances required to support North Slope operations,” and all will have secondary containment, either built-in or provided by a constructed containment area.

Tanks are temporary and will be used until contents are depleted or associated projects are completed and will then be removed from service and left in secondary containment until required elsewhere.

A unit plan of operations amendment from Hilcorp Alaska was approved June 2 authorizing extension of the existing polymer header and installation of a new polymer module at L Pad in the Milne Point unit.

The division said some 1,000 feet of 3-inch pipe would be installed to extend the polymer header to wells L-48, L-

On June 2 the division approved a unit plan of operations amendment by ConocoPhillips to update the portable fluid storage tank inventory at six pads in the Colville River Unit: CD1, CD2, CD3, CD4, CD5 and the Kuukpik Pad.

49 and L-50, with a new polymer module measuring some 8.5 by 53 feet and containing one 2,200-gallon hydration tank where polymer and water will be mixed before well injection.

The new module will be tied into the existing facility with associated piping and electrical infrastructure.

The division said the purpose of the “project is to increase polymer capacity on pad and expand injection to additional wells,” with all activities from existing gravel infrastructure.

Earlier approvals

On May 2 the division approved two unit plan of operations amendments from ConocoPhillips, the first for installation of a new ultra-low sulfur diesel storage facility at the Alpine Central Facility tank farm at the CD1 gravel pad, with six 750-barrel ULSD tanks to be installed with new piping and electrical infrastructure.

The new tanks will be installed on a 45-foot by 70-foot tank platform with new vertical support members, with the

tanks and tank platform inside secondary containment which will be expanded by some 65 feet by 141 feet to accommodate the new infrastructure. There will be a power cable trenched some 200 feet on pad from the ULSD tanks to the existing remote electrical instrumentation module, with the trench 4 feet wide and 5 feet deep.

There will be a new heater platform 20 feet by 25 feet and VSMS will be installed adjacent to the new piping and up to six new conexes will be placed adjacent to the existing ACF tank farm, with existing storage facility and associated infrastructure to be removed prior to installation activities.

The division said the project will “support the increased activities occurring in the Western North Slope area.”

Also on May 2 the division approved a unit plan of operations amendment from ConocoPhillips at the Kuparuk River unit.

The company requested authorization for installation of a new test separator module and associated infrastructure at Drill Site 1C in Kuparuk, including 11 new vertical support members to support the test separator module which will be some 14 by 58 feet.

There will be some 200 feet of on pad trenching to support tie-in activities, with all excavated materials used for pack fill or screened for contamination before being hauled to Mine Site C for reuse. ●

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Cosmopolitan POD conditionally approved

BlueCrest's 12th plan OK'd with conditions through December, including finalizing permits for H-10 well, permits for offshore gas

By KAY CASHMAN

Petroleum News

On May 23, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil and Gas approved BlueCrest Alaska Operating's proposed 12th plan of development with conditions for the period of April 1 through Dec. 31, 2025.

On March 3 the division received the proposed 12th Cosmopolitan unit, or CU, initial plan of development for April 1, 2025, through Dec. 31, 2025, from BlueCrest. The division notified BlueCrest on March 5 that the POD submittal was deemed complete.

The CU is developed from an onshore pad near Anchor Point on the Kenai Peninsula. Production is processed on site, and oil is trucked off location. Production wells extend from the onshore pad under Cook Inlet into State of Alaska submerged lands.

Multiple offshore exploration wells have been drilled in the unit area although no offshore facilities exist.

As of March 31, 2025, the CU cumulatively produced 2.52 million barrels of oil and 9.47 billion cubic feet of natural gas.

The average oil production rate for the 12-month period ending March 2025 was approximately 618 barrels of oil

per day, a decrease from 701 barrels of oil per day one year prior and the average natural gas production rate for the period was approximately 0.92 million cubic feet per day, a decrease from 1.18 million cubic feet per day one year prior.

Previous POD

The division, in its Dec. 9, 2024, **JOHN MARTINECK** conditional approval of the previous CU POD, imposed five conditions for BlueCrest to meet. Of those five conditions, BlueCrest fulfilled three. The company continues to make progress on fulfilling the two remaining conditions, which are providing the division “with evidence of binding commitments from private investors to fund the Tyonek gas project by the end of the 2025 POD period (March 31, 2025)” and submitting an application to contract the combined Starichkof Sand and Hemlock Formation Participating Area, or SHPA.

BlueCrest accepted the division's conditions set forth in the Dec. 9, 2024, decision on Dec. 19, 2024, and requested an extension to Sept. 30, 2025, to address the contraction of the SHPA. The agency approved that request and further directed BlueCrest to provide a technical presentation to the Division no later than June 30, 2025.

**JOHN MARTINECK**

Current POD

In its March 3, 2025, proposed POD, BlueCrest told the division that it submitted loan applications with the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, or AIDEA, to fund development of both the H-10 oil well and on-and-offshore Tyonek gas development.

BlueCrest also told the division of its ongoing engagement in negotiations with private third parties to fund development of the Tyonek gas resources.

As part of its proposed POD, BlueCrest further committed to the following work operations:

- Performing hot oil treatments every three to four weeks on the Hansen 1AL1, H4, H12, H14 and H16A wells to maintain production rates;
- Finalizing the remaining permits for the H10 well in 2025;
- Obtaining permits for offshore gas development to meet production start-up at the end of Q2 2027;
- Planning to begin drilling the H10 Trident Fishbone after completing the onshore Tyonek gas wells; and
- Submitting a progress update by June 30, 2025, on drilling program. ●

Contact Kay Cashman
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● EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Whiskey Gulch gas facilities approved

Division of Oil and Gas OKs production facilities installation at Hilcorp's Whiskey Gulch Pad, location of 3 exploration wells

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

Hilcorp Alaska plans to install gas production facilities at its Whiskey Gulch Pad on the Kenai Peninsula east of the Sterling Highway and some 2.5 miles north of the Anchor Point Post Office. In a May 29 approval of the development phase of the Whiskey Gulch lease plan of operations, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil and Gas said the approval, along with that of other state and federal agencies, is necessary for Hilcorp to install gas production facilities on the pad.

In its April 9 application, Hilcorp said the proposed start date for the work was May 15, with work expected to be completed by the end of July. The company did not provide a date for first gas production. The company began drilling at Whiskey Gulch in 2019 with a series of stratigraphic tests which continued through 2024. Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission records show that all of the stratigraphic tests have been plugged and abandoned.

Hilcorp also drilled three exploration wells, all from the Whiskey Gulch pad according to an illustration of included with the company's application: the Whiskey Gulch No. 1

completed in 2021 and Whiskey Gulch 14 and 15 both completed in 2024.

AOGCC data show Whiskey Gulch 14 and 15 remain confidential, but results from Whiskey Gulch 1 are available. Whiskey Gulch 1 had a total depth of 10,271 feet, with a true vertical depth of 9,332 feet, and was plugged back to a measured depth of 2,790 feet and a true vertical depth of 2,571 feet. The well reached the Hemlock formation at its original total depth before being plugged back to the Tyonek formation.

Results of a test reported to AOGCC show the WG1 flowed 4,877 thousand cubic feet over a 24-hour test on Feb. 19, 2022. The WG1 and WG14 are described as single completion gas wells completed in the Whiskey Gulch undefined gas pool; the WG15 is shown as a single completion gas well completed in an unknown gas pool.

Facilities

In its application, Hilcorp said facilities at the pad would include “subsurface piping and new infrastructure to produce gas to sales from the existing well(s) at Whiskey Gulch,” with all work to occur on the existing pad.

It said the project area is accessible from the existing

gravel pad and existing infrastructure will be used as available to support the project.

Included in the project are 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.

Installation will also include piping, valves and associated structural supports, along with heat trace, instrumentation cables, electrical cables, instrument, air and fuel gas lines.

Earlier work

The Whiskey Gulch Pad was a 2021 project, with the 2.75-acre pad built on private surface lands at the end of Cape Ninilchik Avenue, about 1 mile east of the Sterling Highway. Hilcorp said in 2021 that it planned one gas-only exploration well and one gas/oil exploration well at Whiskey Gulch into state oil and gas lease ADL 392666 to total depths of some 10,000 feet. The construction phase was projected to begin in March 2021, following by drilling and testing to begin about June 1 and possibly extend to early September. ●

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● EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Baker Hughes US rig count drops 3 to 563

By **KRISTEN NELSON**
Petroleum News

Baker Hughes' U.S. rotary drilling rig count was 563 on May 30, down by three from the previous week, down by 37 from 600 a year ago and down by 13 from two weeks ago. Over the last eight weeks the rig count was up in two weeks and down in six with a combined loss of 31 against a gain of four. This is the lowest the rig count has been since November 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 third week of August 2020 when it gained back 10 rigs.

The May 30 count includes 461 rigs targeting oil, down by four from the previous week and down 35 from 496 a year ago, with 99 rigs targeting natural gas, up by one from the previous week and down one from 100 a year ago, and three miscellaneous rigs, unchanged from the previous week and down by one from a year ago.

Forty-two of the rigs reported May 30 were drilling directional wells, 508 were drilling horizontal wells and 13 were drilling vertical wells.

Alaska rig count unchanged

Pennsylvania (18) was up by one rig from the previous week.

New Mexico (91), Ohio (11), Oklahoma (52) and West Virginia (7)

see **RIG COUNT** page 5

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GLENFARNE UPDATE

"allow it to deliver LNG into Asia at prices that are lower than Henry Hub pricing from the U.S. Gulf Coast."

Brendan Duval, CEO and founder of Glenfarne, was in Anchorage the week of June 2 and scheduled to speak at the Alaska Sustainable Energy Conference June 5.

In the June 3 release, referring to the results of the company's first round of partner selection, he said: "the many expressions of interest received reinforce that the market recognizes Alaska LNG's advantaged economics, fully permitted status, and powerful federal, state, and local support."

Referring to plans for phase one, a pipeline delivering natural gas from the North Slope to Southcentral, he said: "The reality is being understood that the energy crisis in Southcentral Alaska can only be solved, in the long term, by the domestic portion of the pipeline, which is independently financially viable."

Phase 1 is an approximately 765-mile pipeline from the North Slope to Southcentral Alaska. Phase 2 will see the addition of compression, an additional 42 miles of pipeline under Cook Inlet, the Alaska LNG Export Facility in Nikiski and the gas processing facility on the North Slope.

Glenfarne said it expects a final investment decision on phase 1 to occur late in the fourth quarter of this year.

Worley

Glenfarne Alaska LNG said in a May 27 release that it selected Worley for additional engineering and to prepare a final cost estimate for the Alaska LNG Pipeline in sufficient detail to achieve final investment decision for phase 1 of the project, the 765-mile portion of the 42-inch natural gas pipeline from the

North Slope to Cook Inlet.

"Worley has also been selected as the preferred engineering firm for the Cook Inlet Gateway LNG import terminal and project delivery advisor to Glenfarne across the Alaska LNG projects," the company said.

Duval said Glenfarne is already in partnership with Worley on its Texas LNG project and described Worley as "one of the world's largest and most experienced engineering and project delivery firms with a long history of success in Alaska."

In a separate May 27 release Worley said it has been working in Alaska for more than 60 years, "delivering engineering, logistics, procurement, fabrication and construction, operations and maintenance (O&M), and field services, including for many of the projects and operators on the North Slope."

Gap analysis

In a May 15 presentation to the Resource Development Council Rex Canon, CEO of Glenfarne Upstream and the head of Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Development for Glenfarne, described the additional engineering work to be done prior to a final investment decision as gap analysis.

He also discussed the import facility, designed to fill the gap for Southcentral between Cook Inlet natural gas supplies and completion of phase 1 which will bring North Slope natural gas to Southcentral for in-state use.

Canon said the import facility is essentially a prebuild of portions of the Nikiski export facility, with tank and some marine construction. The planned storage, he said, will be enough to allow gasification of the LNG up to 300,000 mcf per day, which would be enough to meet peak demand.

—KRISTEN NELSON

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OIL PRICES

gasoline inventories.

Analysts answering a Reuters poll had on the average predicted a gasoline inventory rise of just 600,000 barrels.

Distillate fuel inventories over the week increased by 4.2 million barrels to 107.6 million barrels, 16% below the five-year average for the season, the EIA said. At 436.1 million barrels, crude inventories are 7% under the five-year average for the time of year, while gasoline inventories at 228.3 million barrels stand 1% below the five-year average for the time of year.

“The big builds in gasoline and distillates were just head-scratchers, so much so that the market almost dismissed it out of hand,” Phil Flynn of the Price Futures Group told the Wall Street Journal.

On June 3, ANS rose 75 cents to close at its peak of the week of \$69, WTI rose 89 cents to close at \$63.41 and Brent gained a dollar to close at \$65.63.

ANS leapt \$1.75 June 2 to close at \$68.25, as WTI leapt \$1.73 to close at \$62.52 and Brent added 73 cents to close at \$64.63.

Geopolitical premium sparks rally

Concerns of escalating hostilities in Europe after Ukraine’s June 1 destruction of Russian aircraft overcame bearish sentiment from the June 1 decision by a subgroup of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies to return 410,000 barrels per day of production to the market in July.

Moscow conducted reprisal attacks on Kyiv, casting doubt on cease-fire hopes, and raising the specter that Ukraine might target Russia oil facilities, which ING commodities strategist Warren Patterson told Barron’s could “change the outlook for the oil market drastically.”

Tensions in the Middle East also were simmering. Reuters reported that Iran likely will reject a U.S. nuclear proposal presented over the weekend, scotching near-term lifting of sanctions on Iran’s oil and financial sectors.

ANS slumped 97 cents May 29 to close at \$66.90, as WTI slumped 90 cents to close at \$60.04 and Brent lost 75 cents to close at \$64.15.

On May 28, ANS added 75 cents to close at \$67.88, WTI jumped 95 cents to close at \$61.84 and Brent lifted 81 cents to close at \$64.90. Crude prices rose early in the day after a U.S. court ruled that President Donald Trump exceeded his authority in imposing some of his tariffs on imports.

At its close of \$68.29 June 4, ANS was at a \$5.44 premium to WTI, and at a \$3.43 premium to Brent.

An International Energy Agency report released June 4 said global energy investment is set to jump in 2025 to a record \$3.3 trillion despite elevated geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty.

Investment in oil, natural gas and coal is expected to reach \$1.1 billion.

“The fast-evolving economic and trade picture means that some investors are adopting a wait-and-see approach to new energy project approvals, but in most areas we have yet to see significant implications for existing projects,” Fatih Birol, IEA executive director said.

Lower oil prices and demand expectations are signaling the first year-on-year reduction in upstream oil investment since the Covid slump in 2020. The 6% CAPEX cut primarily will reflect a decline in the U.S. shale sector.

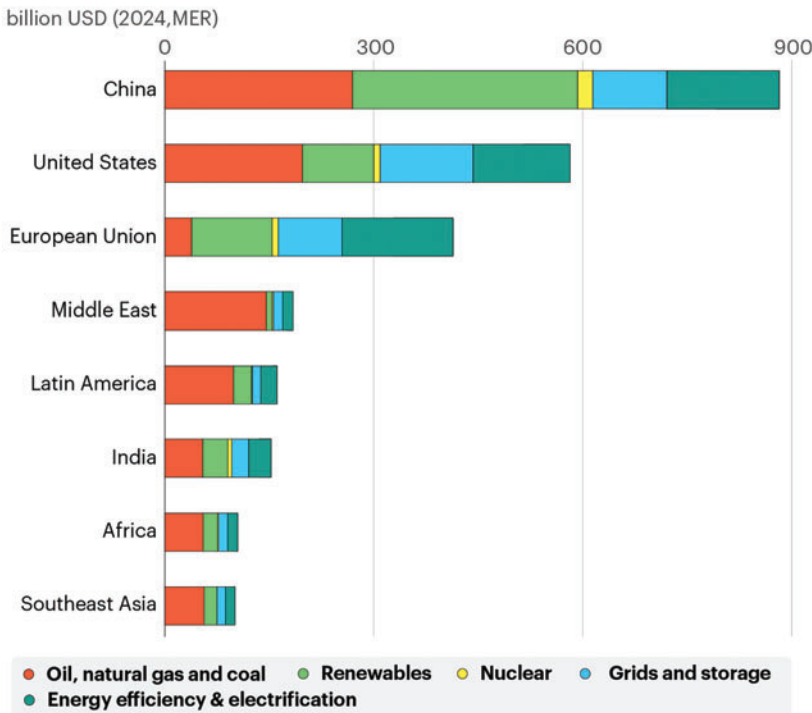
The geography of energy investment is shifting in ways that imply long-term implications, the report said.

“China is the largest global energy investor by a wide margin,” it said. “Meanwhile, global spending on upstream oil and gas is gravitating towards the Middle East.” ●

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Global energy investment is set to rise to \$3.3 trillion in 2025, led by China

Energy investment in select countries and regions, 2025e



International
Energy Agency



Safer. Smarter.

continued from page 4

RIG COUNT

were each down by a single rig.

Rig counts in other states were unchanged from the previous week: Alaska (10), California (6), Colorado (8), Louisiana (30), North Dakota (30), Texas (266), Utah (11) and Wyoming (21).

Baker Hughes shows Alaska with 10 rotary rigs active May 30, unchanged from the previous week and up by one from a year ago when the state’s count was nine.

The rig count in the Permian, the most active basin in the country, was down by one from the previous week at 278 and down by 32 from 310 a year ago. ●

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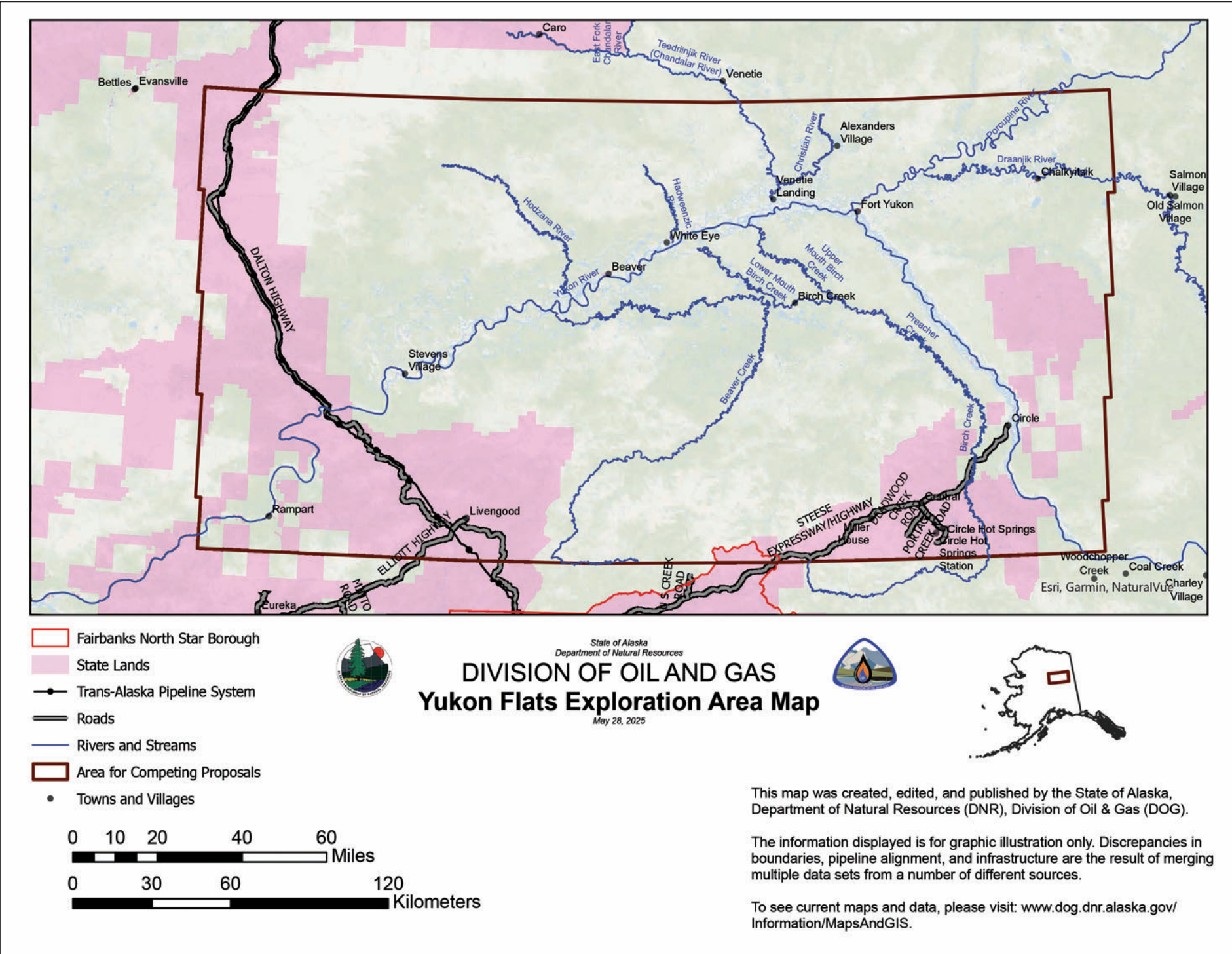
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NABORS – MISSION TO ZERO
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continued from page 1

YUKON FLATS

anywhere in the range of zero to nearly 600 million barrels of technically recoverable oil in the basin, with a mean of about 173 million barrels. The zero at the bottom end of the range reflects the fact that nobody has yet demonstrated the existence of recoverable oil in the basin. Natural gas resources could range from zero to nearly 15 trillion cubic feet. The hydrocarbon resources would be situated in relatively deep sub-basins within the overall basin.

Several years ago, an assessment by consultancy firm Petrotechnical Resources of Alaska indicated that there could be an oil field on the scale of the North Slope Alpine field somewhere in the basin.

Much of the land within the flats consists of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, although Native village corporations own some of the surface land. Native regional corporation Doyon Limited owns some of the subsurface. According to a map published with the division's exploration license notice, the state land tends to lie around the

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perimeter of the basin.

Hilcorp exploration activities

In recent years Hilcorp Alaska has been conducting some exploration in the basin, after entering an oil and gas exploration agreement with Doyon. In 2020 Hilcorp conducted an aerial gravity survey of the basin. The company appears to be particularly interested in the Birch Creek region in the central part of the basin — in 2021 the company drilled 13 shallow stratigraphic test wells in a block of Doyon subsurface land around the villages of Birch Creek and Fort Yukon.

In May the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation approved Hilcorp's oil discharge prevention

and contingency plan for the drilling of two exploration wells at locations 6A and 4A, northwest of the village of Birch Creek and about 30 miles southwest of Fort Yukon. Hilcorp had told ADEC that it anticipated starting the drilling operations this summer.

Preparations for drilling

In its application to ADEC Hilcorp said that it had cleared and leveled the planned drilling sites and had helicopter landing zones in clearings near the sites. Rig mats would be used for stable working and transport surfaces. The company also said that it had overwintered a barge in close proximity to the project sites, to enable operational efficiency in the spring and beyond.

At the time of Petroleum News going to press, permits for the drilling of the two wells had not appeared on the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission's website.

—ALAN BAILEY

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continued from page 1

NPR-A RULE

Reserve in Alaska was set aside to support America’s energy security through responsible development,” said Interior Secretary Doug Burgum. “The 2024 rule ignored that mandate, prioritizing obstruction over production and undermining our ability to harness domestic resources at a time when American energy independence has never been more critical. We’re restoring the balance and putting our energy future back on track.”

The 2024 rule significantly expanded procedural requirements and created a presumption against oil and gas activity in approximately 13 million acres designated as “Special Areas” unless operators could prove minimal or no adverse effects on surface resources. Interior said those provisions not only lack a basis in the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act but undermine BLM’s obligation to carry out an effective and timely leasing program.

The proposed rescission is consistent with recent Executive Orders issued by

President Trump in January 2025 — E.O. 14153, “Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential” and E.O. 14156 “Declaring a National Emergency.”

These directives emphasize the urgent need to reverse restrictive policies that hinder domestic energy development and economic growth, particularly in Alaska.

“Under the proposed rule rescission, the BLM would revert to the regulations that were in place prior to May 7, 2024, which have long guided responsible development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska while incorporating protections for wildlife, subsistence and surface values through the Integrated Activity Plan process,” BLM said June 2.

The proposed rule will be published in the Federal Register and open to public comment for 60 days.

Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat

Also on June 2, Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat, or VOICE, praised the action.

“Today’s decision by the BLM is another important milestone in our effort to advance our Iñupiaq self-determination on

our North Slope homelands,” said Nagruk Harcharek, president of VOICE. “It underscores what VOICE has always known and argued in court on behalf of our 21 member organizations: that the Biden administration’s 2023 rule affecting our NPR-A lands is deeply flawed and poses significant risks to our communities, economy, and culture. We applaud this development and look forward to collaborative engagement with the federal government and Congress about durable policies that support North Slope Iñupiat self-determination.”

In its June 2 release, VOICE said, “The draft rule, which was announced yesterday at a National Energy Dominance Council Session by a federal delegation in Utqiagvik, which included Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum, Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin, will reverse the previous administration’s unilateral actions in the NPR-A and create opportunities for Iñupiaq communities and culture to thrive in the long term.”

In September 2023, “the Biden adminis-

tration blindsided North Slope Iñupiat communities when it announced a proposed rule to ‘protect’ 13 million acres of Indigenous lands and waters located within the NPR-A. This rule was crafted unilaterally by the former administration without consulting Indigenous leaders and communities who would be most impacted by the rule, with many learning of the announcement through the press.”

In June 2024, VOICE filed a lawsuit on behalf of its members challenging the Biden administration’s rule and highlighting its significant risks to Indigenous communities and Iñupiaq culture.

Native Village of Atkasuk President Mary Bordeaux said, “The BLM’s decision to issue a revised draft rule is an important victory for the Village of Atkasuk, which resides wholly within the NPR-A and has stewarded its lands and waters for thousands of years. This reverses the Biden administration’s unilateral policies, which would significantly impact our community, and sets the stage for greater consultation with the North Slope Iñupiat to develop

see **NPR-A RULE** page 8



Doyon makes GeoFORCE Alaska donation

As reported by Doyon Ltd. News June 3, Doyon and two of its mineral exploration lessees recently donated \$50,000 to GeoFORCE Alaska, a hands-on geoscience and science, technology, engineering and mathematics education program run by the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. This contribution supports rural Alaska and Alaska Native high school students who participate in GeoFORCE’s multi-year academic and field-based learning experiences.

GeoFORCE Alaska is a four-year academic experience focused on students from communities off the road system. Each summer, students travel to new regions to study geology and other STEM subjects in the field. The program emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving and observation-based learning — often far outside of the classroom. Over the four-year program, students will visit and learn about geology at Denali National Park, Matanuska Glacier, the Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, Mount St. Helens, Old Faithful, Yellowstone National Park, Dinosaur National Monument, and many other destinations.

“Doyon has been a long supporter of GeoFORCE, and we are very happy to volunteer time as well as financial support,” said Matthew Hanson, resource manager at Doyon Ltd. “Over the past 12 years, this program has given students from off-road systems a unique opportunity to explore the sciences. The participants of this program have an over 90% high school graduation rate, and a high percentage go on to higher education. It’s a fantastic program.”

As part of Doyon’s commitment to support opportunities for shareholder careers in the sciences, natural resources, and engineering, supporting programs like GeoFORCE ensure students are given opportunities early and can build confidence leading to academic success.

For more information about GeoFORCE Alaska, visit www.geoforce.alaska.edu.

EXP wins a 2025 ACEC-NB Engineering Excellence Award

As reported by EXP News May 29, EXP has been awarded an ACEC-New Brunswick 2025 Engineering Excellence Award for rehabilitation work on the Florenceville Bridge. The Engineering Excellence Awards celebrate and promote the provision of exemplary consulting engineering services locally, nationally and internationally.

The Florenceville Bridge, constructed in 1966, spans 610 meters, and serves as a vital connection between the Town of Florenceville-Bristol and the Trans-Canada Highway, with an annual traffic volume of approximately 5,700 vehicles daily.

In 2015, modern condition assessment techniques revealed major structural deficiencies, prompting the development of a multi-year rehabilitation plan to extend the bridge’s lifespan. The rehabilitation scope included replacing pot bearings, removal and replacement of multiple approach spans, major rehabilitation of the 6-span approach structure, strengthening of existing superstructure components and reconfiguring the deck top for traffic barrier upgrades.

Given the unique challenges of rehabilitating a post-tensioned box girder bridge, traditional methods were not feasible. EXP developed a customized approach using surface-mounted carbon fiber rods for external reinforcement and a custom steel truss support system for deteriorated sections of the main span deck. EXP also conducted all investigations, designed the rehabilitation plan and supported construction phases from 2017 to the expected completion in 2025.

The completed bridge will enhance the resilience of the regional transportation system and ensure the Florenceville Bridge will remain open for the next 30 years.

Members of EXP’s project team, Brian Dorcas, Mitchell MacFarlane, Adam Geneau, Martina Verboom and Alyson Dean, attended the ACEC-NB Engineering Excellence Awards dinner and gala to accept the prestigious award.

Companies involved in Alaska’s oil and gas industry

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

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NPR-A RULE

more durable, comprehensive policies affecting our lands and people.”

Taxation

More than 95% of the North Slope’s tax revenue is derived from taxation on resource development infrastructure. These funds support essential services, such as schools, health clinics, modern water and sewer systems, and world-class wildlife management and research supporting Indigenous subsistence traditions. The proliferation of these services is directly connected to significant increases in average lifespan for the North Slope Iñupiat from just 34 years in 1969 to

77 years today —the largest increase of its kind in the United States over that period.

“Our communities rely on the NPR-A, both for traditional subsistence resources and for valuable tax revenues generated by economic development opportunities on our Indigenous homelands,” said Mayor of Utqiagvik Asisaun Toovak. “Given the importance of Iñupiaq lands to our cultural traditions and vital, modern community infrastructure that is ubiquitous in the Lower 48, but has only recently arrived on the North Slope, it is imperative that policies affecting our homelands be created in consultation with our elected leaders.”

VOICE is a nonprofit organization established in 2015 by the region’s collective elected Iñupiat leadership and is dedicated to preserving and advancing North Slope

Iñupiat cultural and economic self-determination. Its members include local governments, Alaska Native corporations, federally recognized tribes and tribal non-profits across the North Slope of Alaska.

On June 2, U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, Rep. Nick Begich (all R-Alaska) and Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy all said they welcomed the announcement from BLM that it will initiate a public process to rescind an unlawful 2024 rule that restricts responsible oil and gas development in the NPR-A.

“Last night at a town hall in Utqiagvik, Secretary Burgum announced that the Interior Department will rescind the Biden administration’s illegal rule that tried to turn vast swaths of NPR-A into de facto ‘wilderness,’” said Sullivan. “The announcement

was roundly met with cheers from Alaskans of the North Slope, who understand better than anyone the proper balance between responsible oil production and the subsistence way of life they cherish. Responsible resource development has transformed the lives of the Iñupiat people, supporting the construction of clinics, gymnasiums, water infrastructure — basic amenities most Americans take for granted. Thank you, Secretary Burgum, for respecting the voices of Alaskans, for standing up for the self-determination of the Iñupiat people, and for sharing this important announcement among the people who will most benefit from it.” ●

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CABINET VISIT

we’ve had as a country unless we have the energy to power it,” Burgum said. “That’s part of our job here, working with governors like Mike to make sure that America is in a position to have energy to solve all these problems and to help everybody again reach their fullest potential wherever you live in this country.”

“There is no force more transformative in human history and in human time than energy, and we’ve really gotten off track on energy,” Wright said. “We are on a mission to get us back on track.”

“There’s no point in producing energy if you’re not going to better people’s lives,” he said.

Lee Zeldin traveled the world while serving on the board of a free market environmental group based in Bozeman, Montana.

“I went to 55 countries and my passion is about people that weren’t born lucky middle class United States of America like I was,” Zeldin said. “What’s the road to improve their lives? It’s energy, energy, energy... because energy enables everything else they need next.”

“If you go to poor and low-income countries or poor and low-income parts of our own country, what you will see every time is the lower income of a society is — which means lower energy consumption per person, the worse the environmental quality is,” he said.

In remote Africa, the energy source is wood, which has powered the world throughout all of human history, he said.

“You have deforestation, you have problems with water quality, you don’t have sanitation,” he said, “Roughly 3 million people die every year from indoor air pollution because they cook their meals and heat their homes with wood, just like our ancestors did.”

“Energized, wealthier societies have massively cleaner environments and massively smaller footprints on the environment,” Zeldin said.

Burgum said some rulemaking made under the previous administration wasn’t about the environment, it was about killing the energy industry, adding, “If you care about the environment, then you should want every drop of oil, every cubic foot of gas, every electron made in the United States because we do it cleaner, smarter and safer than anybody else in the world.”

“The leaders from the North Slope, they care deeply about the land or water, soil health — all the things they care about, they care about more than any bureaucrat ever could,” Burgum said. “We talked about the issues — they would say this is an issue my grandfather was working on.”

“Whether it’s for 45 years trying to get the land transfers done to your state, getting roads built and basic infrastructure, these are things that the Trump administration, the three of us are charged to do,” Burgum said.

The trio agreed that if U.S. production declines, demand still goes up.

“We just let our adversaries become the suppliers,” Burgum said.

“During the last administration, production in Iran went up,” he said. “Production in North Dakota — my home state — went down from 1.5 million barrels a day to 1.2, Alaska went down, Iran went up.”

It seemed the United States was sanctioning Alaska rather than sanctioning Iran, Burgum said.

The promise and challenge of Alaska

Alaska has a tremendous opportunity, and it has a challenge, Wright said.

“The opportunity is that Alaska is a large energy exporter right now,” he said, “It’s a very important energy state.”

With just governance like Gov. Dunleavy, President Trump, Secretary Burgum and Zeldin at the EPA, “it is not a stretch at all to quadruple Alaska’s total energy production in the next 10 years — 100% achievable.”

“This is probably a doubling or more of oil production; this is building a natural gas pipeline to supply the world,” Wright said. “It’s not just Alaska that wins, it’s America that wins; it’s the world that wins.”

The challenge that Alaska faces is that its riches are not resources unless you put wells in the ground and take them out of the ground and turn them into resources, he said, adding, “When they’re underground, they’re just like they were a million years ago — they’re not helping anyone.”

Alaska is further challenged by the expense of delivering energy in state.

“People are leaving Alaska; industry is not coming to Alaska; Alaska is not going to have this manufacturing renaissance that

President Trump is driving through the Lower 48, but it should,” Wright said. “And of course, we have both communities and Alaskan villages that have incredibly expensive energy. Incredibly expensive energy limits their lives.”

The building of infrastructure such as the natural gas pipeline, roads for the North Slope and mining, and creative energy projects involving wind and solar will transform the quality of life, economic opportunity and jobs, he said.

“The next 10 years should see an explosion of Alaskan energy production with the economic benefit of everyone and massively lower costs of energy for those that live in Alaska, wherever they live in Alaska,” Wright said.

Energy and innovation to the rescue

Energy is the direct link to innovation and an electron today could do something never done in history: turn energy into intelligence, Burgum said. We’re literally at a point in human history where we can manufacture intelligence.

“We can take the best software coder in the country and then we can make 1,000, then we can make 1,000 more, I mean, the AI coder today is coding better than 99.5% of all programmers in America,” he said.

“We need more energy, but we also need to have people stop weaponizing the federal government,” Burgum said.

As a governor — “like all western governors do” — Burgum had to deal with the weaponization of the Endangered Species Act.

“I said how many of the things that go on endangered species list ever come off?” he said. “It turns out that 97% of the species that have gone on since the inception of it 140 years ago have never come off.”

“I’m calling it the Hotel California to check in, but you can never check out,” he said.

“We should be celebrating as a society when things come off the list — right now it’s so interesting we celebrate when they go on the list — sometimes with science that maybe wouldn’t hold up to scrutiny and peer review.”

When you have more energy, things get better for prosperity, for humanity, and the environment, he said. Some people are concerned about a degree of temperature change in 2100.

“I’m telling you AI will come up with 1,000 things because the AI will supplement human intelligence, it will augment human intelligence, it will accelerate human intelligence,” Burgum said.

“Human innovation is the core of American greatness,” he said. “We will solve the problems that are coming in the year 2100; if we have the energy, the physical energy to do it and to power AI to do it, we will solve all of those.” ●

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