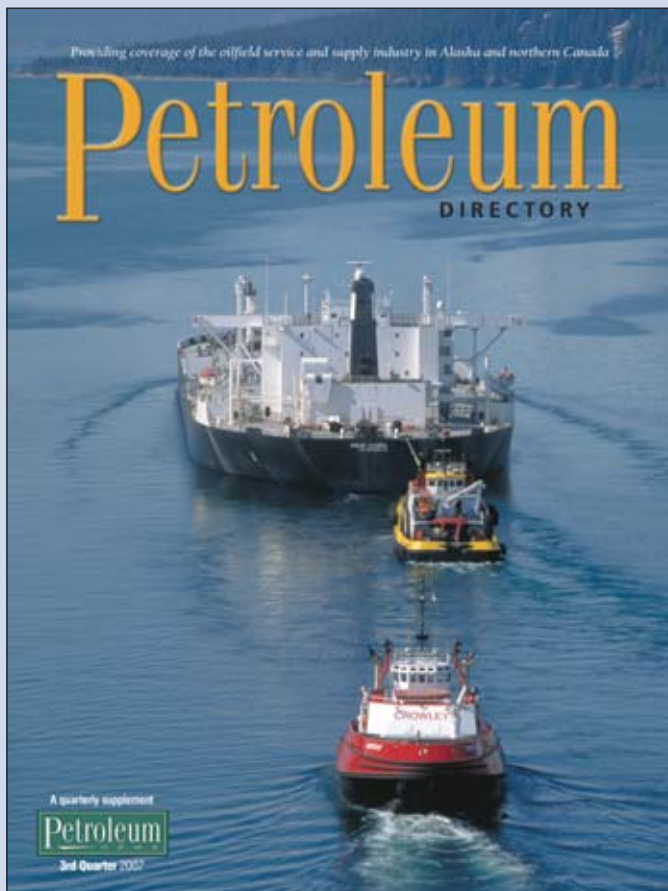




page 12 BP chasing vertical 'string of pearls' above lighter oil on North Slope

Petroleum Directory inside



The latest edition of Petroleum News' quarterly directory is inserted in this issue.

AOGCC reduces potential oil flow from North Slope Burglin well

Following an Oct. 29 decision by the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to further reduce the potential unassisted oil flow from the North Slope Burglin No. 33-1 well, Alaskan Crude Corp. says it will proceed with plans to re-enter the well this winter. But first the small independent will re-enter the Amarex Moose Point No. 1 well on the Kenai.

Drilling Kenai well first

"We'll drill Amarex well first, then send our rig to the North Slope to re-enter the Burglin 33-1 well in the Arctic Fortitude unit," Jim White, president of Alaskan Crude, told Petroleum News Oct. 30. "... Our first plan (for Burglin) is to test the Ugnu, and then evaluate what we have and make a decision as to the next step. ... The area is oil and gas prone."

The Alaskan Crude drilling rig has a top drive and is similar in size to Aurora Gas's AWS 1 rig, White said.

"Nice little pony — actually, it's a race horse," he said. "The rig is set to go at Amarex. We're waiting for cold weather to freeze the ground."

Alaskan Crude will use a snow road to truck its lightweight drilling equipment three miles from the Haul Road to the Burglin well, White said.

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BREAKING NEWS

5 Alberta tossing contracts 'out window:' Investment bank says renegotiating oil sands agreements undermines business

7 Wainwright test well finds gas: Coalbed methane resource could provide long-term power for Alaska village

11 Escopeta gas well under review: North Alexander No. 1 on west side of Cook Inlet targeting Beluga, Upper Tyonek formations

FINANCE & ECONOMY

Fear and loathing

Some ho-hum about Alberta royalty plan; drillers brace for heavy job losses

By **GARY PARK**

For Petroleum News

One minute Alberta was on the brink of catastrophe, the next it was surrounded by calm.

Such was the level of pent-up anxiety that preceded Premier Ed Stelmach's release of his government's new royalty plan and the initial stock market response. (See related story on this page.)

He had scarcely stopped speaking on Oct. 25 when some analysts and industry leaders were whipping up a frenzy.

"I think you're going to see an ugly day tomorrow," said analyst Don Rawson with investment bank Tristone Capital.

Tristone President George Gosbee said the "lack of confidence and lack of clarity" in the framework

Don Herring, president of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, predicted as many as 30,000 job losses for the peak winter season, The "winter season is toast," he said.

would see companies immediately start pulling investments out of Alberta.

"This will result in the loss of the winter drilling season and a decrease in royalties for 2008 and 2009," he told a conference call. "I'm in utter shock."

Tristone forecast an oil sands sell-off Oct. 26 in response to the royalty package, but cautioned against an overreaction until the impact of the royal-

see **FEAR** page 18

GOVERNMENT

Two tax bills now in play

Alaska governor's PPT rewrite, ACES, departs first committees with major changes

By **KRISTEN NELSON**

Petroleum News

The first committee substitutes are out for Gov. Sarah Palin's proposal to increase oil production taxes, the ACES bill, and the Alaska House and Senate are talking such different approaches that it is hard to see where the Legislature may land at the end of the 30-day special session that started Nov. 18.

Both the House Special Committee on Oil and Gas and the Senate Resources Committee voted out committee substitutes Oct. 29 — substitutes



GOV. SARAH PALIN



REP. MIKE DOOGAN

which are considerably shorter than the original bill.

The bill, Alaska's Clear and Equitable Share, is the administration's proposal to make a number of changes in the petroleum profits tax, or PPT, passed in August 2006, including raising the tax rate from 22.5 percent to 25 percent, changing the trigger point and slope of the progressivity feature — which raises taxes as oil prices climb — and providing a number of tools for the Department of

see **BILLS** page 18

GOVERNMENT

Hardscrabble to hardball

Alberta premier draws on roots to tackle Big Oil; tells critics 'this isn't a compromise'

By **GARY PARK**

For Petroleum News

Ed Stelmach has done what none of his predecessors dared to do in the past 60 years — rewritten the province's oil and gas royalty regime.

Whether inspired or foolish, that's not bad for a man often portrayed as plodding and, as one acid-tongued critic put it, having "the charisma of a roof rack."

Whatever the verdict, and it may take years to



Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach

see **STELMACH** page 17

Alberta royalties — New, old and proposed

Here's a snapshot of Alberta's new royalty framework laid out Oct. 25 by Premier Ed Stelmach, compared with what currently exists and how it varies from what the government-appointed royalty review panel recommended:

- Changes will be implemented Jan. 1, 2009, a year later than the review panel wanted.

- The new system is projected to boost the royalty take by C\$1.4 billion, or 20 percent, by 2010. The panel proposed an immediate 20 percent hike or C\$1.9 billion a year, with the

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Petroleum News

A weekly oil & gas newspaper based in Anchorage, Alaska

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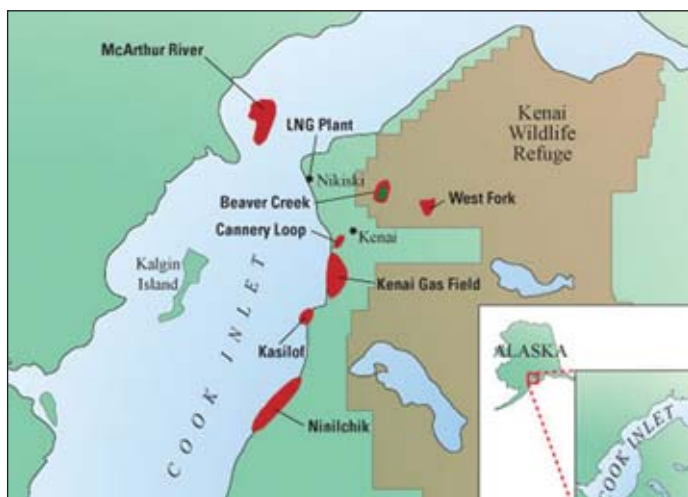
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Company uses technology to access vertical 'string of pearls' above lighter oil; heavy oil, especially Ugnu, remain challenged

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Cost of replacing corroded Prudhoe Bay transit lines turning out to be higher than expected, up about \$10 million, says Utsler

Celebrating 10 Years of Excellence

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Alaska - Mackenzie Rig Report

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

Alaska Rig Status

North Slope - Onshore

Akita Drilling Ltd.
Dreco 1250 UE 63 (SCR/TD) Racked in Deadhorse Anadarko

Doyon Drilling
Dreco 1250 UE 14 (SCR/TD) NGI-13A BP
Sky Top Brewster NE-12 15 (SCR/TD) Kuparuk 1J-178 ConocoPhillips
Dreco 1000 UE 16 (SCR/TD) October rig maintenance BP
Dreco D2000 UEBD 19 (SCR/TD) Alpine CD4-304 ConocoPhillips
OIME 2000 141 (SCR/TD) Kuparuk River Unit 3N-14A ConocoPhillips
TSM 7000 Arctic Fox #1 Stacked in Yard Pioneer Natural Resources
Arctic Wolf #2 Stacked in yard FEX

Kuukpik 5 Stacked in Deadhorse Available till 1/15/08 Available

Nabors Alaska Drilling
Trans-ocean rig CDR-1 (CT) Stacked, Prudhoe Bay Available
Dreco 1000 UE 2-ES Prudhoe Bay DS 14-18B BP
Mid-Continental U36A 3-S Kuparuk 1C-06 ConocoPhillips
Oilwell 700 E 4-ES (SCR) Prudhoe Bay GPB W-40 BP
Dreco 1000 UE 7-ES (SCR/TD) Prudhoe Bay GNI-04 BP
Dreco 1000 UE 9-ES (SCR/TD) Aurora S-126i BP
Oilwell 2000 Hercules 14-E (SCR) Stacked Available
Oilwell 2000 Hercules 16-E (SCR/TD) Stacked Available
Oilwell 2000 17-E (SCR/TD) Stacked, Point McIntyre Available
Emsco Electro-hoist -2 18-E (SCR) Stacked, Deadhorse Available
OIME 1000 19-AC (SCR) On-site at Oooguruk Pioneer Natural Resources
Emsco Electro-hoist Varco TDS3 22-E (SCR/TD) Stacked, Milne Point Available
Emsco Electro-hoist 28-E (SCR) Stacked, Deadhorse Available
OIME 2000 245-E Oliktok Point OPI2 Anadarko
Emsco Electro-hoist Canrig 1050E 27-E (SCR-TD) Stacked

Nordic Calista Services
Superior 700 UE 1 (SCR/CTD) Prudhoe Bay well K-08a BP
Superior 700 UE 2 (SCR/CTD) Prudhoe Bay well X-20a BP
Ideco 900 3 (SCR/TD) Kuparuk well 2L-319 ConocoPhillips

North Slope - Offshore

Nabors Alaska Drilling
Oilwell 2000 33-E Maintenance/mobilization Northstar BP

Cook Inlet Basin - Onshore

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

Marathon Oil Co. (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contractor)
Taylor Glacier 1 SU-43X workover Marathon

Nabors Alaska Drilling
National 110 UE 160 (SCR) Stacked, Kenai Available
Continental Emsco E3000 273 Stacked, Kenai Available
Franks 26 Stacked Available
IDECO 2100 E 429E (SCR) Stacked, removed from Osprey platform Available
Rigmaster 850 129 NNA-1 Chevron
Academy AC electric Heli-Rig 106E (SCR/TD) DS Happy Valley #12 Chevron

Rowan Companies
AC Electric 68 (SCR/TD) Drilling Hansen 1A-L1 well at Cosmopolitan Pioneer Natural Resources

Cook Inlet Basin - Offshore

Unocal (Nabors Alaska Drilling labor contractor)
Not Available

XTO Energy
National 1320 A Platform A no drilling or workovers at present XTO
National 110 C (TD) Idle XTO

Mackenzie Rig Status

Canadian Beaufort Sea

Seatankers (AKITA Equtak labor contract)
SSDC CANMAR Island Rig #2 SDC Set down at Roland Bay Devon ARL Corp.

Mackenzie Delta-Onshore

AKITA Equtak
Dreco 1250 UE 62 (SCR/TD) Rig Racked in Inuvik, NT Available
Modified National 370 64 (TD) Staged on barges in Mackenzie Delta MGM Energy Group

The Alaska - Mackenzie Rig Report as of November 1, 2007.
Active drilling companies only listed.

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

This rig report was prepared by Alan Bailey



JUDY PATRICK

Baker Hughes North America rotary rig counts*

	October 26	October 19	Year Ago
US	1,760	1,764	1,744
Canada	345	331	343
Gulf	51	49	87

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

*Issued by Baker Hughes since 1944

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• GOVERNMENT

Top court to hear Exxon Valdez case

During news conference in Juneau, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin called the Oct. 29 decision a 'kick in Alaska's collective gut'

By MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press Writer

The Supreme Court agreed Oct. 29 to decide whether Exxon Mobil Corp. should pay \$2.5 billion in punitive damages to victims of the huge Exxon Valdez oil spill that fouled more than 1,200 miles of Alaskan coastline in 1989.

The high court stepped into the long-running battle over the damages that ExxonMobil owes from the supertanker accident in Prince William Sound that was the worst oil spill in U.S. history. The Exxon Valdez ran aground on a reef, cracking its hull and spilling 11 million gallons of oil.

Hundreds of thousands of seabirds and marine animals died as a result.

It is a case filled with superlatives. The award, even after it was cut in half by a federal appeals court in December, would be the largest punitive damages judgment ever. A jury in Alaska awarded \$5 billion in damages in 1994 and the company has been appealing the verdict ever since.

ExxonMobil, based in Irving, Texas, is the world's largest publicly traded oil company and last year posted the largest annual profit by a U.S. company — \$39.5 billion. That result topped the previous record, also by Exxon Mobil, of \$36.13 billion set in 2005.

Arguing against Supreme Court review, lawyers for the plaintiffs, some of whom have died, said the damages award is "barely more than three weeks of Exxon's net profits."

The plaintiffs still living include about 33,000 commercial fishermen, cannery workers, landowners, Native Alaskans, local governments and businesses. They urged the court to reject the company's appeal, saying, "After more than 18 years, it is time for this protracted litigation to end."

During a news conference in Juneau, Gov. Sarah Palin called the Oct. 29 decision a "kick in Alaska's collective gut."

"It seems to be a case of justice delayed being justice denied," Palin said. "This protracted litigation, I believe has gone on too long. It's been a generation going on without resolution."

Mike Webber of Cordova, Alaska, a Native Alaskan artist and commercial fisherman, said any money would be insufficient. "I ... would have been able to make twice what I make now if the fisheries had stayed healthy," Webber said Oct. 29 after learning of the court's action.

Should any damages be paid?

But the justices said they would con-

sider whether the company should have to pay damages at all under the Clean Water Act and centuries-old laws governing shipping. The court has frequently sided with business interests in punitive damages and other cases of corporate liability.

John Paul Jones, a University of Richmond law professor and expert in maritime law, said the court was right to jump into the case because lower courts long have been divided on some of the issues peculiar to the laws concerning accidents on the water.

"The decision in this case could dictate the outcome of a significant number of cases," Jones said.

Exxon said that even if the court finds some money is due, it should rule that the \$2.5 billion award violates the Constitution because it is too large. The justices said they would not consider that argument when they hear the case early next year.

Justice Samuel Alito, who owns between \$100,000 and \$250,000 in Exxon stock, did not take part in the decision to accept the appeal.

The court's last ruling on punitive damages, in February, set aside a nearly \$80 million judgment against Altria Group Inc.'s Philip Morris USA. The money was awarded to the widow of a smoker in Oregon.

Exxon: case about punishment

Exxon said it already has paid \$3.4 billion in cleanup costs and other penalties resulting from the oil spill.

"This case has never been about compensating people for actual damages," company spokesman Tony Cudmore said in a statement. "Rather it is about whether further punishment is warranted. ... We do not believe any punitive damages are warranted in this case."

The company marshaled more than a dozen organizations ranging from groups of shippers to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, to support its bid for Supreme Court review.

The company contended it should not be held responsible for the mistakes of the ship's captain, Captain Joseph Hazelwood, who violated clear company rules when the Exxon Valdez ran aground with 53 million gallons of crude oil in its hold on March 23, 1989.

The plaintiffs said Exxon knew Hazelwood had sought treatment for drinking, but had begun drinking again. "Exxon placed a relapsed alcoholic, who it knew was drinking aboard its ships, in command of an enormous vessel carrying

see **COURT** page 6

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● GOVERNMENT

Alberta tossing contracts 'out window'

Investment bank: renegotiating oil sands agreements undermines business environment; Alberta accused of abandoning relationship

By GARY PARK

For Petroleum News

Of all the changes contained in Alberta's new royalty regime, none has unsettled the industry or investors more than the government's decision to renegotiate royalty contracts with oil sands giants Syncrude Canada and Suncor Energy.

"Essentially, the government is tossing these contracts (which don't expire until 2016) out the window, which we view as a questionable move," said investment bank Tristone Capital.

Premier Ed Stelmach, declaring that "talks but not negotiations" were under way, gave the two companies 90 days to reach a settlement.

Failing that, he said the government would "take other measures to ensure a level playing field for all industry stakeholders."

Tristone interpreted the comment to mean the door would be open to "another carte blanche oil sands royalty change," or possibly a severance tax on the removal of bitumen by Syncrude and Suncor "in an attempt to bring their royalties in line with other companies."

"We are concerned that this will result in further deterioration of confidence in the security of the business environment in Alberta," Tristone said.

Concern about relationship

Pierre Alvarez, president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, said his member companies — given the uncertainty of the Syncrude and Suncor agreements — are concerned about the ultimate long-term relationship between the government and the industry.

He said there is feeling the government has "walked away" from a mutual respect and understanding built up over the years.

Now that an element of uncertainty has been injected into the equation, both in the head offices of Calgary and around the world, the ramifications will stretch over many years.

Alvarez said the planned 1 percent to 9 percent royalty during pre-payout on oil sands projects and the 40 percent royalty once capital costs are recovered, imposed with only 14 months' notice, is a "very dramatic and negative step."

He said the government has overlooked the fact that oil sands reserves are the most difficult and expensive to develop in the world.

Rogers: politicians as thieves

Others were less tactful, with commodity investment guru Jim Rogers describing the government's decision to abandon its promised stable investment climate — resulting from years of intensive efforts to first sell the oil sands as a viable business, then attract international investment to finance multi-billion-dollar projects — as "astonishing."

Rogers told the Globe and Mail that "all politicians revert to theft when conditions work for them."

"I must confess I thought Alberta would be among the last sellouts, but clearly I was wrong," he said.

Instead of generating greater production, the government is more interested in a "short-term fix," with no concern for what happens over the long run, Rogers said.

Dennis Gartman, outspoken publisher of

an investment newsletter, said the new regime could finish up slowing expansion of the oil sands and may have contributed to the latest surge in oil prices.

He said Stelmach's plan has hiked royalties to "onerous levels ... this is, in our opinion, lunacy ... it shall serve to make less oil available."

Government offers no defense

The government offered no defense of its decision to reopen the contracts with Syncrude and Suncor, which account for about half of the current 1.2 million barrels per day of oil sands production.

However, the government-appointed royalty review panel offered some hints in arguing that Albertans "need and deserve much more information on how (oil sands) costs are accounted for, and verified ..."

The panel noted that a 1995 report by a National Oil Sands Task Force recommended a government take from the oil sands of 60 to 63 percent, compared with the current

tax and royalty take of 47 percent.

"With a difference between original intentions and actual outcomes as big as 13-16 whole percentage points, is the decline in government take the result of policy, of implementation, or compliance, or of auditing?" it asked.

"Was it a decision not to implement mid-course corrections, or a failure to notice the drift off-course?"

"Imagine the repercussions if the income tax system experienced such drift and nobody knew or nobody seemed to give a 'tinker's damn'" the panel asked, repeating a celebrated remark by former premier Ralph Klein, when asked whether Alberta was getting its fair and full share of royalties.

Buyout could cost billions

One of the review panel members, who would not be identified, told the Calgary Herald the only way Syncrude and Suncor will abandon their contracts is through a

buyout that would cost in the tens of billions of dollars.

"If I was in their shoes, I would be doing the happy dance," the member said. "They won the lottery."

Marcel Coutu, chief executive officer of the Canadian Oil Sands Trust, which owns 36 percent of Syncrude, gave a tempered response to the government's insistence on renegotiating the agreements.

While willing to discuss a "fair and equitable" renegotiation of its contract, the trust "must recognize and preserve our legal rights."

Coutu also warned that by reducing oil sands profitability the government will "likely reduce oil sands activity," given that lower grade oil sands deposits which form part of every project "may never be recovered due to a higher economic threshold."

Suncor Chief Executive Officer Rick George said the changes are "substantial

see **CONTRACTS** page 6



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OIL COMPANY EARNINGS

Earnings from Petroleum News Top 25

Earnings third quarter 2007 • Change from third quarter 2006
Liquids production third quarter 2007 • Change from third quarter 2006
Natural gas production third quarter 2007 • Change from third quarter 2006

Company	symbol	earnings	%	liquids	%	gas	%
ExxonMobil	XOM						
BP	BP	\$4,406	-29	2,292,000	-5	7,879	-3
RD/Shell	RDS-A	\$6,392	-8	1,874,000	-9	7,329	+6
Chevron	CVX						
ConocoPhillips	COP	\$3,673	-5	940,000*	-17	4,916*	-9
Occidental	OXY	\$1,324	+13	447,000	+5	747	+13
EnCana	ECA	\$934	-31	136,000	+1	3,630	+8
Can. Natural	CNQ.TO						
Anadarko	APC						
Devon	DVN						
Marathon	MRO						
Husky	HSE.TO	C\$769	+13	266,500	-4	620	+7
Talisman	TLM						
Apache	APA	\$612	-5	263,965	+16	1,785	+5
Imperial	IMO	C\$816	-1	291,000	+4	430	-23
Suncor	SU.TO	C\$588	-14	239,100	-1	211	+1
Petro-Canada	PCZ	C\$776	+15	315,100	+49	723	0
Nexen	NXY.TO	C\$403	+103	222,700	+34	227	+2
XTO	XTO	\$412	+12	61,277	+8	1,561	+29
Chesapeake	CHK						
Pioneer	PXD						
EOG	EOG	\$202	-32	43,700	+18	1,497	+11
Newfield	NFX	\$83	-69	23,911	+13	536	-6
Pogo	PPP	-\$46	—	17,165	-18	191	-3
Swift	SFY						

* Does not include Lukoil investment
**Millions of cubic feet equivalent

Liquids production in barrels per day. Natural gas production in millions of cubic feet per day.

NOTE: Top 25 is based on Petroleum News research on exploration spending

GOVERNMENT

BP agrees to \$20 million for Prudhoe spill

BP will pay \$20 million and plead guilty to a misdemeanor violation of the federal Water Pollution Act for the largest oil spill ever on the North Slope, Justice Department officials said Oct. 25.

The \$20 million is part of \$373 million in fines and restitution the London-based oil giant agreed to pay for a variety of criminal acts.

The fines are the largest criminal assessments ever against a corporation for Clean Air Act violations and the first criminal prosecution of the requirement that refineries and chemical plants take steps to prevent accidental releases, the Environmental Protection Agency said.

The settlement was announced Oct. 25 in Washington and Anchorage. BP agreed to pay \$50 million in connection with an explosion that killed 15 employees at a refinery in Texas. The company also was fined \$303 million in connection with price manipulation of the propane market.

For its violations in Alaska, BP will pay \$12 million in criminal fines to the federal government, \$4 million in payments to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and \$4 million in criminal restitution to the State of Alaska. The company was prosecuted in Alaska under the Clean Water Act.

BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. will also plead guilty to a misdemeanor violation of the federal Water Pollution Act for the oil spill, Justice Department officials said.

DOJ: BP didn't heed warnings

The 201,000-gallon leak at the Prudhoe Bay field in March 2006 was the largest oil spill ever on the North Slope. Officials said the company failed to take necessary action to prevent the spill.

"Both leaks were the result of BP's failure to heed many warning signs," said Peter Keisler, acting U.S. attorney general, referring to the March leak and smaller leaks that led to a shutdown at Prudhoe in August 2006. Nelson Cohen, U.S. attorney for Alaska, said the evidence showed that BP had not been spending enough to maintain North Slope pipelines, and that contributed to the leak.

"BP didn't spend money that it should have spent." The company knew there was a thick layer of sludge inside the pipes, and this led to corrosion and ultimately an almond-sized hole that resulted in the spill, Cohen said.

Cohen and Alaska Attorney General Talis Colberg added that the action does not preclude future criminal prosecution of individuals or pursuit of a civil case against the company.

BP runs Prudhoe Bay, the nation's largest oil field, on behalf of itself and other owners, including ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips.

—ERIKA BOLSTAD
Anchorage Daily News

ASSOCIATIONS

AAEP to hear about proposed Alaska regs

The Alaska Association of Environmental Professionals Nov. 14 brown bag lunch features a talk on proposed revisions to Alaska contaminated site regulations, 18 AAC 75.

The presentation, by Earl Crapps and Bill James of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Spill Prevention and Response, is at the BP Energy Center on Seward Highway between 36th and Benson.

Doors open at 11:30 a.m.; meeting begins at 11:45 a.m.

The meeting is free. Call 333-2238 for information.

The next AAEP brown bag lunch talk will be Jan. 16.

continued from page 4

COURT

toxic cargo across treacherous and resource-rich waters," they said.

The San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reduced the punitive damages because, in part, the company tried to clean up the spill and didn't spill oil from the tanker Exxon Valdez deliberately.

The disaster prompted Congress in 1990 to pass a law banning single-hulled

tankers like the Valdez from domestic waters by 2015.

ExxonMobil shares were up \$1.40, or 1.5 percent, to \$93.61 Oct. 29. The shares are up nearly 30 percent since the start of the year.

The case is Exxon Shipping Co. v. Baker, 07-219. ●

—Associated Press Writer Jeannette Lee in Anchorage, Alaska, and AP Business Writer John Porretto in Houston contributed to this report.

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CONTRACTS

and could have a significant impact on industry economics," but he said more time is needed to study the changes and "their potential impact on our business."

On the contract renegotiation, he said his company will go for the "right solution for Suncor and the people of Alberta." ●

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• NATURAL GAS

Wainwright test well finds gas

Coalbed methane resource could provide long-term power for the Alaska village if extraction proves economically feasible

By **ALAN BAILEY**
Petroleum News

A multi-year U.S. Department of the Interior Alaska Rural Energy Project which has been searching for coalbed methane near rural Alaska villages hit pay dirt in June and July when a test well at the Chukchi coast village of Wainwright found a significant gas resource in coal seams under the village.

Wainwright with a population of 500 to 600 depends on expensive diesel fuel for electricity generation — an ability to switch to natural gas as an energy source for the electricity power plant could represent a substantial economic benefit for the community. However, the results of the summer drilling are still preliminary in nature and it remains to be seen whether the production of coalbed methane at Wainwright is technically and economically viable, Art Clark, co-project leader of the DOI project, told the Arctic Energy Summit technical conference on Oct. 16.

“But we are able to say that there is enough coalbed natural gas contained in sub-permafrost coal seams underlying Wainwright and vicinity to serve as an alternative energy source,” Clark said.

Fort Yukon first

The project, led by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Geological Survey, and involving at various times Alaska’s Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys and the U.S. Department of Energy, started out by drilling a coalbed methane test well in 2004 at Fort Yukon in Alaska’s Interior.

That well encountered coal seams but did not find viable quantities of gas. In 2005 a well at Franklin Bluffs, just off the Haul Road in the central North Slope, tested the potential to drill for coalbed gas in an area of deep permafrost, prior to drilling in the less accessible Wainwright area.

The project team used a lightweight Atlas Copco CS 1000 rig for both the Fort Yukon and Franklin Bluffs drilling. And in August 2006 the team barged the rig and other drilling equipment from Prudhoe Bay to Wainwright, in preparation for drilling in the Chukchi Sea village during the follow-



Placing a coal core from the Wainwright well into a PVC desorption canister

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

ing summer.

Arctic Slope Regional Corp., the North Slope Borough and Olgoonik Corp. (the Wainwright village corporation) were partners in the Wainwright drilling.

Locate coal

The primary objective of the drilling was to determine the number, thickness and depth of the coals directly under Wainwright — it was already clear from surface rock exposures, seismic data and a couple of oil exploration wells drilled 25 to 30 miles away that coal existed under the village, Clark said.

But it was particularly important to discover how much of that coal lay below the thick regional permafrost zone. Production of gas from the permafrost is unlikely to be feasible.

“Even if there was a large amount of gas-bearing coal in the permafrost, more than likely that would not really provide a viable resource,” Clark said.

Drilling started in early June and reached a total depth of 1,613 feet. Continuous rock coring resulted in 95 percent core recovery below the surface casing, Clark said. That resulted in about 1,500 feet of core in about 250 boxes for geologic analysis of the sub-surface.

see **WAINWRIGHT** page 8

FINANCE & ECONOMY

Fairborne Energy Trust’s bid to return to corporate ranks viewed as ‘test case’

Fairborne Energy Trust is heading for shore after a year of being tossed around in uncertain seas.

Its bid to become the first energy trust to convert back to corporate ranks needs unit holder approval for Fairborne to sell a 16 percent stake to Denham Commodity Partners Fund, a U.S. private equity fund, for C\$100 million.

That offer for 13.4 million shares of the new company is C\$7.45 per share, or 8 percent above Fairborne’s closing price on Oct. 19.

Analysts view the proposed reorganization as a “test case” in a sector where True Energy Trust was rebuffed six months ago when investors turned down its conversion plan.

Fairborne Chief Executive Officer Steve VanSickle said Fairborne sees “greater value creation to security holders from investing all of our cash flow in our existing assets and growth opportunities than under the current trust structure.”

He said the Denham infusion would significantly improve Fairborne’s balance sheet by paying down debt “without diluting existing shareholders” and would enable the trust to “aggressively pursue identified opportunities on our existing asset base.”

VanSickle said Fairborne is “on the small side” of a sector that has evolved into very large and very small trusts.

Production 13,100 boe per day

Fairborne currently produces 13,100 barrels of oil equivalent per day, 75 percent of its natural gas in Alberta and Saskatchewan and has 233,500 net undeveloped acres.

The trust also has tax pools of about C\$490 million, which will allow it to remain non-taxable beyond 2011, when the Canadian government will put trusts in the same tax category as corporation.

If the conversion goes through it has a 2008 capital spending program of C\$125 million to C\$150 million.

Turned into a trust in May 2005, Fairborne struck a deal to acquire its original spinoff Fairquest Energy for C\$197 million earlier this year and picked up production of about 10,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day.

Meanwhile, Provident Energy Trust is scooping up a private heavy oil producer for C\$79 million to expand its operations in southwestern Saskatchewan.

The deal involves 1,300 bpd of production from proved plus probable reserves of 3.6 million barrels and 17,900 net acres of undeveloped land.

—GARY PARK

ADEC’s Division of Spill Prevention and Response seeks two corrosion engineers to direct a risk assessment addressing corrosion problems in the aging North Slope oilfield and oil transportation infrastructure.

CORROSION ENGINEERS

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- Expertise and education in pipeline integrity management (corrosion).
- Knowledge and experience in the design, construction, and maintenance of hazardous liquid pipelines



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- Drafting and managing requests for proposals for the risk assessment of Alaska North Slope crude oil production, storage, and transportation systems, including the Trans Alaska Pipeline and the Valdez Marine Terminal,
 - Managing the resulting contracts and implementation plan, and
 - Conducting engineering evaluations of flow lines and other spill prevention requirements for oil exploration and production facilities.



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Los Angeles

continued from page 7

WAINWRIGHT

And during the drilling, the well penetrated many coal seams.

"We penetrated 70 feet of net coal in 24 beds greater than or equal to 1 foot in thickness. There were numerous other thin coals," Clark said.

Took coal samples

The drilling team took from one to four 1-foot samples from each of the coal seams that were at least 1 foot thick, and then rapidly transferred the samples into sealed plastic canisters for measurement of the amount of gas desorbed from the coal.

"The quicker you can get it into your canister and start taking measurements, the less gas you actually lose, although once you make your calculations you do have ways to determine what that lost gas is," Clark said.

The team stored the canisters at a steady temperature in a desorption trailer and periodically measured the amount of gas released from each coal sample. Sampling intervals started at five to 10 minutes, but increased to once every few hours or more once the desorption rate slowed. At the end of the drilling project the samples were transported back to the USGS facility in Denver, for further monitoring and testing.

"Most of these samples are still desorbing back in Denver. It will take a long time for all of this gas to come off," Clark said. "... I'm taking readings approximately every 10 days now."

The team has also taken samples of the desorbed gas and gas from the drilling mud for chemical and isotopic analysis.

"We also (now) know that the gas contained in the coal is almost pure methane," Clark said.

Although the testing of the coal is still incomplete, preliminary results indicate a natural gas content of 50 standard cubic feet per ton from samples taken from a depth of 200 feet, increasing to 180 standard cubic feet per ton from the deepest coal sampled at 1,470 feet. There is a very direct relationship between the depth of the sample and the amount of gas it contains, Clark said.

After completing the drilling and coring, the drilling team ran some geophysical logging tools down the well, using a portable winch system. The logs enabled identification of the exact depths and thicknesses of the coals, and of the other rock strata encountered.

Pressure recovery test

The next step involved isolating a single coal seam to test how quickly the pressure in the seam recovered from a pressure draw down — time and the project budget limit-



Removing the core barrel inner tube from the Wainwright coalbed methane test well

ed this type of testing to just one seam.

"Our coalbed of primary interest, our thickest coal, was at 1,250 feet," Clark said. "We took four samples from that coal and they're averaging out at a little over 150 standard cubic feet of gas per ton of coal."

The team isolated this 7.5-foot seam by placing nitrogen-filled inflatable packers in the well above and below the seam, with a slotted pipe placed between the packers adjacent to the coal. A pipe through the upper packer connected the well hole within the seam to the surface. By using high-pressure air to drop the pressure in the pipe, the drill team could draw water from the coal seam to the surface. By then measuring the pressure recovery in the seam over a period of 12 hours, it was possible to calculate the permeability of the coal.

The permeability, a measure of how easily fluids can flow through the coal, turned out to be approximately 100 millidarcies, a value that Clark described as "a pretty nice, mid-range number" that ought to enable gas production without the need for artificial stimulation.

After completion of the draw down and recovery test, the team used a Teflon baler to recover a water sample from the coal seam for testing. A total dissolved solids reading of 10,000 to 12,000 milligrams per liter indicated that the water is highly brackish. That's a mid-range dissolved solid content for a coalbed methane field but certainly not drinkable — water produced during gas production would likely have to be injected into a subsurface rock layer, Clark said.

From a technical perspective, one of the more intriguing discoveries from the well was the existence of numerous gas-bearing coal seams inside the permafrost zone (there have been questions in the past about the

existence of coalbed methane in permafrost).

"They did contain gas, somewhat surprisingly — they contained more gas than we thought they would," Clark said. "But that gas more than likely is not going to be producible."

Having completed the sampling and testing at the well, the team set an anti-freeze filled PVC well tube in the completed well for long-term monitoring of subsurface temperatures.

Estimated resource

So, what does all this mean in terms of a natural gas resource for Wainwright?

Just taking the single coal seam used for the draw down and recovery test, multiplying up the numbers for the coal volume and gas content indicates that there would be approximately 1.24 billion cubic feet of gas in one square mile of the seam. Assuming that 50 percent of that gas could in practice be recovered that amounts to 0.62 bcf of recoverable resource, Clark said.

"That is ... a very realistic and probably conservative recovery ratio," Clark said.

Currently Wainwright uses about 450,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year for electricity generation. The energy content of that volume of diesel equates to about the energy content of 62,500 thousand cubic feet of natural gas, thus indicating that one square mile of the single coal seam could fuel Wainwright electricity generation for 10 years, Clark said.

Taking the estimated gas content from all of the sampled sub-permafrost coal seams results in an estimate of a 26-year power supply from a total of 21 feet of coal. And extending the area of extraction to four square miles could provide power for the village for 40 to 100 years, depending on

how many coal seams are tapped, Clark said.

Much work remains

But much work remains to be done before it will be possible to say whether coalbed methane production at Wainwright will be possible.

The project team has yet to determine the methane saturation of the coals, a critical piece of data in determining how much water would have to be pumped out before taking gas out of the ground. But an initial assessment looks promising.

"Our initial feeling is that these coals are highly saturated, maybe even fully saturated, with respect to gas, which from a production standpoint is a very good thing," Clark said. However, actual saturation levels cannot be determined until isotherm analyses are conducted on fully desorbed coal samples. Because the coal cores are still desorbing, this won't be done for at least several more months.

The next step at Wainwright would be a multi-well production test, to test the engineering challenge of producing gas and water through the permafrost and to measure the characteristics of the coal seams as gas reservoirs. It would also be advisable to drill to a depth of 2,500-3,000 feet to look for possible deeper coal seams and to locate a potential zone for produced water disposal, Clark explained.

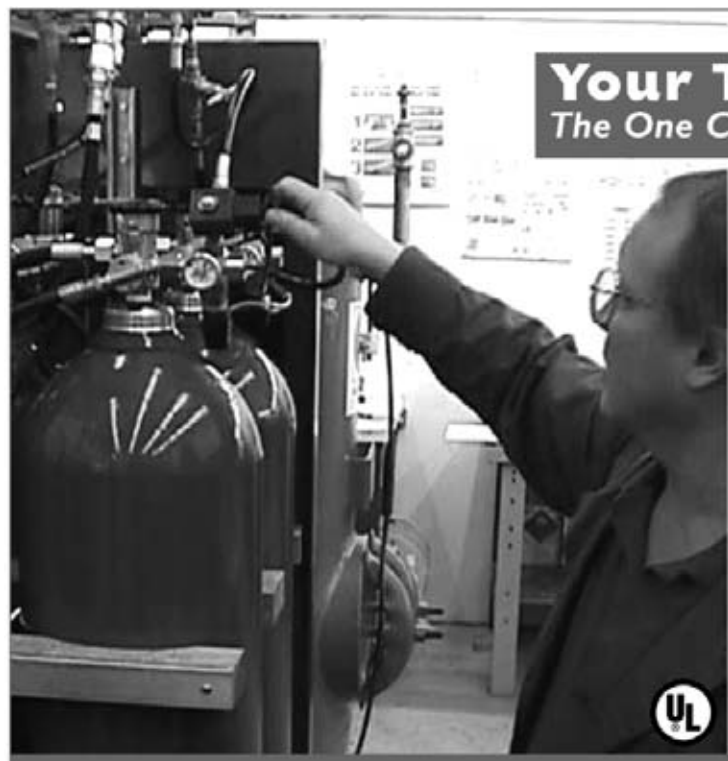
The multi-well test would require a larger truck-mounted drilling rig than the CS100 rig used for the test well.

"We need to transport a larger rig up to Wainwright," Clark said. "We have that rig in the Lower 48, which we can barge up and then fly into Wainwright in a C-130. ... We're already working with DOE trying to put together a multi-well test plan."

But the project team will need to work with the project partners to secure funding for all of that — current funding does not extend to production testing, Clark said.

However, the preliminary results from the Wainwright test drilling seem very promising and show that a lightweight rig can successfully test for shallow subsurface resources in a remote rural location.

"The 2007 Wainwright project shows that shallow to mid-depth test drilling to assess local-use resources can be successfully and economically conducted in remote Arctic locations using this type of portable equipment," Clark said. "... Similar equipment and techniques could be used for comparable studies in other frontier locations where little subsurface information is available." ●



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● EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Marathon continues to chase Cook Inlet gas

Company sees significant opportunity in the region but wants competitive gas pricing and a stable fiscal, regulatory environment in Alaska

By **ALAN BAILEY**
Petroleum News

Although oil and gas production in Alaska is declining, there are still plenty of resources to find and develop, Mitch Little, Marathon's Alaska production manager, told Petroleum News Oct. 2, 2007.

"While the (Alaska) industry is certainly maturing ... there are still significant opportunities that remain within existing fields and in terms of undiscovered resources," Little said.

Marathon is a major natural gas supplier in the Cook Inlet region and produces gas from the Kenai, Cannery Loop, Ninilchik, Beaver Creek and West Fork fields on the Kenai Peninsula and from the Chevron-operated McArthur River field on the west side of the Cook Inlet. Kasilof, the company's newest field, went on stream in November 2006, delivering gas through the Kasilof pipeline to the Kenai Kachemak pipeline on the western side of the Kenai Peninsula.



MITCH LITTLE

Market transition

Developing new resources in the Cook Inlet region depends on that market continuing its transition towards competitive pricing — the gas market in the Cook Inlet has in the past seen an excess of cheap gas, priced below market rates in the Lower 48 or elsewhere in North America, Little said.

"Those conditions have probably led to curtailed investment on the exploration and production side and potentially haven't resulted in as much conservation on the consumer side, or in the power generation or heating efficiency market," he said.

In other markets that have had to go through the same

type of evolution, the transition in price levels has promoted the development of new gas supply sources, Little said. Little expects the same phenomenon to occur in Southcentral Alaska. But it is not yet clear to what extent new gas supplies in the region will come from new Cook Inlet discoveries, from a North Slope gas line or from a combination of the two, he said.

Development of new resources in the Cook Inlet region also depends on a stable fiscal and regulatory environment that reduces the uncertainties in project decision making, he said.

Continued development

Meantime, Marathon continues to work its gas fields around the Cook Inlet — in 2007 the company focused on development drilling in four of those fields: the Ninilchik, Kenai, Beaver Creek and Sterling gas fields.

"We've had a fairly active drilling campaign, more or less a continuous drilling program throughout the year utilizing our company owned Glacier drilling rig," Little said. "We've had drilling campaigns in four different field areas and by year's end we will have drilled nine additional wells."

The company has been using its Escape completion technology to exploit multiple reservoir sands, especially in the Beluga formation and in the Kenai gas field — the complex geology of the Cook Inlet may result in a single well penetrating as many as 10 to 15 individual reservoir sands, Little said.

"The Escape technology is a completion technique that allows us to perforate and fracture stimulate much more efficiently and cost effectively than traditional



This article will appear in **The Explorers** magazine, which will be released at the annual Resource Development Council conference in mid-November in Anchorage. **The Explorers** features oil and gas companies that are in various stages of exploring for oil and gas in Alaska. For more information contact Amy Spittler, Petroleum News associate publisher, at aspittler@petroleumnews.com or (907) 770-3506.

methods," Little said. "We're able to complete zones of lower quality than were typically completed in the past. ... What it's ideally suited for is fields where there are multiple stacked reservoirs, especially if there are over four intervals that you want to complete simultaneously."

The company is also in the process of shooting a new 3-D seismic survey in the northern part of the Ninilchik field.

"We're looking to better characterize the known field area — the majority of the survey is over the field area," Little said. Marathon is also using the seismic survey to search for any new opportunities at Ninilchik, he said.

Marathon picked up nine tracts around the Ninilchik field in the State of Alaska's May 2007 areawide lease sale. Little characterized this lease acquisition as "the normal course of business," consolidating the company's Ninilchik position.

Sunrise prospect

On the exploration front, Marathon is moving forward with its Sunrise gas prospect, also known as East Swanson, in the northern part of the Kenai Peninsula. The prospect lies in a Cook Inlet Region Inc. holding, inside the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

"We continue to be interested in the prospect," Little said. "We're advancing it through our normal evaluation processes and we've permitted, and plan to acquire additional 2-D seismic data over the prospect later this year. ... Plans beyond that would be contingent or dependent on what the seismic reveals."

see **MARATHON** page 10

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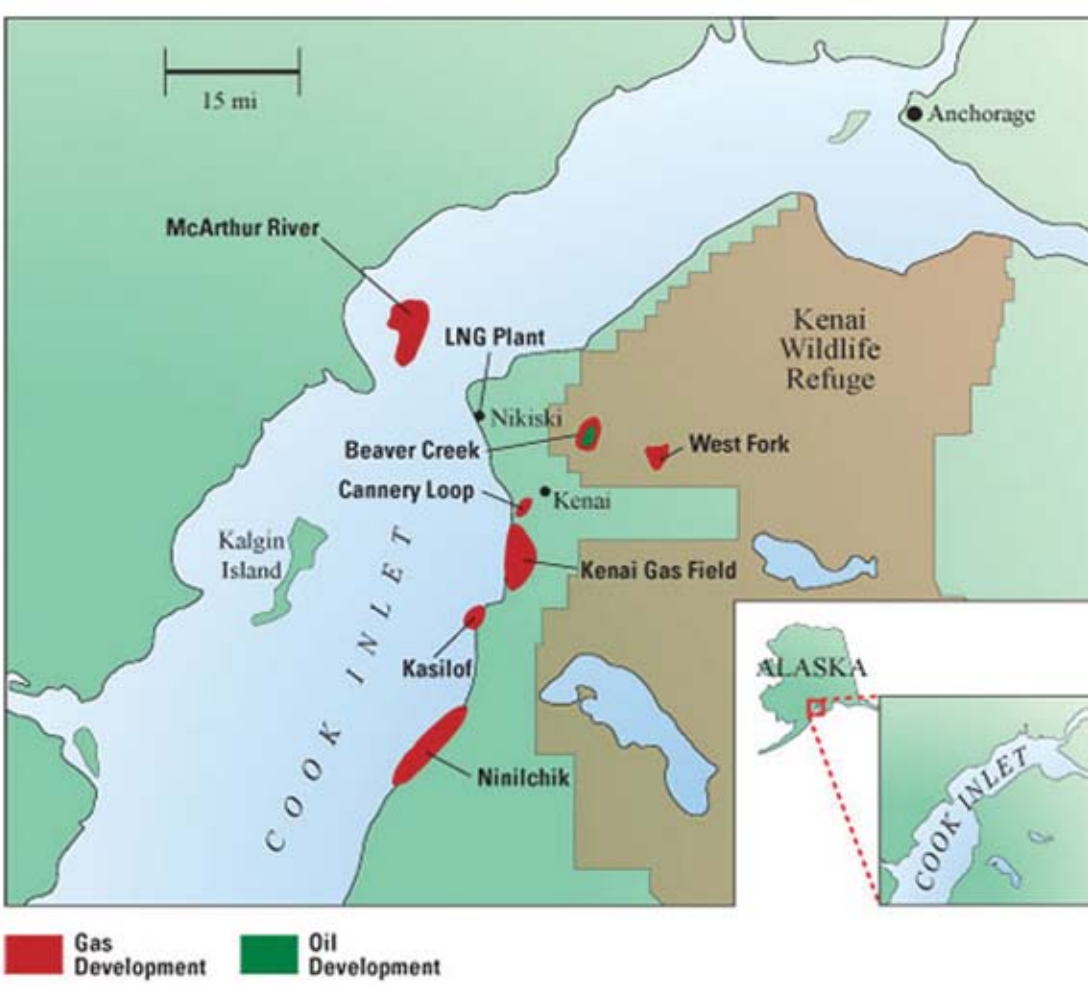
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On the exploration front, Marathon is moving forward with its Sunrise gas prospect, also known as East Swanson, in the northern part of the Kenai Peninsula. The prospect lies in a Cook Inlet Region Inc. holding, inside the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

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MARATHON

And does Marathon have any interest in exploring deep in the Mesozoic section, below the conventional Cook Inlet Tertiary reservoir strata in any of the company's leases?

"We don't currently have plans focused on the deeper section, although ... we recognize there's some potential there," Little said. "We're not actively pursuing it right now."

Gas storage

In May 2006 Marathon started injecting gas into a gas storage facility that it had established in the Sterling formation pool 6 C1 and C2 sands of the Kenai gas field. That storage facility has been operating successfully, to enable Marathon to fulfill its contractual obligations to meet demand swings between summer and winter — excess gas can be injected into the storage facility during the summer when utility demand is relatively low and then retrieved during the winter when demand is high.

In 2007 Marathon drilled a second injection well in the facility.

"That (second well) provides us with some redundancy in case of a mechanical problem but also increases our instantaneous injection capability," Little said.

But the company has no current plans to expand its Cook Inlet gas storage capacity.

"We continue to look at other options but ... those are going to be dictated by the prevailing economics of the time and some understanding of where markets are headed," Little said.

Possibilities for gas storage depend largely on who has the economic incentives to develop either seasonal or peak load storage to accommodate the market requirements.

"In other areas those facilities are commonly built and operated by the local utilities, or in some cases by a third party, but in all those cases it's where there's a significant economic incentive for somebody to make that investment," Little said.

And, in terms of technical options, a small LNG facility to handle needle peaking loads might make sense, he said.

"It's typical of other gas markets where there are high seasonal swings,"

see MARATHON page 11

The Workforce



Nolan Treybig; soccer player, future toolpusher

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● EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Escopeta's North Alexander well in ACMP review

By KRISTEN NELSON
Petroleum News

Escopeta Oil Co. LLC's North Alexander prospect gas exploration well is under review for consistency with the Alaska Coastal Management Program. Escopeta is proposing to drill the North Alexander No. 1 well on the west side of Cook Inlet, some 13 miles north of Beluga. The prospect includes four state oil and gas leases and the well will target gas producing sandstones in the Beluga and Upper Tyonek formations.

The closest existing wells are Lewis River 1-A, six miles to the southwest, and Isla Grande 1, some 2.5 miles to the southeast.

The Department of Natural Resources Office of Project Management and Permitting said in an Oct. 29 public notice that comments are due on or before Nov. 27; a final determination will be issued by Dec. 17.

Escopeta proposes to use as much existing infrastructure as possible, including Grant's Landing, the Beluga airstrip, state gravel lease roads and bridges, commercial camp facilities, construction equipment, personnel, permitted water sources and staging areas.

Final access to the well site would be by a 7-mile temporary ice road along the Enstar buried gas pipeline right of way. The temporary drilling pad would be constructed of ice and reinforced with composite mats.

Northeast of Lewis River

The 22,882-acre prospect is onshore on state oil and gas leases within the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge; both surface and subsurface mineral estates are state owned.

The well site is about 6.5 miles northeast of the Lewis River unit.

Both the temporary ice road and the ice pad are expected to be built in December. The drilling schedule is dependent on rig availability, mobilization and weather.

The North Alexander 1 is planned as an 8,500-foot vertical hole.

Equipment will be barged

Prior to ice forming in Cook Inlet equipment and freight will be barged to Grant's Landing near Beluga. When barging is no longer possible due to ice, freight would be flown to the 5,000-foot airstrip at Beluga. Gravel roads on state lands would be used from the staging area in

Beluga to an approved site as close as possible to the proposed well site. The temporary ice road would be built from south of Lewis River drill site 1-A to the proposed well site.

Until completion of the temporary ice road and pad, Beluga would serve as Escopeta's base of operations and staging area. During operations personnel would be housed at a camp facility in Beluga.

The North Alexander well site is just south of Mount Susitna, about 1.5 miles west of the Susitna River on a low, south-east-facing ridge at 55 feet above sea level in low shrub and mixed lowland forest.

The North Alexander unit terms require Escopeta to drill a well in the winter of 2007-08, holding leases which would otherwise have expired in January 2007. ●

continued from page 10

MARATHON

Little said.

But whatever the mechanism for gas storage, achieving reliable gas deliverability through the ups and downs of seasonal demand ultimately costs money.

"It takes significant investment to meet the deliverability requirements — it's not just the annual volume you're concerned about. It's the daily volume," Little said.

The LNG plant owned by Marathon and ConocoPhillips at Nikiski on the Kenai Peninsula has in the past been able to help with meeting peak utility load by curtailing LNG production during periods of especially high winter gas demand. However, the export of LNG to Japan from the plant represents a significant component of the current Cook Inlet gas industry. The plant's federal LNG export license expires in 2009 and the U.S. Department of Energy is currently reviewing an application for license renewal.

"We're certainly hopeful that we're going to get a positive decision in the near future," Little said.

Operational safety

Little feels particularly proud of a new safety program that Marathon has been implementing to instill a heightened safety culture with the company's employees and contractors.

"We've continued to emphasize our overall philosophy of safe, clean and responsible operations," Little said. "We've instituted, over the past year or so, a new safety leadership program. In Alaska we've now trained over 100 of our company and contract employees. ... It's about making sure that we all hold each other accountable and about learning more effective ways to encourage each other to work safely."

And, as Marathon moves forward to 2008, what does the company have planned for Alaska?

"At this point I would see 2008 shaping up to look pretty similar to 2007,"

Little said. "... We'd be looking to continue with a development-drilling program in our existing fields. We've got the two seismic surveys at north Ninilchik and Sunrise that we'll be interpreting and evaluating next year."


What happens beyond that will depend to a considerable extent on the continuing evolution of the Alaska gas market, he said. Historically, margins in the Alaska gas market have been slimmer than elsewhere because of high operating costs driven by a challenging climate and physical environment.

But transitioning to a more competitive gas market will not be easy.

"No doubt as the market transitions to a different pricing environment and different contractual responsibilities, it's going to be difficult," Little said. "It's going to put strain on all of the stakeholders. But it's that kind of change that I think is going to be necessary to access the future (Alaska) potential." ●


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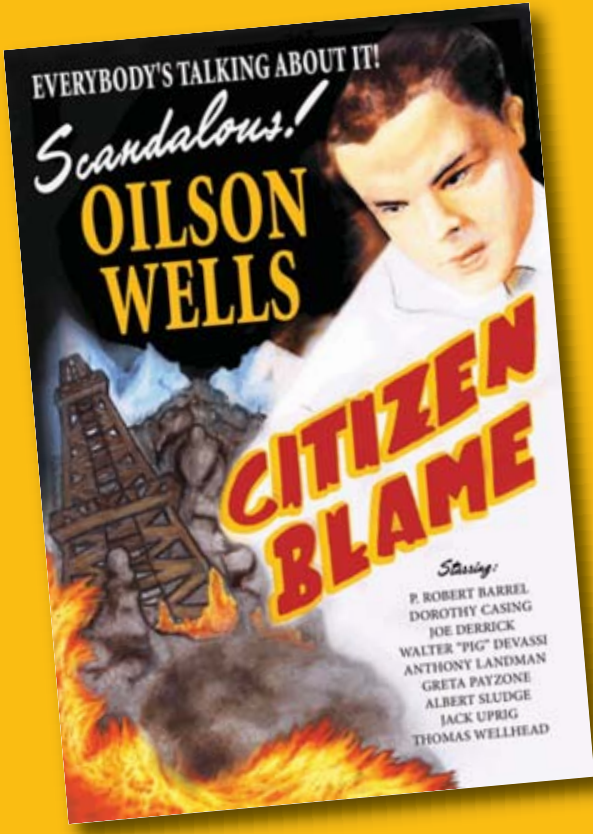


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• EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

BP 'exploring' in known ANS fields

Company uses technology to access vertical 'string of pearls' above lighter oil; heavy oil, especially Ugnu, remain challenged

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

BP Exploration (Alaska), no longer active in traditional exploration in Alaska, is focused on exploring for — and recovering — resources at Prudhoe Bay through technology.

BP is a successful explorer worldwide, Scott Digert, the company's resource manager for full-field waterflood in the Greater Prudhoe Bay business unit, told Petroleum News.

The company has "done really, really well in remote basins," areas like the deepwater Gulf of Mexico and the deepwater off Angola, Digert said. But in Alaska, it wasn't "seeing that same sort of success."

BP is now focusing on where it thinks the big remaining resources are in Alaska — and that's "around the existing oil fields," Digert said, undeveloped oil at the BP-operated Prudhoe Bay field and heavy

oil across the slope.

"We actually know where it is. The problem is getting it out," he said.

Frank Paskvan, Prudhoe Bay western region subsurface development manager, said "BP globally is amongst the top tier of world-class exploration companies." BP wants to be not just the world's best explorer, but "the world's best explorer and recoverer of oil," he said.

At Prudhoe Bay, with 30 years of development, there have been "a series of projects, wells, reservoir techniques and facility expansions that have substantially improved our ultimate recovery," Paskvan said.

More oil has been recovered to date at Prudhoe than was estimated for total recovery when



Original oil in place at Prudhoe Bay was 22.6 billion barrels of oil, Scott Digert said. The original estimate was that about 42 percent of Prudhoe oil could be recovered, some 9.5 billion barrels; to date, more than 11 billion barrels have been produced. The belief now is that another 2 billion, 2.1 billion barrels, can be recovered, he said.

the field went online in 1977.

Original oil in place at Prudhoe Bay was 22.6 billion barrels of oil, Digert said. The original estimate was that about 42 percent of Prudhoe oil could be recovered, some 9.5 billion barrels; to date, more than 11 billion barrels have been produced.

The belief now is that another 2 billion to 2.1 billion barrels, can be recovered, he said.

"We know where the oil was to start — before we started moving things around — so now the question is, of the oil that's left, where is it?"

One thing that helps with oil recovery is three-dimensional seismic with its "much finer vertical resolution." Faults can be seen on a smaller scale, Digert said, probably around 20 feet vs.

60 feet originally.

Four-dimensional seismic, comparing seismic with that shot earlier over the same area, can show "changes in fluids or pressure from the injection that we've done," he said, and "... helps you identify where are the pockets that you're not sweeping out" either in the gravity drainage area or with water. "And now you can start targeting the sidetracks into these smaller and smaller remaining pockets of oil."

And with new technologies — coiled tubing drilling and multilateral wells — "you can now start to envision how you can actually target these smaller and smaller pools, things that we couldn't have even done two or three years ago."

2,500 wells drilled

Information on remaining oil also comes from "a pretty active appraisal and delineation effort within Prudhoe," Paskvan said. Some 2,500 wells have been drilled, and starting in the mid-'90s, BP did appraisal drilling "on what you might call initially discovered satellite reservoirs."

This included delineating the western satellite pools — Aurora, Borealis, Orion and Polaris and it also included the Put reservoir, "an accumulation that was included in the (Prudhoe Bay) initial participating area," he said.

The Put, now on production, was found in early field drilling.

"We've gone back in the last half-dozen years, figured out where that hydrocarbon is gas and where that hydrocarbon is oil; where the reservoir quality is the best and where it's not so good; where we should put in water injectors; and where we should put in oil producers," Paskvan said.

"The Sag River formation falls in exactly the same category," Digert said. "It's something that we've known about; we've drilled through it." The Sag is minor compared to the Ivishak — the major producing formation at Prudhoe — and sits right above it. It's "much tighter. It's still nice, light oil, but it's a much more difficult reservoir to produce from. It's thin and tends to be broken up by the faulting more; and it's much less productive." When Sag River is commingled with Prudhoe Bay Ivishak production, Sag may only be contributing 1 to 2 percent of the total.

But it's being targeted now with horizontal wells, Digert said.

Where are more than a billion barrels of oil in place in the Sag, said Paskvan: "We're still working on technologies to make that actually work."

Digert said the recovery factor for the Sag will probably only be a few percent of the billion-plus barrels in the formation.

The best Sag recovery has been "adjacent to the gas cap where continued gas reinjection provides pressure support. Waterflooding of that reservoir is very difficult because it's low-low permeability," Paskvan said.

The Sag has been targeted at the Milne Point field, Digert said, where there isn't a gas cap. Out of a dozen Sag wells drilled at Milne, only one is currently producing. "So it's very difficult."

Better resolution in seismic helps with the Sag, because faults are easier to see, Digert said.

The Sag was "highly marginal 20 years ago (but) is starting to look now like it's competitive with other drilling opportunities," he said.

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BP

Economies of scale

For continued development on the North Slope you need a “certain economy of scale ... to make things work,” Paskvan said.

Ten to 11 rigs are active in the Prudhoe Bay area year in and year out, he said, with an annual average of seven rigs working. That includes coiled tubing, workover and rotary drilling rigs. That’s part of the North Slope economy of scale that Prudhoe Bay brings to the North Slope, he said, because the rigs are mobile and you can bring in a rig to do a specific job.

It’s not just the rigs, he said: “It takes people who really know and have experience doing what they’re doing to get it right,” Paskvan said.



KRISTEN NELSON

The best Sag recovery has been “adjacent to the gas cap where continued gas reinjection provides pressure support. Waterflooding of that reservoir is very difficult because it’s low-low permeability,” Frank Paskvan said.

Vertical development

“The State of Alaska talks about a string of pearls,” Paskvan said. “... And I think they thought of it as ... stringing pearls along the Barrow Arch,” and fields have been added laterally across the North Slope.

“But we’re stringing pearls vertically,” he said.

Referring to a schematic of stratigraphy in the western satellite area of Prudhoe Bay, Paskvan noted that the Schrader Bluff Orion accumulation lies above the lighter-oil Borealis pool — and both lie above a Sag-Ivishak accumulation. And above all is the Ugnu, the heaviest oil on the North Slope, which is not yet being developed.

This is known oil that lies above developed fields in shallower formations.

Development started with the deeper, light oil. The companies knew the heavier oil was there, but “the technologies were available at the time of development to go in and develop the Prudhoes and the Kuparuks of the world,” Paskvan said. Deeper, lighter oils have a lower viscosity — they flow more readily. The Schrader Bluff-West Sak formation is heavier oil, but it can be waterflooded, and 100 million barrels have been produced to date.

The “transforming technology” for Schrader Bluff-West Sak production was horizontal drilling, Digert said, “drilling these long horizontal producing wells.” Production went from an initial 200 barrels per day with vertical wells that dropped off quickly to 50 bpd with “wells that have come on above 1,000 barrels a day,” he said.

“They still decline pretty fast, but you’re starting from a much higher point so it’s been absolutely transformational in our ability to now drill this lighter heavy oil.”

Western region development

In recent years the number of developed oil pools at Prudhoe Bay has doubled, Paskvan said. Aurora, Borealis, Midnight Sun, Polaris, Raven and Orion have all been brought online.

Four of those accumulations — Aurora, Borealis, Orion and Polaris — are in the western region development area at Prudhoe Bay.

This is the area of Prudhoe Bay west of the Kuparuk River, said Paskvan, “a huge area and known accumulation of reservoirs discovered originally, drilled through to prove oil up ... during the original Prudhoe Bay appraisal.”

“The western region is kind of a microcosm of the North Slope story, because you’ve got Ivishak development first (deeper, lighter oil), more than 250 million barrels produced to date from the western region,” from more than 220 wells producing some 50,000 barrels per day, Paskvan said.

“And we’re unlocking the heavy oil resource as we’re moving through ... the reservoir,” he said.

Western region development started with “Eileen West End development in 1988, continued with the Borealis reservoir installation in 2001 of L and V pads,” Paskvan said.

Z pad is being expanded now and a new pad, I, is proposed for the far northwest corner with startup planned for 2011.

“We’re adding a gas partial processing plant on Z pad,” and will use gas-lift to get more oil out of the reservoir.

Paskvan said I pad appraisal wells were drilled in the winter and spring of 2006 and engineering is being done for the area today. Z pad expansion should be put in next year, he said, with startup in 2009; I pad would be installed in 2011.

This is the long-term forecast, he said. Full funding has not yet been approved.

“Western region development is ... such a large program that we broke it into separate projects,” Paskvan said. Some elements are operating — which accounts for the 50,000 bpd from the area — other components have not been sanctioned, but are budgeted over the next five years.

\$2 billion in future

The Western region development is an ongoing five- to 10-year program with an estimated \$2 billion in future investments.

Paskvan said those investments are “offsetting natural decline” as well as “pushing the limits on resource development.”

At least half a billion has been spent recently on the western region, Paskvan said, excluding the original Eileen West End work.

The current project involves some 400 people including 120 technical staff split between drilling, subsurface and facilities. There are about 100 project engineers working in Arcadia, Calif. — and a subcontractor has run out of people in the United States to work on oilfield equipment and is looking at doing some engineering in Beijing.

About 150 people are working on the fabrication, “building this equipment and installing it,” he said.

And, because Prudhoe is mature, Paskvan said the challenge is to process and reinject all of the gas that is produced with the oil and produce all of the seawater needed to supplement produced water for waterflood.

With equipment fully employed, there is no idle equipment for a project like western region development.

Because of that, sealift modules will be required for western region development, with three sealift modules planned. That’s happening because “the drilling successes, the recovery successes, have created an opportunity to put in a new facility,” Paskvan said.

The target is a 2010 sealift, he said. Long-lead materials commitments have been made to preserve the option.

If that portion of the project is approved, the sealift modules would come up in summer 2010 and the startup target would be the fourth quarter of 2010.

Ugnu challenged

Known but undeveloped oil extends beyond Prudhoe Bay.

“Over half of the known North Slope oil



JUDY PATRICK

The first sealift for BP’s Northstar development left Anchorage July 19, 2000. Sealift modules will be required for western region Prudhoe development. The company is targeting a 2010 sealift.



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INTERNATIONAL

Outside oil companies getting a foot inside Mexico; Shell, others get deals

Mexico's spluttering moves to open its doors more widely to international investment have yielded some benchmark deals covering technology, research and training.

Earlier in October state-owned Pemex agreed with Royal Dutch/Shell to study increasing productivity and recovery techniques for oil wells, followed by separate agreements with Calgary-based Nexen and Chevron to probe exploration and production methods, especially for offshore deepwater and coalbed methane.

It's now anticipated that ExxonMobil, Saudi Aramco and Total will add their names to the list of outsiders, whose expertise is needed to reverse a drop in Mexico's production as the country lowers a 70-year-old barrier against western oil and gas companies investing in the industry.

The Economist Intelligence Unit in London said in a recent report that Mexico's proven crude reserves have shrunk over two decades to 13.7 billion barrels at the start of 2006. Although Pemex has been urging reforms to allow limited private investment to offset slumping production from the Cantarell field in the Gulf of Mexico, which accounts for about 75 percent of production, the "strength of nationalist feeling makes it highly unlikely these sectors will be privatized soon."

However, the unit said comprehensive reforms are essential to generate the US\$20 billion a year of capital investment Pemex requires to sustain production at about 3.1 million barrels per day.

Nexen's pact, the first by a Canadian company in Mexico, involves a framework for collaboration in a wide range of research, training and E&P areas.

Dwain Lingenfelter, the Canadian independent's vice president of government relations, said Nexen is now working on other types of contracts to gain entry to opportunities in the deepwater and marginal fields in Mexico.

"This is a very important step in our plans to work in Mexico," he said.

Lingenfelter said Nexen's experience on the U.S. side of the Gulf with deepwater and sub-salt drilling technology have direct application in Mexico.

He said it took about 40 meetings for Nexen to convince Pemex that Canadian technology could achieve benefits.

Lingenfelter also noted that Nexen's technology developed in the marginal fields of Alberta and Saskatchewan, which pump eight to 10 to barrels per day, offer scope in Mexico, where a marginal field is rated at 80 to 100 bpd.

In addition, Nexen is hoping to deploy its coalbed methane technology to both produce Mexican gas from conventional onshore and offshore areas, as well as coalbed methane.

—GARY PARK



The 2001 sealift

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BP

remains to be developed," Paskvan said.

This oil is primarily in the shallow, cold, heavy Ugnu formation: Of the 20-billion-some barrels of oil in the Ugnu formation, current production is zero.

"When you see 20 billion barrels sitting there, even though (production) is zero today, it can't stay zero," Digert said. "There is a way and we've got the energy to find that."

He said the search is on for technologies that will allow Ugnu production. There have been a couple of Ugnu wells, but they've been pretty unsuccessful.

Waterflood doesn't work on Ugnu, the shallowest and heaviest of the North Slope formations.

A new technology, cold heavy oil production with sand, is being tried now "with different pumps and different wellbore style to see if we can actually keep that sand from moving out of the wellbores better."

Light oil technologies

For lighter oil Prudhoe Bay development is underpinned by waterflood technologies and enhanced oil recovery through miscible gas injection.

And new technologies are being developed and employed, technologies which allow BP to move "beyond the easy oil into the more challenging, difficult bypassed oil or more challenging high-viscosity heavy oil," Paskvan said.

Examples of new technologies are low salinity waterflood and Nalco's Bright Water™, which allows redirection of water injected for waterflood.

Talking about low-salinity waterflood, Digert said BP thinks that "by changing the chemistry of the water we inject and actually engineering that chemistry, we can increase recovery in zones that have already been flooded by mobilizing some of the oil that's been left behind" by earlier waterflood. "And in some cases we see that as being as much as 10 percent of the oil that was originally in place," and at BP's Milne Point field, he said, the original oil in place is about a billion barrels.

Sealift modules will be required for western region development. ... That's happening because "the drilling successes, the recovery successes, have created an opportunity to put in a new facility," Frank Paskvan said. The target is a 2010 sealift. ... Long-lead materials commitments have been made to preserve the option.

Bright Water™ is also a waterflood technology, in this case a way to redirect injected water, not a change in the water injected.

In areas that are under waterflood, where the oil has been displaced, water can move through the area where oil has been displaced and move rapidly from the injector to the producer without moving oil, Paskvan said.

The water is following a route through portions of the formation where the oil has already been swept.

Bright Water™ redirects the waterflood.

Particles are pumped into the injector well. The particles are so small they move into the sandstone. Heat in the reservoir expands the particles, which mesh up with other particles, filling the pores in the sandstone through which water had been moving, creating "a deep diverting block" which prevents water movement, Paskvan said, causing injected water to move into new areas where it can sweep remaining oil to producing wells.

Digert said those are only examples of innovative technology used at Prudhoe: Alaska is a key technology area for BP, he said. Considering the size of BP — 100,000 people and \$20 billion a year in capital deployed worldwide — Alaska is a recognized leader in technology within BP, he said.

Renewal project

Digert said that while the good news is that Prudhoe has produced more oil in 30 years than was expected — and BP now sees a much longer future on the North Slope — "the downside of that is ... we find ourselves with facilities that were built for a 30-year future."

The company is now "heavily engaged in what we call our renewal project."

Digert said that's a little misleading because "really you're rebuilding for a future that's different from your past." The future, he said, will include heavy oil and hopefully major gas sales.

What's needed for heavy oil, Paskvan said, is modifications within Prudhoe, including equipment that allows heavy oil production through facilities designed for light oil.

Digert said modifications were done at Milne and will also be needed at Kuparuk to handle West Sak heavy oil. ●

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PIPELINES & DOWNSTREAM

BP: Pipeline repair costs up

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BP said Oct. 24 that costs to replace approximately 16 miles of pipeline at Prudhoe Bay have increased slightly to as much as \$260 million.

That figure would be a \$10 million increase — or about 4 percent — over original estimates provided 15 months ago.

“The one uncertainty is that there is inflationary costs associated with labor costs,” said Mike Utsler, BP’s senior vice president for greater Prudhoe Bay operations, who said the costs could range from \$255 million to \$260 million.

Utsler’s comments came as he updated the state Senate Resources Committee, which is reviewing Gov. Sarah Palin’s bill to raise oil taxes during a special legislative session.

BP began rebuilding the 16-mile transit pipeline system last year after the company discovered corrosion that forced a partial shutdown at Prudhoe Bay, the nation’s largest field responsible for about 8 percent

of the nation’s production.

Since then, lawmakers have been debating whether the company should receive a partial deduction for these capital costs, allowed under the current tax law, which has caused some outrage among lawmakers.

Sen. Tom Wagoner, R-Kenai, has said no company should receive tax breaks if they can’t maintain the facilities.

His regular session bill, however, dragged through various Senate committees before stalling in the House Finance Committee the last week of the session, which ended last spring.

A similar provision is part of Palin’s special session bill, which is called Alaska’s Clear and Equitable Share, or ACES. The main intent of her bill is to increase the tax on oil companies from 22.5 percent to 25 percent.

No one among the seven-member Senate committee seemed to find BP’s 2 percent to 4 percent cost boost on the

Prudhoe Bay rebuilding project to be onerous, especially when other companies report 50 percent increases in costs related to construction since 2005.

“They’ve been working on it for going on two years, so it’s understandable that there would be some inflationary costs. I just don’t want the state to pay for any of

it,” Wagoner said of BP’s increase.

North Slope producers have spent the last three days imploring lawmakers to rethink any rate increase, the second in as many years, because it could jeopardize future investment. Rising costs have been a part of the oil industry’s argument against raising the tax rate to 25 percent. ●

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BURGLIN

The original Alaskan Crude Corp. drilled the Burglin well down to Ivishak formation in 1984-85. The well was suspended in 1985 and the original company subsequently went bankrupt. Jim White later bought the company and acquired the Burglin leases in a state lease sale. Amarex drilled the Moose Point well to a total depth of 10,058 feet in March 1978 as part of an oil exploration program — Alaskan Crude now wants to test for gas in the well (a gas show was recorded in the original drilling).

In the summer of 2006 the Alaska Division of Oil and Gas approved formation of Alaskan Crude’s Arctic Fortitude unit. The new unit involved a plan of exploration that included re-entry of the Burglin well. But in July 2007 DNR threatened to terminate the unit because of lack of progress in the drilling program. However, Alaskan Crude paid a \$60,000 fee and filed a written statement of its drilling plans to keep the unit in place. A key issue in the delayed drilling at Burglin has been the need for an oil spill contingency plan. Under state statutes and regulations, a company drilling an oil well needs a contingency plan for responding to an oil spill up to a maximum potential rate of unassisted flow for the well.

The cost of ensuring the availability of oil spill response resources capable of dealing with the maximum possible spill rate represents a significant hurdle to a small independent such as Alaskan Crude. And Alaskan Crude questioned the potential for an oil spill from Burglin during re-entry of the well.

Reduced planning standard

In June 2007 the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission upheld a request by Alaskan Crude to reduce the normal maximum flow rate planning standard of 5,500 barrels per day by 85 percent. The Ugnu and West Sak formations that Alaskan Crude was planning to test in the Burglin well were “highly unlikely to produce hydrocarbons to the surface in amounts greater than 825 barrels of oil per day,” the commission said.

However, the commission turned down an Alaskan Crude request to classify the Burglin well as a gas well, and thus avoid altogether the need for an spill plan. The company said that it was testing for gas and that in the region in which the well is locat-

ed the only oil found in the Ugnu and West Sak formations is viscous oil that doesn’t flow to the surface easily.

Following an appeal, AOGCC reaffirmed on Oct. 1 its decision to classify the Burglin well as an oil well because the well may penetrate “a formation capable of flowing oil to the ground surface.” But, after a reinterpretation of the oil spill response regulations by DEC, the commission reduced the maximum potential oil flow rate for the well from 825 barrels per day to 600 barrels per day.

Alaskan Crude subsequently asked the commission for a ruling on that maximum flow rate, based on an amended drilling plan that involved only re-entering the Ugnu formation. And on Oct. 29 AOGCC reduced the unassisted oil flow potential for the well to 115 barrels per day, for an Ugnu test.

“We can certainly live with that,” White told Petroleum News.


White, a long-time Alaska oil and gas investor and explorer, said he drilled his first well “in Alaska in 1977 in the Copper River basin, not far from Rutter and Wilbanks’ well.

—ALAN BAILEY

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Business Spotlight



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Jennifer Richardson
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When Total Safety acquired Well Safe three years ago, Jennifer Richardson left for another opportunity. Today she's happy to have been lured back and loves the variety her position offers. Jennifer, an avid reader, also enjoys indoor and outdoor gardening, making homebrew and visiting with customers while doing fill-in bartending. The only female on staff, sometimes she's den mother and other times just one of the guys.

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continued from page 1

STELMACH

determine, no one will ever again underestimate Stelmach, assuming he survives the next election.

To understand some of what motivates the 56-year-old leader of a province described as Canada's economic engine, it helps to understand his roots.

His grandparents came from Ukraine in 1898, settled northeast of Edmonton and, like so many of their stock, overcame a harsh environment to turn bush into a farm.

Stelmach continued that agricultural tradition when he returned home from law school after an older brother died suddenly.

He takes considerable, but quiet pride in his heritage, which is a potent force in Alberta where about 250,000 of 3.5 million residents claim Ukrainian origins.

A year ago he defied all odds by snatching leadership of the Alberta Conservative Party from a highly touted former cabinet minister and business executive and becoming premier.

Soft-spoken and seldom ruffled, Stelmach wasted no time acting on his central campaign promise — a review of a royalty system he did not believe was delivering a fair return to Albertans, the resource owners.

He stood his ground against threats that meddling with the regime could drive billions of investment dollars and thousands of jobs out of Alberta, ruining the province's international reputation as a safe predictable place to invest.

One Albertan, herself of Polish heritage, described Stelmach as typical of his ethnic stock. "When you push a Ukrainian from that part of the world, they push back," she said.

Oct. 25 unveiling

In the five weeks after his handpicked royalty review panel dropped a bombshell, calling for an immediate 20 percent, or C\$2 billion hike in royalties, Stelmach has been pushed from all sides.

And, typical of his upbringing, he told the industry and Albertans he would not be bullied or intimidated.

Sure enough, on Oct. 25, he unveiled the framework for a new royalty regime that is likely to set the stage for an election this fall or next spring.

In the process he spurned arguments from the review Chairman Bill Hunter that the government should implement the panel's findings in total, or risk losing the potential benefits.

Again Stelmach set his own course, accepting in whole or in part 15 panel recommendations, but rejecting 11, and

introducing one of his own.

Amid the next-day fallout, Stelmach dug in.

"The decision has been made," he said. "We're not moving off of the decision — period.

"This isn't a compromise. I have confidence we have got this right."

Under fire on an open-line radio program, Stelmach showed the depth of his feelings, by portraying himself as "trustee" of Alberta's non-renewable resources, which hold the key to North America's only debt-free jurisdiction and its ability to underpin the infrastructure and programs needed to handle a projected 40 percent increase in population to 5 million over the next 20 years.

Legislation must be drafted

The initial response fell far short of the dire warnings from the industry and analysts.

But Stelmach has a bumpy ride ahead as he drafts 11 pieces of legislation to revamp the royalty system and convince investors.

As the reviews started to roll in and the stock market appeared to take the royalty proposals in stride, Stelmach got a rousing reception from 400 delegates to his ruling Conservative party's annual policy convention Oct. 27.

He told the faithful that the new framework will enable Alberta to "plan for a financially secure future," dominated by the need to pay for infrastructure and programs to support a 40 percent surge in population to 5 million over the next 20 years.

While the industry raged, convention delegates rallied to Stelmach's side.

"I think it takes a lot of courage to do what he did and I think the people are recognizing that," said Calgary delegate Marnie Marr.

"I think the premier spelled it out exactly the way it is and exactly the way the people of Alberta wanted," said Clyde Elford.

During one of the rare moments when he flares publicly, Stelmach answered those who suggested the changes would put Alberta in the same league as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who is nationalizing his country's oil sector.

"Certainly in the last few weeks I've been called a lot of names," he told reporters. "We're not Communists. I'm not whatever-his-name-is in Venezuela. This is Alberta. We share the returns of our economic rent with all Albertans."

As former premier Peter Lougheed said prior to the royalty announcement, Stelmach has entered a "political watershed" and he's apparently done it with his eyes wide open. ●

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ROYALTIES

increase rising to 26 percent by 2010.

• For conventional oil, the government plans a single sliding rate formula, with royalties rising to 50 percent at an oil price cap of C\$120 per barrel, compared with current maximums of 30 percent and 35 percent for old and new oil, with the price cap set at about C\$30 per barrel. By 2010 the change is expected to generate an additional C\$460 million from 2006 returns, compared with the panel's estimated C\$456 million.

• For natural gas, royalty increases will range from 5 percent to 50 percent from the current 5 percent to 35 percent, with rate caps set at C\$16.59 per gigajoule (compared with the existing cap of about C\$3.75 per gigajoule), boosting 2010 revenues by C\$470 million from current levels, compared with the panel's recommended C\$742 million hike. The government also plans to revamp a deep gas drilling program and apply lower royalty rates over a wider price range for less productive wells.

• The government estimates that 88 percent of all gas wells and 57 percent of conventional oil wells will see a reduction in royalties.

• The government said it intends to implement a "shallow rights reversion" to maximize extraction of natural gas. Under this policy, mineral rights to undeveloped geological formations above zones that are being developed will be returned to the government and made available for resale. The objective is to maximize recovery of known gas resources which are being bypassed by

operators pursuing deeper targets.

• For the oil sands, base royalty rates during the period when developers recover their capital costs, will start at 1 percent when the West Texas Intermediate price is C\$55 per barrel and climb with each C\$1 per barrel rise in oil prices to 9 percent when WTI reaches C\$120 per barrel. The current pre-payout rate is a flat, 1 percent of gross revenues. After developers recover their capital costs, royalties, currently at 25 percent of net revenues, will be 25 percent starting at WTI prices of C\$55 per barrel and grow to 40 percent when oil hits C\$120 or higher.

• Scrapped from the review panel's recommendations is a new Oil Sands Severance Tax that would have started at 1 percent when oil prices were C\$40 per barrel and built to a peak of 9 percent.

• The government will consider taking oil sands "royalties in kind" rather than cash in an effort to stimulate the construction of projects in Alberta to upgrader bitumen into synthetic crude. As part of that review it will consider a new royalty credit, allowing developers of upgraders and refineries to charge 5 percent of construction costs against royalties.

• In what shapes up as the most controversial issue, the government will attempt to rewrite agreements with oil sands pioneers Syncrude Canada and Suncor Energy. Those contracts expire 2016, but the government wants the two companies to be under a new royalty regime by 2009. If there is no deal within 90 days, the government "will take other measures to ensure a level playing field for all industry stakeholders."

—GARY PARK

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BILLS

Revenue in administering the tax.

The bills are now in the House Resources and Senate Judiciary committees.

One reason the shape of a final measure is hard to discern is because the Senate divided up work on the bill, leaving tax rate issues to Senate Finance, the bill's last committee of referral. The Senate Resources CS did not include the tax increase in the governor's bill leaving work on that provision to Finance, so what view the Senate will take on the governor's proposal to increase the tax rate from 22.5 percent to 25 percent and change the trigger point and slope of the progressivity is not clear.



REP. KURT OLSON

House kicks up progressivity

The House Oil and Gas Committee worked the entire bill and made a number of changes, including dropping the 10 percent gross tax floor for legacy fields and changing the progressivity element to a tax on the gross. House Oil and Gas did not increase the PPT base rate. In a press release issued after the CS was adopted, Oil and Gas Chairman Kurt Olson, R-Soldotna, said the committee considered the increase in the base PPT rate from 22.5 percent to 25 percent, but did not adopt it because members of the committee generally believed that approach would dampen oil industry investment in Alaska.

The redo in the progressivity factor is in response to the belief of Alaskans that "we are not getting our fair share, especially when the price of crude is as high as it is," Olson said. "Our approach is to redo the progressivity formula of the PPT, which will result in significantly greater revenue to the state whenever the price goes over \$50 a barrel."

House Oil and Gas adopted a progressivity surcharge on the gross value of the barrel of oil when that value is above \$50.

House CS under attack

The Oil and Gas CS change basing progressivity on gross value has already drawn criticism.

The House Oil and Gas CS came under attack by committee member Rep. Mike Doogan, D-Anchorage, who said at a House Minority press conference Oct. 30 that numbers used in modeling proposals before the committee were changed in ways that weren't explained — and in such ways that the CS proposal appeared to bring in more revenue to the state than ACES — which isn't the case if other numbers are used.

Doogan said he expects that "we're going to get different versions of this bill at every stop" and it will have to be fixed on the House floor, noting that House Oil and Gas produced a committee substitute for the Alaska Gasline Incentive Act last year, a version which was scrapped in House Resources.

Commissioner of Revenue Pat Galvin and administration consultants defended the ACES approach to progressivity Oct. 30 in House Resources, telling committee members that the ACES approach, with progressivity on net rather than gross, is in line with the way companies look at

State revenues come not only from PPT, which is a tax on production, but also from royalties on oil produced from state oil and gas leases, from corporate income tax and from property tax.

investment decisions and allows the state to increase its revenues while allowing the companies acceptable levels of return on investments.

Senate committee substitute

The Senate committee substitute retains the current tax system's structure, taxing the net value of petroleum resources, the Department of Revenue said in a fiscal note. The bill eliminates the transition investment expenditure credit except to the extent that transition credits earned from April 1, 2006, to the bill's effective date that could not be used to offset tax liability can be carried forward. This allows companies that have expenditures — but don't currently have production — to benefit from these credits to the same extent as companies with existing production.

The bill excludes from qualified lease expenditures expenses related to unscheduled production interruptions; excludes dismantlement, removal and restoration costs; requires taxpayers to provide cost projections to allow the state to better forecast state revenues and pursue changes in reported costs; authorizes public reporting of some cost data; authorizes a short-term audit program; and designates an exempt class of oil and gas auditors.

Senate Judiciary heard objections to the exempt class of oil and gas auditors from two of the state's labor unions. The unions want the state to keep oil and gas auditors within the classified service and create additional grades of classified workers to allow the state to attract experienced auditors by paying closer to the market rate.

The Department of Administration told Senate Judiciary that it has tried to work within the state's classified service, but that the level of oil and gas auditors it needs aren't attracted to levels of pay the

state can offer within the classified service.

The Department of Revenue said it even looked at bringing in auditors right out of college — many more than the state actually needs in order to ensure that some remain with the state. As those auditors gain experience, the department said, most would move on to jobs in private industry because the state is at the bottom of the pay scale.

The current goal in making oil and gas auditors exempt employees, Deputy Revenue Commissioner Marcia Davis told House Resources, is to be able to attract some senior and very qualified auditors to lead the state's oil and gas auditing program.

Revenues vs. investment

Public comment on the bills has been divided between those who believe the oil companies make "obscene" profits in Alaska and that the state, as the resource owner, should get a bigger share of the proceeds from current high prices and those concerned that raising the tax rate — and changing it the year after it was enacted — will have a negative impact on oil industry investment in the state. Those opposed to raising the tax also point out that the state currently has a surplus and has not established a long-term fiscal plan to deal with declining oil revenues as production drops.

Democrats in the Legislature favor the state taking a larger share of oil industry profits in Alaska, pointing to the high value oil currently brings and the need to fund state services.

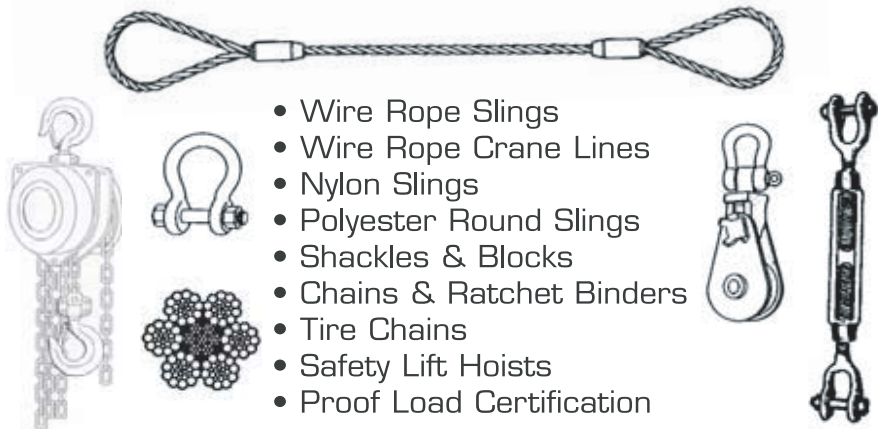
Republicans also speak in favor of the state getting a fair share of profits with current high prices, but many are concerned that the state's economy could be hurt if oil companies invest less in Alaska.

State revenues come not only from PPT, which is a tax on production, but also from royalties on oil produced from state oil and gas leases, from corporate income tax and from property tax. The value of royalties is based on the production level as well as the price, and the volume of royalty to which the state is entitled drops as volumes produced drop. ●

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FEAR

ty changes was better understood.

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers President Pierre Alvarez called the framework a "very, very serious day" for the industry.

"You will see an impact," he said. "It's not going to be very positive."

Peter Tertzakian, chief economist at ARC Financial, said that, faced with a

difficult operating environment, "firms will now look to make cuts to their programs. It's just a question of how much and how deep."

Juniors expected to be hurt

FirstEnergy Capital analysts Robert Fitzmartyn and Cody Kwong said the "landscape of opportunity for the smaller capitalized juniors has shrunk discernibly. Economics will be challenged

see FEAR page 19



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FEAR

for both natural gas and oil projects, particularly on exploration projects.”

But the brokerage wasn't issuing quite the same dire warnings of two weeks earlier when it said that implementing the full recommendations of a government royalty review panel could see 30,000 jobs disappear, including 19,000 in the oil sands sector as future projects were delayed or cancelled.

Wood Mackenzie, the Scottish-based energy research consultant, said a month ago that the panel's proposed changes could wipe 13 percent or US\$26 billion from the value of current and planned oil sands ventures, based on a long-term Brent price of US\$50 per barrel.

Derek Butter, head of the firm's corporate analysis, estimated Oct. 26 that value would shrink by only US\$10 billion, using the same oil price yardstick, because of the government's increased fiscal take over the life of projects.

He said the overall impact would be “significantly less serious” than under the panel's recommendations.

But he said that dropping the much-maligned Oil Sands Severance Tax proposal did not remove the financial bite because royalties will rise beyond the 33 percent proposed when oil prices are above \$90 per barrel.

“From the point of view of new project development economics, the new royalty framework clearly recognizes the high breakeven costs that the industry faces in the current operating environment,” Butter said. “We believe that there is a much reduced chance of the cancellation of proposed oil sands projects under the new framework than under the panel's proposals.”

Temperate messages register

As temperate messages such as these started to register on Oct. 26, the initial downward blip on the Toronto Stock Exchange's oil and gas subindex actually edged up 0.17 percent.

EnCana (one of the first out of the blocks after the panel's report was made public with warnings it would likely slash Alberta spending next year by US\$1 billion) lost only 16 cents or 0.25 percent of its value to C\$64.25; Canadian Natural Resources (which said the panel's proposals could see C\$20 billion worth of oil sands projects shelved) saw its shares rise 1.12 percent to C\$77.02, near an all-time high; Canadian Oil Sands Trust (a 36.7 percent partner in the Syncrude Canada consortium) slipped 1.2 percent to C\$33.20; while oil sands giant Suncor Energy was off 14 cents at C\$102.61.

That's consistent with the buildup from Sept. 15, when the panel recommendations were released, to Premier Ed Stelmach's response on Oct. 25.

Over that period, the 10 largest oil and gas producers experienced an average market decline of just 0.5 percent, compared with the Toronto Stock Exchange's overall gain of 2 percent.

Not quite Armageddon for Big Oil.

Net asset value off 31%

The heaviest punishment on Oct. 26 was dished out to the junior E&P companies — Highpine Oil & Gas dropped 17 percent, Galleon Energy 11 percent and Duvernay Oil 3.5 percent, although the new royalties are seen as removing a much larger chunk from the net asset values of those companies — Highpine by 31 percent, Galleon by 18 percent and Duvernay by 15 percent.

Glenn MacNeill, who manages the equivalent of C\$1.04 billion in assets for Sentry Select, said the penalties are greatest for Galleon and Highpine, which have high-productivity wells that will face higher roy-

“From the point of view of new project development economics, the new royalty framework clearly recognizes the high breakeven costs that the industry faces in the current operating environment. We believe that there is a much reduced chance of the cancellation of proposed oil sands projects under the new framework than under the panel's proposals.”

— Derek Butter, Wood Mackenzie head of corporate analysis

alties.

Jeffrey Fiell, an analyst at Octagon Capital, shared the consensus view that the new royalties will “squeeze the margins more” for smaller producers, making them less attractive outside Alberta and outside Canada.

RBC economist Derek Holt thinks the broader consequences will have only a “very marginal impact” on the Alberta and Canadian economic.

But Stelmach and his government are not yet home free.

The next big test comes with the release of 2008 capital spending programs and the

first round of drilling forecasts by sector organizations.

Gary Leach, president of the Small Explorers and Producers Association of Canada, said the new royalties will hit the juniors and microcaps disproportionately harder than the rest of the industry.

Because of the greater risks associated with exploration, some of the successful small companies drilling for natural gas could be driven away, he said.

Job losses predicted

Don Herring, president of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, has predicted as many as 30,000 job losses for the peak winter season.

But that scaling back was already well advanced, based on what he said is “unecconomic” gas in the gas-prone Western Canada Sedimentary basin.

Well counts and rigs were down 30 percent from a year ago, with the rig utilization rate for the first nine months of 2007 struggling at 42 percent, its lowest level since 1999, while the tally of new well permit — the strongest barometer of near-term industry intentions — was off 25 percent for the period.

In the bluntest terms, Herring said the “winter season is toast. ... It was already

toast before (Oct. 25) and all the report did was cement the uncertainty that had been lingering for months.”

He now expects only 13,700 wells will be drilled next year, compared with 22,300 in 2006 and that could translate into 16,000 lost jobs in the service sector.

Roger Soucy, president of the Petroleum Services Association, said layoffs were already under way before the government announced what direction it is taking.

Reflecting the state of confusion, Trinidad Energy Services Income Trust could employ from 2,000 to 4,000 people this winter, said chief executive officer Michael Heier, warning that once rigs are laid down “those people are gone.”

He said that what Alberta plans is similar to the Canadian government's decision a year ago to change the tax rules for income trusts.

Bill Gwozd, vice president of gas services at Ziff Energy Group, said Alberta is kicking the troubled sector when it is already down.

The combination of current gas prices and the new royalties means the gas production outlook in Canada is “dismal,” he said.

Producers will have a tough time moving ahead with new drilling programs and, as a result, there will be cuts in drilling fleets and services, Gwozd said. ●

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Cover photo: A Crowley tug works for the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.'s Ship Escort/Response Vessel System

Courtesy Judy Patrick



COURTESY ASTAC

ASTAC's technicians work at remote sites traveling by a variety of transportation

ASTAC meets Arctic region's communications needs with state-of-the-art services

Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative offers local and long distance, Internet, 850 MHz Wireless, wired and 700 MHz licensed wireless broadband, and Arctic Lite Transparent LAN service

Q. When was ASTAC founded, who founded it, and what was its original name?

A. The Arctic Slope Regional Corp., seeking region-wide telephone service, provided seed-funding in 1979. It soon became apparent that the cooperative business model would best serve the people of the region, who at that point had one "bush" phone per village. ASTAC has had the same name



Steve Merriam, Chief Services Officer, provided responses to these questions

since incorporation.

Q. Where is your company located?

A. Our headquarters office is at 4300 B Street, Suite 501, in Anchorage. We also have offices at 1078 Kiogak Street in Barrow and at 100 Airport Way in Deadhorse. In addition there are telecommunications central offices in each of the nine exchange communities we serve on the North Slope.

Q. Who heads up ASTAC and who is on its senior management team?



By Paula Easley

A. A nine-member board elected by the cooperative members oversees policy and development. David S. Fauske is our CEO/general manager.

His senior management team consists of Remi Sun, chief financial officer; Charlie Carpenter, chief of network operations; and Steve Merriam, chief services officer.

Q. Describe any partnership arrangements and when they became effective.

A. A partnership has been recently established with OTZ Telephone Co-op, our

neighboring cooperative based at Kotzebue.

Q. What is the company's primary business sector?

A. We are a full service telecommunications provider.

Q. Who are the company's main clients?

A. Our main clients are the subscribers of the member-owned cooperative. Members who are provided telecommunications services are oil production and oil-field service companies and camps; the North Slope Borough; regional and village Native corporations; and traditional Native councils. We also provide originating and terminating local exchange services to the long distance companies.

Q. How many employees does your company have?

A. We currently have 50 employees — 26 in the Anchorage office and eight in Barrow, serving the west side of the North Slope, and 10 in Deadhorse serving the east side of the North Slope. Each of the seven village exchanges has a part-time local representative as well.

Q. Does your company have subsidiaries? If so, what services do they provide?



COURTESY ASTAC

Short construction seasons remain a scheduling challenge

A. Our two wholly owned subsidiaries, Kasuuti LLC and ASTAC LD, provide microwave transport and long distance toll resale.

Q. Describe your essential equipment in general terms. Purchases planned?

A. We have digital switches in all nine exchanges we serve. We currently have GSM roaming service in Deadhorse and have an aggressive rollout schedule to bring it to Barrow and the village home

markets and well as expanded service coverage around Deadhorse in the near future.

Q. Is your company expanding any of its operations and/or locations?

A. We have been and will continue to push any service to the edge from any existing network access point if there is a sustainable business case to be made for the service. In some instances, aid to construction from the served company can bridge the gap between an expensive project and the anticipated revenues flowing from that project.

Q. Is the company changing any of its services?

A. In wireless, we added roaming GSM to our TDMA/AMPS home service in Deadhorse. Soon, we will offer GSM home service there as well. We will continue to support the higher cost TDMA/AMPS service due to the large number of truck phone customers who depend on this service out beyond the coverage of GSM or CDMA service.

We acquired the 700 MHz wireless broadband license for the upper half of Alaska several years ago. With the FCC's upcoming auction of the remaining 700 MHz frequency causing such a buzz, consumer awareness of 700 MHz capability will be much more ubiquitous. Couple this with the coming demand for equipment by



COURTESY ASTAC

ASTAC digital switches in each exchange undergo continuous upgrades

see next page

the winning bidders, and manufacturers of 700 MHz equipment will have the economies of scale to produce longer-range equipment. This will be of particular benefit to the early adopters like ASTAC.

Q. What is your company's main strength, i.e. its edge over the competition?

A. The dedication all of our employees have to the cooperative's mission and the years of experience our technicians have accumulated working in an Arctic environment give us a tremendous advantage. There has been a great deal of media hype about "telephone wars," but in truth, the long distance companies buy a lot of service from us to originate and terminate their service offerings. Probably the bigger competition is for acquiring and retaining the next generation of telecom worker with rapidly changing technology.

Q. What new markets, clients and/or projects did your company attract in the last year?

A. 700 MHz licensed wireless broadband continues to grow as a market opportunity for us with companies needing a high speed wireless broadband connection. Our Arctic Lite Transparent LAN service was also introduced in the last few months and is the answer for tying multiple separate LANs together. We have one customer who was able to lower its transport costs off the North Slope by tying together LANs at Alpine, Kuparuk, and Deadhorse and sharing their connectivity back to Anchorage.

Q. Has the company invested in any new technology in the last two years?

A. We have invested in GSM wireless service and in software-defined radio, in addition to the continuing cycle of upgrades to existing switching platforms.

Q. What is the most challenging job ASTAC has undertaken?

A. Nothing is easy in the Arctic. Maybe the deployment of our Cellular Repeater on Wheels in support of the Alaska Clean

COURTESY ASTAC



A committed workforce is ASTAC's greatest competitive strength

Seas emergency spill response in 2006 is a good example of our commitment to supporting our oilfield neighbors. We redeployed, set up and activated the CROW in a 12-hour time frame in minus 60 degree Fahrenheit wind chill.

Q. What are the biggest obstacles to completing work the company undertakes?

A. Adverse weather and short construction seasons for outside plant projects give us our greatest challenges to staying on track with project deadlines and budgets.

Q. What do you see as your company's biggest challenge in the next five years?

A. Personnel are our greatest asset and timely replacement of retiring workers with the next generation of dedicated, competent employees with a forward-looking skill set will challenge all companies in telecommunications.

Q. What do you see as future trends or opportunities for your company from,

say, political events or long-term weather fluctuations?

A. Both Congress and the FCC are struggling with the need to bring the terms of the Telecommunications Acts of 1934 and 1996 current and appropriate to the impact of rapidly emerging technologies. Telecommunications service providers such as ASTAC must survive this rather chaotic transition. There is both opportunity and danger.

Q. What is the most humorous story from ASTAC's years in business in Alaska?

A. A local television reporter earnestly described the desperate plight of the blizzard-bound village of Kaktovik "entirely cut off from the world" and then cut to a live telephone interview with the village mayor. (ASTAC's telephone service to the "outside world" never faltered throughout the duration of that severe storm).

Q. Do you have an anniversary or other landmark event coming up?

A. We are presently celebrating our 30th year anniversary since incorporation.

Q. What is the average length of time your workforce is employed by the company? Are you hiring for any positions?

A. ASTAC employees' average length of time worked is approximately 11 years. We are currently recruiting for a network engineer.

Q. What is your company's safety record?

A. ASTAC has consistently received ARECA's Safety Achievement Awards for hours worked without accidents for most years throughout the 1990s and recent years.

Q. Does ASTAC or its partners or subsidiaries maintain Web sites?

A. Yes. Check us out at www.astac.net.

HC Price: On the leading-edge of engineering, procurement and construction projects

Mechanical/electrical-related pipeline projects, electrical power and process facilities and infrastructure installations in Alaska and the Lower 48 represent HC Price Co.'s core competency

While not a company with a high-profile general public presence, HC Price Co. concentrates its resources on recruiting and retaining the most qualified and experienced professionals, providing good value to its customers and maintaining its record of a solid 32-year performance.

Q. When was the company founded, who founded it, and what was its original name?



Dave Matthews, Vice President and Alaska Area Manager, provided information for this company profile

A. HC Price has distinguished company origins. The company has been in business for 86 years and was established utilizing new technology for the time that has now been adopted as an industry standard. The company was founded as HC Price in 1921 when Hal Price borrowed \$2,500 to pursue the development of electric arc welding in Bartlesville, Okla.

Q. Where is the company located?

A. The corporate headquarters for HC Price Co is in Dallas, Texas. We have regional division offices in Iowa, Alaska, and Nisku, Alberta. The Alaska regional office was established in 1975 during construction of Section 3 of the trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Q. Who heads up your company and who is on its senior management team?

A. HC Price Co. is led by Charles Price (third generation and grandson of Hal Price) chairman; Tom White, president; and Mike Langston, executive vice president. David Matthews is the vice president and Alaska area manager.

Q. Describe any partnership arrange-



COURTESY HC PRICE

Lowering in Oooguruk offshore pipeline bundle.

ments and when they became effective.

A. HC Price Co. responds to projects, both independently and in partnership or consortiums where appropriate to the client or project scope. These relationships historically have been project-specific. In 2006, we initiated a partnership with an Alaska regional Native corporation and anticipate making a public announcement in the fourth quarter, 2007. We have on-going strategic working arrangements and terms with companies involved in engineering, equipment, contractors, financiers, vendors, etc.

Q. What is the company's primary business sector? What services does the company offer?

A. In Alaska the company's business is about 50 percent new pipeline construction and 50 percent heavy mechanical and electrical facility construction. In the

Lower 48, around 90 percent is new large-diameter pipeline construction and 10 percent mechanical facility construction. In Canada, around 70 percent is new large-diameter pipeline construction and 30 percent is maintenance work for oil and gas and tar sands projects. We are pioneers in the pipeline construction field, bringing innovations to the industry in welding (first to use electric arc welding), shield arc welding, removable backup rings and the "stove pipe" method of welding around a pipe, as well as the first to use pipeline coating systems for buoyancy control.

Our services include logistics planning, budgeting, constructability reviews, engineering coordination, procurement, schedule management, construction management, subcontractor management, and construction execution.

Q. Who are the company's main clients?

see next page



By Paula Easley

A. Multi-national energy companies, independent oil and gas companies, oil and gas transmission companies, electrical cooperatives and governments.

Q. How many employees does your company have?

A. Like most companies of our type, employment levels vary dramatically based upon the scope of the projects and stage of completion we are undertaking. In 2007, we have employed more than 500 in Alaska, while our corporate employment for the same period is more than 1,500.

Q. Does your company have subsidiaries? If so, what services do they provide?

A. RMS Welding in Edmonton, Alberta, offers mechanized welding systems for large-diameter pipeline construction including sales, service, rentals, and technical support.

Q. Describe your essential equipment in general terms. Purchases planned?

A. We own specialized equipment necessary for large-diameter pipeline construction. A common industry measure for pipeline companies' capabilities is expressed in its equipment capacity, called spreads. This includes the necessary fleet of equipment to support and outfit a large-diameter cross-country pipeline construction project. In the Lower 48 and in Canada, we have two spreads each. In Alaska we have a special-



COURTESY HC PRICE

Setting vertical support members to elevation, North Slope

ized smaller spread. Our Alaska equipment fleet is designed for Arctic conditions and for work in the building and trades type projects. This year HC Price Co. is investing in increasing its equipment capacity by 30 percent by developing a third spread in the Lower 48.

Q. Is your company expanding any of its operations and/or locations?

A. As mentioned, we are adding a third spread of equipment to the Lower 48. This is a very large equipment investment. We routinely move equipment to

and from our project locations as projects require. The large-diameter pipeline construction business in the Lower 48 is robust and is expected to remain so for the next several years. Accordingly, we are working with our clients to prepare for these projects.

Q. Is the company changing any of its services?

A. In Alaska, we see a value to clients by being involved during the planning and budgeting of projects, vs. the construction execution phase only. We have considerable EPC experience that clients have not fully utilized. We have developed these expanded capabilities for several years and plan to fully make our clients aware of what this can mean to their project timelines and bottom line.

Q. What is your company's main strength?

A. HC Price Co. has been in the construction field longer than many of our competitors and clients and has pioneered many industry standards for quality and safety. Our company size and structure also offer the access and flexibility to respond to clients' unique project requirements which increases our value to clients.

We are a lean, capable organization that understands risk and project execution.



COURTESY HC PRICE

General safety meeting at Pioneers' project on North Slope.



COURTESY NORTHERN AIR CARGO

Northern Air Cargo's philosophy: Teamwork that delivers

NAC's transportation and related services deliver everything from overnight letters to support for large projects throughout North America

NAC has worked in the Alaska bush for more than 51 years and remains committed to providing the most dependable air cargo services to individuals and organizations throughout Alaska and beyond.

Q. When was the company founded, who founded it, and what was its original name?

A. Northern Air Cargo was founded in 1956 by Robert "Bobby" Sholton and Maurice Carlton. In March of 2006 Northern Air Cargo was purchased by Saltchuk Resources Inc., a privately held company with various businesses operating in Alaska including TOTE, Foss, Delta Western and Inlet Petroleum. Additionally, Saltchuk compa-

nies operate in various service sectors around the world. We are proud to be Saltchuk's first air cargo acquisition.

Q. Where is NAC located? Does it have more than one location?

A. NAC's primary base of operations is in Anchorage, with secondary hubs in Fairbanks and Bethel. Additionally we have an excellent network of agents throughout the state.

Regularly scheduled markets include Aniak, Barrow, Bethel, Dillingham, Emmonak, King Salmon, Kodiak, Kotzebue, McGrath, Nome, Prudhoe Bay, St. Marys and Unalakleet.

Q. Who heads up your company and who is on its senior management team?

A. Officers are Bill Fowler, CEO; David Karp, COO; Eric Van Anandel, CFO; Stephanie Holthaus, vice president, cargo; Kevin Schlosstein, vice president, corporate services; and Jeff Landrum, vice president, maintenance.

Q. Describe any partnership arrangements and when they became effective.

A. We have had a successful joint venture with Kuukpik Corp. since 1998. Kuukpik has been with us through the years as we've operated our cargo fleet throughout the North Slope region.

see next page



Mark Liland,
Account Manager,
answered these
questions



By Paula Easley



COURTESY NORTHERN AIR CARGO

Q. What is the company's primary business sector? What services does the company offer?

A. Northern Air Cargo's primary business has been transporting freight throughout the state. With its subsidiaries, Northern Air Maintenance Service, Northern Air Aviation Services, NAC Link and a variety of sister companies, we provide individuals and businesses with a full complement of transportation logistics services.

Q. Who are the company's main clients?

A. NAC's primary clients are the individuals and businesses requiring transportation service to and from rural Alaska. These include everything from a family in St. Marys buying a new sofa, to the Department of Defense providing critical provisions to a remote radar station. We serve the oil and gas, construction, mining, health care, and seafood industries as well as the United States Postal Service on a regular basis.

Q. How many employees does your company have?

A. NAC has approximately 320 employees with the majority residing in the Anchorage area.

Q. Does NAC have subsidiaries? If so, what services do they provide?

A. Yes. Northern Air Maintenance Service is a certified 145 repair station which provides maintenance services for almost any type of aircraft or airline. Most of our efforts in this division have been focused on a key client relationship with ConocoPhillips' shared services. NAMS provides maintenance and facilities that support weekly multiple passenger aircraft operations for ConocoPhillips to and from the North Slope.

Northern Air Aviation Services provides ground handling services for passenger flights at the Anchorage International Airport. This includes passenger and ground handling services for the ConocoPhillips contract as well as Denver-based Frontier Airlines. Services include everything from passenger check-in and baggage handling to aircraft dispatch.

NACLink is a full-service freight forwarding company, working with clients to transport freight throughout North America in a timely and cost effective

manner. NACLink will soon expand its services internationally.

Q. Describe your essential equipment in general terms.

A. NAC's primary assets are cargo aircraft. We recently purchased three Boeing 737-200s and operate three Douglas DC-6s. NAC also has real estate holdings in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Bethel. Our fleet modernization and replacement strategy requires us to constantly be prepared for our next equipment acquisition.

Q. Is NAC expanding any of its operations and/or locations?

A. NAC constantly pursues better ways to serve Alaskans with outstanding service. Currently we are implementing several initiatives to improve and modernize our freight handling process with a renewed emphasis on recognizing the time constraints of our customers. Managing and tracking the flow of freight is absolutely crucial to our success. We're constantly looking to make improvements in these areas. We are also in the final stages of opening a new contract freight facility that will allow us to

focus on expansion of our contract freight services division. Currently NAC handles freight for United, Continental, Frontier, Hawaiian and soon Japan Airlines. The new facility is adjacent to the existing NAC facility on the airport ramp. Additionally, we are making multiple capital improvements to our existing facilities, focusing on modernization and operational efficiency.

Q. Is the company changing any of its services?

A. NAC has expanded its overall lift capacity with the addition of the Boeing 737s, which has resulted in increased flights throughout our system. We are absolutely focused on more frequency and improved schedule adherence. We are a service company. Frequency, reliability and superior service are the keys to our success.

Q. What is your company's main strength, i.e. its edge over the competition?

A. Our main strength lies in our people. Providing customers with great service, in a timely and professional manner is what we do. We have many employees who have been with NAC for 10, 15 and 20 years. They are always there to assist with those fragile, hazardous, time sensitive, odd size and unusual shipments safely and professionally.

Q. Has the company invested in any new technology in the last two years?

A. We have made significant investments in this area in the last two years. Aside from our multi-million dollar fleet modernization initiative, we've also implemented new, cutting edge software systems for managing freight flows, flight operations, maintenance procedures and administration. Again, all of these initiatives are directed at improving the customer experience and the overall value of the product we provide.

Q. What are the biggest obstacles to completing work NAC undertakes?

A. The biggest obstacles we face are the weather and unique requirements of our customers, but we thrive on these challenges. We also operate in a very complex, closely monitored regulatory environment which requires attention to



COURTESY NORTHERN AIR CARGO

detail and organization. NAC has an outstanding safety record and the well being of flight personnel and all employees are absolutely the number one priority. More than 51 years of operating experience is contributed to almost every decision we make.

Q. What do you see as your company's biggest challenge in the next five years?

A. It is an exciting time to be in the air cargo business, but the ability to develop and implement growth strategies will rely on doing things in the smartest way possible. This includes a concerted effort to operate and grow the company in a safe, ethical manner that meets the requirements of the complex regulatory environment we operate in. We want to operate a profitable company that our employees and our customers are proud of. We believe if we direct our efforts towards creativity, attention to detail, and regulatory compliance, any challenges can be overcome.

Q. What do you see as future trends or opportunities for your company from, say, political events or long-term weather fluctuations?

A. The continued development of Alaska's rich natural resources represents a key area of emphasis for NAC. It's no secret that these sectors are affected by many decisions and events outside of our control, both political and otherwise. As for long-term weather fluctuations, our

five year strategic plan doesn't quite contemplate palm trees on the North Slope, but understanding changes in weather and how it affects our operations is an ongoing effort. Bottom line, we are an optimistic group of hard working Alaskans, dedicated to helping develop industries that sustain the state's economy.

Q. Does your company have an anniversary or other landmark event coming up?

A. NAC just celebrated its 50th anniversary last year — 1956 to 2006. We anticipate multiple landmark events in the near future.

Q. What is the average length of time employees remain with the company?

A. Many of NAC's employees have been with the company for 10, 15 and even 20-plus years. The dynamic and operationally intensive nature of this business is what our employees thrive on. Their commitment to working in Alaska, providing essential services to Alaskans, is complemented by our continued commitment to operating in a professional, safe and rewarding business environment.

Q. Does your company or its partners or subsidiaries maintain Web sites?

A. Northern Air Cargo's Web site: www.northernaircargo.com or www.nac.aero.

Family-owned Totem Equipment & Supply thrives on innovation

From Anchorage's Convention Center to remote Alaska villages, Totem Equipment & Supply keeps Alaska workers safe and warm

Q. When was the company founded, who founded it, and what was its original name?

A. Cliff and Allie Huston founded the company in 1961. Its original name remains the same, Totem Equipment & Supply Inc. In February 1993 we formed a new company, naming it Totem Rentals Inc., with Mike Huston as president. This not only filled a market niche but utilized adjacent properties we owned. Totem Rentals has been a platform to introduce Totem's heater trailers to the contractor on a rent-to-own basis.

Q. Where is your company located? Does it have more than one location?

A. We have a sales, service, rental and fabrication facility in Anchorage, at 2536 Commercial Drive. We also have a fabrication and rental facility in Wasilla at 300 East Susitna that was completed two years ago. Altogether, we have more than 25,000 square feet of space to meet all our operational needs.

Q. Who heads up your company and who is on its senior management team?

A. President Allie Huston and son Mike Huston, vice president, manage the company since Cliff Huston retired. Mike Stevens manages Totem Rentals and Rick Bond manages the Service and Fabrication Division. It's a fairly informal management system, but it works.

Q. What is the company's primary business sector? What services does the company offer?

A. Our primary business sectors are the construction and industrial sectors. Totem Equipment and Totem Rentals offer sales, service and rentals of con-



Mike Huston, Vice President, responded to these questions



The Alaska-manufactured Totem heater trailer.

struction and industrial equipment. The manufacturing division designs and builds compact, easily transportable heater systems. Our customers tell us what they need and, if we can't find it, we figure out how to build it. Our specialty is problem-solving, and we continually make design improvements based on cold-weather conditions or other special needs, whether it be in Alaska, Russia or South Korea.

Our major product lines are Toyota lift trucks, Terex construction equipment, Ice Frost Fighter heaters, SureFlame gas-fired heaters, Clemco sand blasters, Genie personnel lifts, Mustang skid loaders, Multi-Quip construction equipment, Wacker products and, of course, our own Alaska-manufactured Totem heater trailers and built-to-specification heaters. With access to more than 200 product lines, we can get what our customers need.

Q. Who are the company's main clients?

A. Our main clients are oil companies, oil field contractors, general and subcon-

tractors, state, city and village governments, Alaska Native corporations, the military and federal agencies.

Q. How many employees does your company have? How many in each of its locations?

A. We have approximately 25 full-time employees — 10 at Totem Anchorage, nine at Totem Rentals Anchorage and five at Totem Wasilla.

Q. Is your company expanding any of its operations and/or locations?

A. We've been busy doing just that. We put the new branch in Wasilla in 2005, built a new fabrication facility that same year, expanded the fabrication shop in 2006 and finished a new shop in 2007. In 2004 we expanded into the export market, which continues to grow.

Q. Is the company changing any of its services?

A. We are always looking to expand services in our areas of expertise. We



By Paula Easley

know the Alaska climate and what works here and what doesn't. Fortunately we're light on our feet and can build or alter products to suit just about any need.

Q. What is your company's main strength, i.e. its edge over the competition?

A. We've spent the last 46 years serving our construction and industrial customers. Over time we earned a solid reputation as a company that's professional, is dedicated to meeting customer needs, and will do what is necessary to get the job done. Our entire staff takes pride in everything they do.

Q. What new markets, clients and/or projects did your company attract in the last year?

A. Going back a little farther, to 2004, we shipped our first order of 13 Totem 10, 1 million-Btu heater trailers to VECO Sakhalin, a subsidiary of VECO Alaska, and then shipped another 15 units. We subsequently received another order for 50 heater trailers to Sakhalin, Russia. The South Korea Air Force also ordered 12 Totem 5-GSE self-contained heaters, a heater prototyped and developed especially for the Air Force's ground support.

Q. Has the company invested in any new technology in the last two years?

A. We're designing and introducing a better, more efficient heater. We are



Totem founders Cliff and Allie Huston in front of the store in 1976.

always looking at ways to improve our heater designs and performance. Over time we have changed or tweaked almost everything a little. We have, for example recently shrunk the physical size of the heaters. Without getting too technical, we always look for ways to improve our product. All of our heaters are portable and provide self-contained, clean, safe heat with no fumes or carbon monoxide and feature easy cold-weather starting.

Q. What is the most challenging job the company has undertaken?

A. Without a doubt Korea wins first prize in the "challenging" department. The actual design and implementation from paper to steel faced some road blocks due to language differences. Additionally, the logistics of shipping, delivery schedules to meet, plus on-site training at two Korean army bases through an interpreter, mixed in with jet lag, and a fairly accurate picture forms. Michael Stevens, the rental manager, was the man on site with two trips to Korea.

Q. What are the biggest obstacles to completing work the company undertakes?

We're designing and introducing a better, more efficient heater. We are always looking at ways to improve our heater designs and performance.

Over time we have changed or tweaked almost everything a little.

A. Totem companies have the same problems today that they have always had: Meeting schedules and providing services due to the complications created by distance and travel. There is no question here in Alaska that rarely is everything you need available next door.

Q. What do you see as future trends or opportunities for your company from events such as long-term weather fluctuations?

A. We feel these two questions are really tied together. We believe our future opportunities will occur through the continued development and marketing of Alaska's gas and oil. Our biggest challenge as a state will be to overcome the negativity, promoted by outside sources, to prevent our developing the state's natural resources.

Q. What is the average length of time your employees work for the company? Are you hiring for any positions?

A. Our oldest employee in length of service is Michael Stevens, rental manager, who was hired in February 1993 when Totem Rentals was started. Rick Bond, the service and fabrication manager, joined us in July of 1995.

In fact, our managers are all an experienced team averaging 20 years of service.

Q. What is your company's safety record?

A. We make a real effort with a full-time safety officer who holds mandatory safety meetings for ALL employees once a month. With the exception of some minor scrapes and bruises our safety record is excellent.

Q. Do you maintain a Web site?

A. Our Web site is www.toteminc.com. Our Anchorage contact information is:

Phone: (907) 276-2858, Fax: (907) 258-4623, and E-mail: sales@toteminc.com



Totem Equipment and Supply Inc. features Terex construction equipment

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Website: www.frontierflying.com

Kenai Aviation

P.O. Box 46
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Contact: Bob or Jim Bielefeld
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E-mail: kenaiav@yahoo.com
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COMPANYNEWS *in brief*

Railroad introduces 'City Ticket Office'

The Alaska Railroad Corporation opened a satellite ticket and information center this summer at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center building located at 605 West 4th Avenue in downtown Anchorage. The Alaska Railroad's "City Ticket Office," is made possible through a newly established cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

"This is a perfect fit for the Alaska Railroad because of the many visitors and residents that are attracted to this venue," said Susie Kiger, ARRC's director of markets, sales and service. "After touring the facility and viewing all the great displays, they can then book passage on the Alaska Railroad for a first-hand look at the best this state has to offer."

The Alaska Railroad's City Ticket Office will be staffed by an Alaska Railroad employee who can provide tour information and train bookings onsite.

"This new partnership creates a greater awareness of Alaska's public lands for visitors and residents alike," noted Alex Carter, director for the Alaska Public Lands Information Center. "We always strive to create enhanced recreational and educational information opportunities and this agreement helps us highlight our state and federal public lands, including national parks."

The National Park Service operates the Alaska Public Lands Information Center on behalf of nine state and federal public land management agencies.

The ARRC City Ticket Office will be open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., seven days a week, during the summer. Reservations and ticketing will still be offered at the Anchorage Historic Depot at Ship Creek. More information on tour options and bookings can be found online at www.alaskarailroad.com or by calling (907) 265-2494.

Alaska Marketplace Announces 66 Finalists

Sixty-six finalists from across Alaska have been selected to advance to the next round of the 2007 Alaska Marketplace competition, where they will vie for a portion of nearly \$1 million in award money for small business pro-

jects. Last year's highly successful competition awarded \$500,000 to more than 20 entrepreneurs with the best ideas for stimulating Alaska's rural economies.

Sixty-two assessors from the business, government, nonprofit and education sectors met on July 26 at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage to review the more than 300 eligible business idea applications. This year's assessors were faced with the daunting task of eliminating more than 200 applications, selecting the most promising ideas to advance to the competition's next phase.

"BP is very pleased to continue its investment in the Alaska Marketplace project as it goes into year two," commented Carla Beam of BP Alaska. "We see this project as a way to focus human energy to create sustainable economic opportunity in rural Alaska."

Alaska Marketplace received 306 eligible business idea applications from across the state. 37 percent were from Southcentral Alaska, 32 percent from Western Alaska, 11 percent from the Southeast, 8 percent from the Arctic region, 9 percent from the Interior and 3 percent from the Aleutian Islands. Nearly equal numbers of men and women applied. Alaska Natives submitted 63 percent of the applications, with 37 percent coming in from non-Native Alaskans.

"The tremendous response we've received from across Alaska further proves that there is a wealth of untapped entrepreneurial potential in our great state," said AFN President Julie Kitka. "We look forward to seeing more of what each of these finalists has to offer at the Alaska Marketplace competition at this year's AFN Convention in Fairbanks."

Finalists have until October 1 to write more comprehensive business plans with the help of entrepreneurial coaches.

The Alaska Marketplace is supported by a growing list of partners, including BP, ConocoPhillips Alaska, Denali Commission, Rasmuson Foundation, Telecommunications Development Fund, Chugach Alaska Corporation, Doyon Limited, National Cooperative Bank, Wells Fargo and Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership. For more information on the Alaska Marketplace initiative, visit the Web site at www.alaskamarketplace.org.



COURTESY NORTHWEST STRATEGIES

CH2M Hill finalizes acquisition of VECO

CH2M HILL, a global full-service engineering, construction and operations firm, announced Sept. 7, 2007 that it had finalized the acquisition of VECO. The two companies signed a letter of intent for exclusive negotiations on May 15, 2007, and this agreement finalizes the details of the acquisition and transaction.

"Our extensive due diligence has confirmed this is an outstanding company with an exceptional workforce and project resume," said Lee McIntire, president and COO of CH2M HILL. "Like CH2M HILL, our new colleagues' business operations are built on a commitment to safety, quality and client satisfaction. The employees of VECO are a great fit for our firm. We are proud to call them our colleagues."

The former VECO organization includes businesses specializing in program management, construction, engineering, procurement, operations and maintenance that have been serving oil and gas, mining, and power clients since 1968. With over 4000 employees, the organization has major operations in Alaska, western Canada, the United States, Russia and the Middle East. The former VECO businesses will generally operate under the CH2M HILL name.

"The acquisition of VECO represents the single largest investment that CH2M HILL has made and speaks to our commitment to Alaska," said Garry Higdum, who will lead the new business for CH2M HILL. "This deal augments CH2M HILL's existing oil and gas experience and provides us a world-class platform to bolster our project delivery capabilities around the world."

CH2M HILL is headquartered in Denver, Colorado. Employee-owned, the company is a global leader in engineering, construction and operations for pub-

lic and private clients. With over \$5 billion in annual revenue, CH2M HILL is an industry-leading program management, construction management and design firm. The firm's work is concentrated in the areas of transportation, water, energy, environment, and industrial facilities.

Thompson joins Crowley as maintenance and repair director

Crowley Maritime Corporation would like to announce that Tommy Thompson has joined the company's liner service group as director of maintenance and repair.

In this position, Thompson is responsible for overseeing domestic M&R.

Thompson brings over 40 years of progressive maritime and intermodal experience to Crowley including previous management of worldwide M&R facilities. He served as Crowley's M&R manager, then director for seven years prior to joining DOLE Fresh Fruit Company where he held a comparable position. Jacksonville-based Crowley Maritime Corporation, founded in San Francisco in 1892, is a privately held family and employee-owned company that provides diversified transportation and logistics services in domestic and international markets by means of five operating lines of business: Liner Services, Logistics Services, Petroleum Services, Marine Services and Technical Services.



TOMMY THOMPSON

Titan Salvage safely refloats container ship

Titan Salvage, Crowley Maritime Corporation's salvage and wreck-removal company, successfully completed the refloating of the M/V Maersk Diadema recently at Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico.

The 975-foot laden containership went aground outside the entrance channel, on its approach to the harbor on September 2. After a failed attempt by the ship's crew, Titan was contracted by the German owners on September 4 to refloat the one-year-old vessel from its resting place atop a sandbank.

A Titan salvage master and naval architect were dispatched to the scene to per-



Anchorage award recipients

Carlile recognizes performance in safety

Carlile Transportation recognized individual drivers for outstanding safety performance at its first annual driver safety awards banquet September 22 in Anchorage.

"Our goal is to be the best, safest transportation company in Alaska and throughout North America," said Harry McDonald, Carlile's president. "Safe highways start with safe drivers and we need to communicate our support for their performance and make sure the driving public knows that we have a team of safe drivers on the roads."

In attendance at the banquet were Tracy Luellen with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; John Sallak from Marsh, the world's leading insurance broker and strategic risk advisor; officials from the Alaska Trucking Association and representatives from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Banquets were scheduled for September 22 at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage; September 23 at the Princess Riverside Lodge in Fairbanks; September 29 at the Oakbrook Golf and Country Club in Tacoma, WA; and October 6 in Houston, TX.

Carlile was also named to the top 100 carriers by national trade publication Inbound Logistics and Transportation Company of the Year for the Pacific Northwest by the Tacoma Transportation Club.

Founded in 1980 by brothers John and Harry McDonald, Carlile has grown from two tractors to one of Alaska's largest trucking companies. Carlile Transportation Systems is based in Anchorage and employs more than 550 people, including 110 in Tacoma. Carlile terminals serve Alaska from Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kenai, Kodiak, Prudhoe Bay/Deadhorse, Seward, Forest Lake, MN, Tacoma and Fife, WA, Houston, TX and Edmonton, Alberta.



Fairbanks award recipients

COURTESY CARLILE

COURTESY CARLILE

form a preliminary survey of the vessel while a dive survey was also performed. Using local tugs, the ship's own ballast system and the expertise of Titan's personnel, the vessel was successfully refloated on Sept. 5 approximately 24 hours after Titan Salvage was initially contacted.

This is the seventh successful salvage over the past 18 months that Titan has performed in Mexico. In March 2006, Titan successfully refloated the 835-foot containership APL Panama from a beach in Ensenada, Mexico, and redelivered her safely to her owners, concluding one of the largest commercial salvage endeavors ever undertaken.

Crowley makes strides to address crewing shortages

Crowley has hired 21 seniors from the 2007 spring graduating classes of the nation's merchant marine academies. The surge in academy new hires is part of Crowley's re-energized recruiting program designed to help address crewing shortages currently facing the maritime industry.

These newly hired graduates will be given a comprehensive, training program intended to provide them an introduction to the basics of towing along with insight into Crowley's procedures and safety culture.

After the new-hires complete the training program, they sail for approximately one month under the guidance of Crowley's experienced senior officers with an overall goal of exposing them to an environment where they gain hands-on tools for success and advancement of their skills. Crowley is taking steps to further the company's competitive advantage to not only recruit but also retain qualified seagoing personnel for the future. The company's scholarship offerings to cadets at maritime academies have increased by nearly 60 percent.

In addition to focusing on academy graduates, Crowley has implemented a development program designed to help long-time employees advance their careers. In the summer of 2006, funding was approved to sponsor six of the company's able-bodied seamen as they endeavored to pursue their 1600-Ton Mate's license.

"This program gives our experienced crew members the chance to climb the ladder when before they may have been limited by the financial loss incurred by



COURTESY COLVILLE

Colville launches White Night for offshore logistics

The White Night is a high-performance work boat, named for the midnight sun of the Arctic, where Colville will station it for "bare boat" charters beginning in August. The 32 foot customized Boulton Powerboat is specially outfitted for Arctic conditions, including the capacity to carry long-range fuel supplies onboard for its two Evinrude 250 HP outboards.

The White Night will be used to provide offshore logistics support out of Prudhoe Bay. It was rigged by Alaska Mining and Diving Supply of Anchorage. President Mark Helmericks captained the boat for its maiden voyage in Cook Inlet in June.

enrolling in the licensing classes," said Gilliam.

In the future, Crowley has plans to develop a trainee engineer and chief mate program, which will provide crew members with the assistance and experience they need in order to make the jump to chief engineer or chief mate and eventually captain.

"The current industry demographics are such that there will be lots of opportunity for advancement in the years to come, and Crowley is working hard to make sure these opportunities go to the individuals that most deserve them," said Gilliam.

Bob Cox joins Crowley as GM

In July Crowley Maritime Corporation announced that Bob Cox had joined the company's petroleum distribution group as general manager. Cox is domiciled in the company's Anchorage office and reports to Craig Tornga, vice president of petroleum distribution.

In his new position, Cox is responsible for Crowley's 14 Alaska marine and aviation petroleum terminals, which have a combined fuel capacity of 39 million gallons.

A veteran of the Alaska petroleum sales and distribution market, Cox also brings transportation experience to his position. Prior to joining Crowley, he was vice president at both Petro Marine Services, Inc. and Alaska Railroad. He also held various positions of increasing responsibility with Southern Pacific Railroad including engineering, operations and marketing.

Cox, a registered civil engineer, is a board member at the Alaska Resource Development Council Board, Alaska Chadux Corporation, SEAPRO, Intermodal Transportation Institute and the University of Denver.

He obtained a Bachelor of Science degree with distinction in aerospace engineering at Virginia Tech, and a Master of Science degree in transportation engineering at Stanford University.

Doyon Foundation awards 320 scholarships

The Doyon Foundation has awarded almost \$377,000 in scholarships to 320 Alaska Native students attending universities across the country.

This year marked a doubling in the

dollar amount of noncompetitive scholarships awarded by the foundation, the nonprofit arm of Doyon Ltd. The recipients are Doyon enrollees or children of original enrollees.

“Doyon Foundation is investing in you and your goals and your education,” past scholarship recipient Tracy Snow told the students during a reception in Fairbanks Friday. “But congratulations to you for investing in yourself, investing in your dreams, investing in your goals.”

Among the recipients, 228 are full-time students receiving \$800 each and 40 are part-time students receiving \$400.

Sharon McConnell Gillis, executive director of the foundation, said the board of directors decided to increase the amount of the individual awards after visiting villages around the region and talking to shareholders about how the foundation could better serve students.

“Tuition keeps rising and we hadn’t increased our scholarships in five years, so we thought the time was right to do that,” she said.

Also among recipients were 52 students awarded a total of \$178,532 in competitive scholarships, with the amounts ranging from \$2,000 to \$7,000.

Foundation scholarships are funded by corporate donors, including Doyon Ltd. Last year, the foundation also received money from 72 individuals who pledged money for the scholarship programs.

The foundation also holds fundraisers. Doyon Ltd. Chairwoman Georgianna Lincoln said she hopes the scholarship recipients will bring their expertise back to the Doyon region to help solve many of the issues affecting the Native community, such as health care, engineering, forestry management and crime.

“It goes on and on, the needs that we have that you are going to be participating in the future, if you aren’t already,” she told the students. “We can’t forget who we are and where we come from.”

Kenworth relocates to new Fairbanks facility

Kenworth Alaska recently relocated its Fairbanks dealership to a new facility that offers customers increased service capacity and expanded parts availability.

A member of Kenworth’s dealer network of nearly 300 locations in the United States and Canada, Kenworth Alaska’s new Fairbanks location offers triple the amount of service space avail-



COURTESY KENWORTH ALASKA

able than in its previous location. The new 21,000-square-foot facility houses 10 service bays and one enclosed wash bay and is located on a 3.3-acre site.

“Since the new facility is so much bigger, Kenworth Alaska becomes the only truck dealer in Fairbanks to offer services under a single roof and in a building designed specifically as a heavy duty truck dealership. That means we’ll have more space to store and sell truck parts and to provide truck service to our customers,” said Ken Mason, chief operating officer for parent company Kenworth Northwest in SeaTac, Wash., which also has locations in Aberdeen, Bellingham, Marysville, and Yakima, Wash., in addition to Kenworth Alaska in Anchorage.

“We’re also pleased that the new facility offers a more convenient location for customers since it’s near the crossroads for State Highway 2, the western route to Canada, State Highway 3, the southeastern route to Anchorage, and the Dalton Highway, the northern route to Prudhoe Bay,” added Jim Scherieble, general manager of Kenworth Alaska.

The 414-mile Dalton Highway, or “Haul Road,” leads to the oilfields of Prudhoe Bay and is among the world’s most treacherous stretches of highway. The demanding, mainly gravel road follows the trans-Alaska oil pipeline and climbs more than 120 mountain grades and hills with 25 grades approaching or exceeding 18 percent. Temperatures can fall to 50 or 60 degrees below zero. Because trucks face such extreme conditions, reliable parts availability and service following the sale become critical to their operation.

“As pipeline maintenance on the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline System expands and work begins on a new Trans Alaskan Gas Pipeline, our new facility will serve the needs of customers involved in the oil and gas industry for years to come,” Scherieble said.

It is this commitment to customer service and dealer support that helped Kenworth receive the 2006 J.D. Power

and Associates award for highest customer satisfaction for heavy-duty dealer service.

Scherieble said Kenworth Alaska expects the new location will help the dealership sell and service more of its best-selling Class 8 models, the Kenworth W900L and the Kenworth T800. These trucks are the most popular models because they can handle the heavy loads haulers routinely pull to Prudhoe Bay, he added. The dealership also anticipates more demand for the Class 7 Kenworth T300 box van since it’s already a popular medium duty choice for making local deliveries, particularly heating oil and propane, to residences and commercial locations, Scherieble said.

Kenworth Alaska-Fairbanks, located at 2262 Van Horn Road, is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. The phone number is (907) 455-9900.

Staff members pass professional examinations

Lounsbury & Associates, Inc. is pleased to announce that Glory Rae Hotko, P.E. and Todd Carsten, P.E. recently passed their professional engineering exams.

Hotko joined Lounsbury in 2003 and holds a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Carsten has a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from North Dakota State University and joined Lounsbury in 2005. Both serve as project engineers in the firm’s Mat-Su office.

Also joining the firm’s Mat-Su office are Jedediah Smith, E.I.T. and Candace McIlvain. Smith recently earned a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from the University of Wyoming and serves as a civil engineer. McIlvain is an administrative assistant, a recent graduate of the Business Office Specialist pro-



GLORY RAE HOTKO



TODD CARSTEN



JEDEDIAH SMITH

gram at the Career Academy and joined the firm in February 2007.



CANDACE MCILVAIN

MWH awarded hydroelectric contract in China

MWH, a global provider of environmental engineering, construction and strategic consulting services, announced today that it has been selected by Ertan Hydropower Development Company, Ltd. to provide engineering and construction management consulting services for the Jinping I Hydropower project in China.

Located on the Yalong River in the Sichuan Province of southwest China, the Jinping I Hydropower project will consist of a double-curvature, thin arch dam that, when finished, will stand at 305 meters. Among all of the dams completed, under construction or in the design process, Jinping I is considered one of the highest in the world. The project will provide a significant reservoir for flood control and will have a generation capacity of 3600 megawatts. The hydropower produced at Jinping I will ultimately pay for the project's construction costs, which are estimated at \$3.3 billion USD, with MWH's revenue over the next five years forecasted at more than \$5 million.

"EHDC and MWH have worked together since the early 1980s and have developed a strong, mutually beneficial relationship. Having delivered excellent work in the past, we are confident that MWH will continue to help protect the interests of EHDC and the Chinese people in building this historic and strategic hydropower project," said Chen Yunhua, general manager of EHDC.

In the 1980s MWH provided engineering and construction management consulting services to EHDC on the Ertan Hydropower Station, the first hydroelectric project on the Yalong River and China's largest hydropower project completed in the 20th century. More recently, MWH provided dam design optimization and geological assessment services to EHDC for the Jinping I Hydroelectric project in November 2002.

"We are delighted to once again team with EHDC on the development of the Yalong River and the historic Jinping I project," said Alan Krause, president of the Natural Resources, Infrastructure and Industry unit of MWH. "MWH is commit-



Loading up the turf

COURTESY NORTHERN AIR CARGO

NAC delivers Barrow's football field

In July Northern Air Cargo began flying the first segment of 62,000 pounds of Pro-Turf synthetic field grass for Barrow High School's football field.

The majority of the freight was trucked to Deadhorse and flown from Deadhorse to Barrow.

The field was donated by efforts started by Cathy Parker, a football mom from Jacksonville, Florida, after seeing a story about the Barrow Whalers football program, which plays and practices on a dirt and gravel field. National Football League Hall of Fame running back Larry Csonka was among the nearly 3,000 in attendance at the first game played on the new field on August 17, and Pennsylvania-based Black Diamond Sports broadcast the game live on the Internet. ABC, NBC, CNN and ESPN have all done stories on the effort.

ted to helping China harness the energy-producing potential of their rivers with hydropower; a mature, reliable and renewable technology."

In the newly signed contract, MWH will be involved in construction quality control for the concrete construction of the Jinping I dam, and will provide project and executive management training. MWH will also provide a full-time, on-site concrete expert to assist with the planning, execution, quality assurance and quality control of the concrete dam.

Northern Air Cargo introduces jet service to Iliamna and increased Kodiak service

Northern Air Cargo is introducing regular service to Iliamna beginning October 1, 2007. This is the first time a Boeing 737 Freighter aircraft will be providing scheduled service to Iliamna. "We are very excited about returning to Iliamna," said Stephanie Holthaus, vice president, cargo and business development. "We have always considered Iliamna and the surrounding communi-

ties a big part of the NAC family, and we're happy to be back in the market."

The introduction of the Iliamna flight compliments NAC's Kodiak flight schedule and allows for a return to a 5-day-a-week scheduled service into that market. The addition of three Boeing 737-200 freighters in early 2007 has allowed the company to achieve considerable success in establishing frequency and schedule adherence in the markets it serves.

Schlumberger acquisition expands geophysical solutions

In July, Schlumberger announced the acquisition of Geosystem, a Milan-based provider of land and marine electromagnetics and seismic imaging services. Electromagnetics is a subsurface measurement used by the oil and gas industry for enhanced reservoir description and is one of the fastest-growing new technologies in the oilfield. "The combination of Geosystem land acquisition, processing and interpretation expertise with the marine acquisition capabilities of WesternGeco Electromagnetics will result in a compre-

hensive geophysical solution for our customers," said Dalton Boutte, president of WesternGeco. "The Geosystem interpretation group is well recognized in the business."

Geosystem is a leading provider of commercially available processing software for land and marine electromagnetics surveys. The company also has expertise in the joint inversion of multiple geophysical measurements - acquired through seismic, gravity and magnetotelluric surveys. Geosystem has 55 employees and will become part of WesternGeco Electromagnetics, which was previously known as AGO.

"The real value of electromagnetics will be demonstrated through integration with other measurements such as seismic and gravity, and WesternGeco is uniquely positioned to provide these services," said Dr. Silvia Foresti, founder of Geosystem. The Geosystem office in Milan, Italy will become a WesternGeco Electromagnetics Center of Excellence.

Schlumberger acquires InnerLogix

In September Schlumberger announced the acquisition of InnerLogix, the market leader in data quality management for the exploration and production industry. InnerLogix, with 20 employees, has offices in Houston and Stavanger, Norway.

"InnerLogix technology delivers the next level of innovation for information management. A proven solution for automated data quality management, this technology is used by more than 26 oil and gas companies around the world today," said Olivier Le Peuch, president of Schlumberger Information Solutions. "With our strong focus on helping our customers improve reservoir performance, the addition of InnerLogix brings superior data quality to end users, which translates directly into increased productivity and reduced technical risk."

Over the last seven years InnerLogix has developed a data quality technology and process that automatically provide end users the best available data for decision-making at any point in their workflow. The combination of these capabilities with the domain expertise and global organization of Schlumberger will bring further momentum to the data quality market while improving workflow efficiencies.

"Our technology will extend to all

E&P software workflows, such as reservoir development and operations management," said Dag Heggelund, president of InnerLogix Inc. "Our relationship with Schlumberger will accelerate and expand our technology development for the delivery of best quality data across all business processes for the global E&P market," he added.

InnerLogix is integral to the new Schlumberger Data Quality Center of Excellence located in Houston with support from key Schlumberger domain experts and from existing InnerLogix personnel.



New Rain for Rent sound-attenuated pump

High efficiency pumping, low maintenance cost and 72 dB(A) sound attenuation are the three greatest features of Rain for Rent's SA DV-150i portable pumping unit. The DV-150i handles solids up to three inches at flows up to 2,600 GPM and heads up to 195 feet. The corrosion-resistant, galvanized trailer has dual wall fuel cell containment and a compact footprint for tight construction site locations. Excellent suction lift capabilities make this the pump of choice for bypass pumping and construction dewatering.

Combine the DV-150i with Rain for Rent spill containment, filtration and storage products, and you have complete solutions. Proven Results designed for your unique liquid-handling situation. Rain for Rent at (800) 742-7246 or visit www.rainforrent.com.

TOTE certified for environmental management standards

The attempt in August 2007 was TOTE's first endeavor to achieve ISO

14001:2004; however, the company has retained an ISO certification for quality management systems (9000 series) since 1998.

TOTE's two Orca Class vessels are known for their versatility and leading-edge ecology systems. By achieving ISO 14001:2004 certification, TOTE demonstrates its commitment to environmental excellence and quality at all of its land-based activities and facilities, with the focus being on reducing both electrical energy consumption and nonhazardous waste.

"We take our environmental responsibilities very seriously," said TOTE President and Chief Operating Officer Bill Deaver. "We want to make meaningful contributions to the beauty and preservation of Washington and Alaska, which is where we operate and where our employees live."

"TOTE is proud to achieve this certification," he said. "It confirms that we have the framework in place to not only comply with environmental laws and regulations, but to become a leader in this proactive movement."

As a result of the certification process, TOTE reached a number of achievements through the initial implementation of several programs, including motivating other business tenants at TOTE's corporate headquarters building in Federal Way, Wash., to join the office waste recycling campaign.

The new certification closely follows TOTE's acceptance of the Tahoma Environmental Business Award from the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce in April 2007. This award is given to businesses deserving recognition for exemplary environmental protection or restoration efforts.

"Our ISO 14001:2004 certification lets other companies know they can feel confident that when doing business with TOTE, the environment is in the forefront of our minds," Deaver said.

TOTE was also awarded the prestigious Washington State Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices in 2006.

ISO 14001:2004 is an internationally recognized, independently verified management standard designed to continually improve environmental management systems and performance. The purpose of ISO 14001:2004 is to help organizations prevent pollution and protect the environment.

US Bearings thanks customers

We recently held our 4th Annual Customer Appreciation Day event, Open House and Barbeque at our Anchorage branch. We were honored to host over 200 of our customers, and know that many more who would liked to have come were unable to make it. I'd like to take this time to thank each of you for your continued support of our company and its products and services. You are the reason our business is a success in Alaska.

Our Anchorage warehouse employs 5 Alaskans full time, and each of us would also like to personally thank you. It is because of you that we have good jobs with a good company, and that we enjoy it! With branches throughout the United States, South America and Canada, our company is able to offer our customers the excellent service and personal touch of a family owned business with the buying leverage and product availability of a major industrial distributor.

We know that now, more than ever, you have a choice of where to do business. We will continue to work hard every day to earn your business and your loyalty. Our 5000 SF Anchorage warehouse is full of inventory to serve you — with everything from electric motors and gearboxes to bearings and seals, chain and sprockets, belts and chemicals. We will strive to always return your quote requests ASAP, to enter your orders quickly and fill them accurately and on time; and to handle any concerns immediately. We do special orders on non-stock items and know how to get it here the most economical way. We offer delivery and shipping with all local carriers. We offer 24 hour emergency service every day of the year. We have two outside technical representatives who travel throughout the State offering on-site training, site surveys, bin stocking and troubleshooting assistance. In addition, all our employees are constantly training on the products and services we provide, so that we can provide valuable technical assistance when you need it.

We hope that you will continue to consider US Bearings your "Partners in Productivity." We truly value our relationship with you, and thank you for your business. As always, we welcome your feedback on our products and services

so that we may continue to improve and serve you better.


Sincerely,
Your Anchorage Branch Staff

UTC Fire & Security completes Marioff acquisition

UTC Fire & Security has received regulatory approval and completed the acquisition of Finland-based Marioff Corporation Oy, a global provider of water mist fire suppression systems for land and marine applications. Based in Vantaa, Marioff is a highly regarded global leader in the manufacture, design and service of water mist suppression systems.

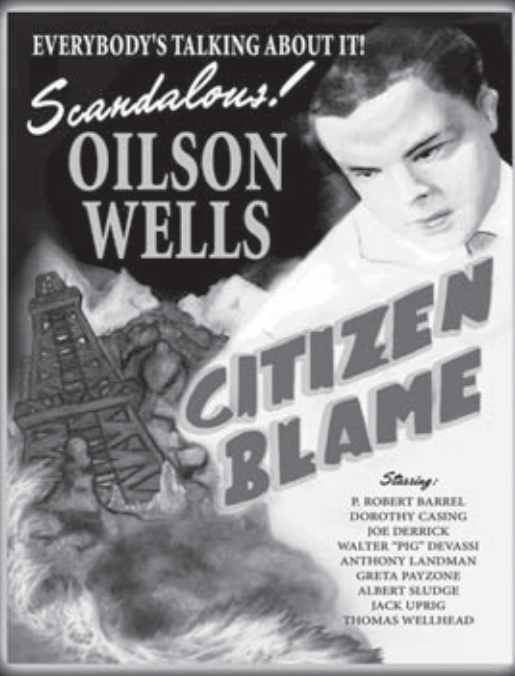
The company has more than 1,300 patents and patent applications worldwide around its advanced technical solutions, including the well known HI-FOG brand. It has business operations in 11 countries and employs approximately 350 people. "This acquisition increases UTC Fire & Security's capabilities in the fire suppression segment and will drive new growth opportunities by expanding our product and service offerings globally," said Bill Brown, president, UTC Fire & Security.

"Building our presence in environmentally friendly water-based suppression systems through the acquisition of companies like Marioff is of particular strategic importance as new legislation



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and environmental standards take effect," Brown continued.

"By implementing UTC's global expertise, capabilities and network throughout our business operations, I am confident that this acquisition offers a superior platform for Marioff's continued global growth," said Petteri Saarinen, president, Marioff. "Our organization will continue supplying HI-FOG solutions and associated services to our customers, with the confidence that we are satisfying their needs for protecting people, property and businesses."

WesternGeco expands wide-azimuth surveys

In August WesternGeco announced an expansion of its multiclient, wide-azimuth survey in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico as a result of underwriter demand for high-quality subsalt imaging and optimized data resolution.

The E-Octopus project is in its third phase of acquisition, and WesternGeco will add a fourth phase in November 2007 with a fifth phase in early 2008. These WAZ surveys offer the unique advantage of more precise base and edge of salt definition through the integration of magnetotellurics, gravity and Q-Marine data through MMCI multimeasurement constrained imaging.

"We are currently conducting targeted magnetotelluric surveying in the most challenging imaging areas for all phases of the E-Octopus program," said Aaron Gatt Florida, vice president, WesternGeco Electromagnetics.

The E-Octopus project, the first multiclient, wide-azimuth program in the Gulf of Mexico, commenced in July 2006. Since then, over 700 blocks of wide-azimuth data have been acquired. WesternGeco has also developed the world's first onboard prestack wave-extrapolation depth migration in the third phase of E-Octopus through the use of its proprietary Q-Xpress technique, providing quick-look migrated data volumes for interpretation, quality control, illumination and in-fill acquisition requirements.

The final deliverables for these surveys will include the latest state-of-the-art technologies such as anisotropic multi-azimuthal tomography, wavefield extrapolation demultiple and shot domain WEM with angle gathers.

The E-Octopus project is a member of the WesternGeco family of multiclient E-surveys that utilize advanced acquisition and



COURTESY SCHLUMBERGER

Rutter and Wilbanks Ahtna 1-19a gets makeover

Initially using rotary drilling, Rutter and Wilbanks switched to a Schlumberger coiled-tubing unit this summer to drill for gas at the Ahtna 1-19a well located at mile marker 177 of the Glenn Highway. The changeover project was completed with Schlumberger equipment out of Kenai district consisting of a 2,375 coiled tubing unit with auxiliary equipment, a reel of a 2,375 coiled tubing, a mud pump, a 2,875 mud motor, 3,125 orienter, a 3.75 bit and extensive cementing equipment.

Other companies participating were Schlumberger Well Services, Schlumberger Wireline, Schlumberger Drilling and Measurements, Baker Thru Tubing, Weatherford, MI Swaco, Hughes Christensen, Weaver Brothers Trucking and Rain for Rent.

processing technologies. The WesternGeco suite of geophysical applications includes electromagnetics services and Q-Technology, the world's only single-sensor high-fidelity seismic acquisition-to-inversion platform. For further information, please visit www.westerngeco.com.

Crowley awards scholarship to Williams-Mystic student

Iris Lowery, a student in the maritime studies program of Williams College and Mystic Seaport, has been named as a recipient of a Thomas B. Crowley Sr. Memorial Scholarship, which is presented annually at the institution by Crowley Maritime Corporation.

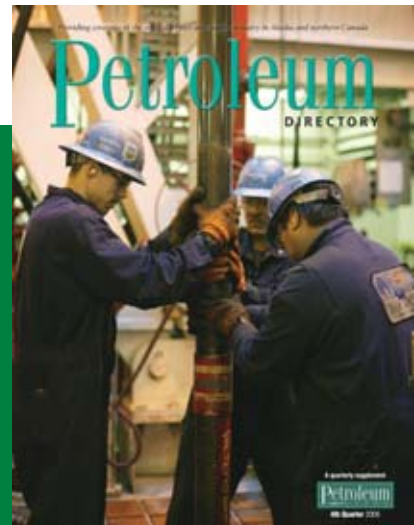
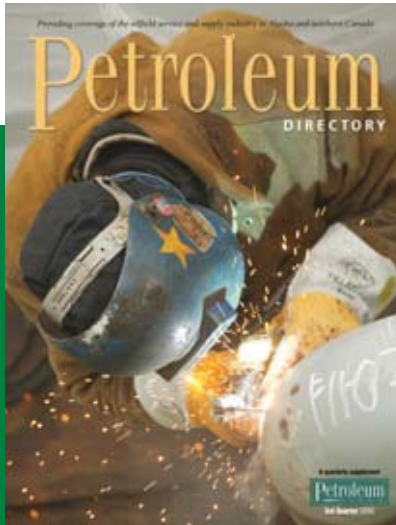
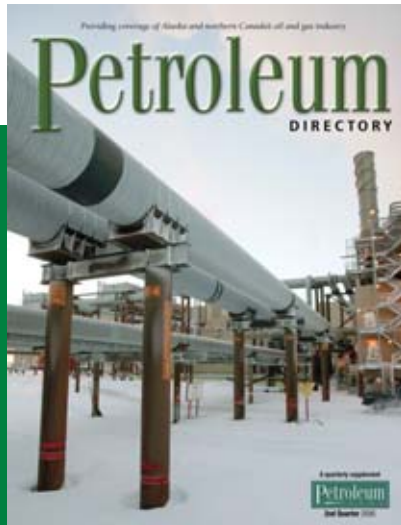
Lowery was selected based on academic success, financial need, and her interest in maritime trades and studies. In addition to participating in the Williams-Mystic program, Lowery is a junior majoring in Human Ecology at College of the Atlantic in

Bar Harbor, Maine. Additionally, Lowery has strong skills in boat building. She graduated with an associate's degree from Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building before continuing her studies at College of the Atlantic where she is pursuing her bachelor's degree.

Williams-Mystic has the only interdisciplinary program of its kind. Undergraduates of all majors share one semester at Mystic Seaport to focus on the past, present and future of the earth's oceans. Students participate in four rigorous courses, a museum skills class, a Pacific Coast field seminar, a Nantucket Island field seminar and a deep-water offshore voyage.

Over the years, Tom Crowley Jr., Crowley chairman, president and CEO, has given scholarship dollars to deserving students at the maritime academies and other select institutions in the name of his father Thomas B. Crowley Sr., who guided the company to extraordinary heights before passing away in 1994.

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