

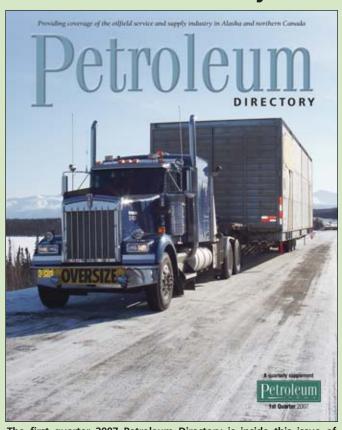
page Grand chief threatens to block construction of Mackenzie gas line

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Latest Petroleum Directory inside



The first quarter 2007 Petroleum Directory is inside this issue of Petroleum News. The directory is a quarterly marketing publication devoted to promoting the companies that advertise on a regular basis in Petroleum News. This month's news briefs include the latest from Northern Air Cargo, Lynx Enterprises, Cruz Construction, Alaska Air Cargo, Alaska Textiles, Arctic Controls, Arctic Wire Rope, ASRC, Carlile, Alaska Railroad, ENSR, Lounsbury, NATCO, Schlumberger, Steelfab, Univar, Usibelli and Xtel. North Slope Telecom is featured in a photo layout, and this quarter's company profiles are on Trinity Inspection, Colville, Kenworth Alaska, Air Liquide and ACS.

Poor results from Mac Delta wells

The only active drilling program in the Mackenzie Delta has seen one well suspended and another abandoned.

Junior explorer MGM Energy said the Unipkat M-45 well in the Northwest Territories did not appear to contain hydrocarbons and is being abandoned without further testing.

That comes on the heels of a decision to suspend operations at the Kumak I-25 well without further testing when drilling failed to yield commercial quantities of hydrocarbons.

The wells were drilled as part of a farm-in agreement involving MGM, operator Chevron Canada and BP Canada Energy and are part of a planned 11-well drilling commitment.

MGM President Henry Sykes said in a statement his company is disappointed with the winter's drilling results.

It plans to reevaluate the seismic data used by MGM and its partners to "identify the locations of these wells in light of the results." Although the results "demonstrate the risk inherent in exploration activities, we continue to believe that our drilling program will meet expectations overall," Sykes said.

MGM expects to drill three wells on the Delta in the 2007-08 winter and will conduct seismic programs in the Delta and Central Mackenzie Valley at the same time.

—GARY PARK

Buffett to the rescue?

MidAmerican would continue to FERC certification if open season failed

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

idAmerican's Kern River is back in the Alaska gas pipeline wars, and told legislators at the end of March that it would continue to FERC certification after a failed open season.

While the company said alignment with both the state and the producers is necessary for a successful project, it said it would go ahead with project work while the state settles alignment issues with the pro-

Two other pipeline companies interested in the project have a different view. They want the state to settle with the producers up front. Enbridge told legislators "no producers, no pipeline" and TransCanada said "no producers, no credit, no pipeline."

see BUFFETT page 15

Nationalization possible threat to gas pipeline

If Alaska doesn't get its North Slope gas to markets in the Lower 48, the federal government could step in. Kern River Gas Transmission President Kirk Morgan raised the issue in testimony to the Alaska Legislature — and Don REP. DON YOUNG Young, Alaska's represen-



tative in Congress, hammered the point home.

see THREAT page 16

Exxon gets cold shoulder

Point Thomson operator's drilling plan for defunct leases, unit ignored by DNR

By KAY CASHMAN

Petroleum News

n March 23, ExxonMobil filed a "plan of operations" for the eastern North Slope "Point Thomson area" with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil and Gas. Unlike previous Point Thomson plans, this application wasn't called a plan of development, nor did it carry the next plan of development's number, which would have identified it as the 23rd plan submitted by the operator of the undeveloped Point Thomson unit over the last 30 years.

That's because both the Point Thomson unit and its leases have been terminated by DNR, although Exxon and other owners are challenging part of those

The seven wells Exxon proposes to drill one per winter — between 2008-09 and 2015 appear to be the same seven wells the company agreed to drill by June 15, 2007, in its 22nd plan of development.

separate decisions in court and in an administrative appeal to the commissioner to halt the process.

Division petroleum manager Nan Thompson told Petroleum News April 5 that the division and other DNR agencies are not reviewing the March 23 plan and well permits submitted by Exxon because of the defunct status of the Point Thomson unit and its

see **EXXON** page 9

GOVERNMENT

Kyoto gets second chance

Parties holding balance of power in Canada's parliament make sweeping amendments to clean air legislation; add to petroleum industry unease

By GARY PARK

For Petroleum News

anada's fractured Parliament has seen the three opposition parties gang up on the government by forcing through a drastic reworking of plans to tackle greenhouse gas emis-

Holding the balance of power and the ability to topple the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Liberal, New Democratic and Bloc Quebecois parties have endorsed a newly named Clean Air and Climate Change Act that restores commitments to implement the Kyoto Protocol and sets mid- and long-term targets for GHGs.

Government Member of Parliament Mark

The original act avoided setting any cuts in GHGs until 2020, although some limits on large producers were to be phased in, starting in 2010 as a buildup to acrossthe-board reductions of 60 percent to 70 percent by 2050.

Warawa said a provision in the new act to impose heavy penalties on polluters could cost industries "billions of dollars," adding to confusion and unease in the petroleum industry, which is struggling to make sense out of environmental directions being taken by the federal and provincial

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NATURAL GAS

AGIA moving forward

Clears first committees; Alaska legislators want approval rights, not just denial

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

he governor's Alaska Gasline Inducement Act has cleared its first committees in both the House and Senate. Senate Resources passed out a committee substitute for Senate Bill 104 April 1, followed closely by the House Special Committee on Oil and Gas which moved a committee substitute for House Bill 177 April 3.

Senate Judiciary began hearing SB 104 April 4, and will hear the bill daily beginning April 11 after legislators return from the

Easter break. House Resources has scheduled daily hearings on HB 177 beginning April 10. Both bills also have referrals to Finance.

Both Senate President Lyda Green and House Speaker John Harris have said they want AGIA passed this session.

AGIA is the proposal of the administration of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin to offer inducements to a pipeline builder to get a project started to take Alaska North Slope GOV. SARAH PALIN gas to market, combined with inducements



to the North Slope producers to get them to commit their gas to a line in an initial open season.

The state is proposing to contribute matching funds of up to \$500 million, money the administration has said the state will get back both in a quicker project and in reduced tariff rates.

The commissioners of Natural Resources and Revenue would review applications under AGIA, including public comments, and make a determination. All applications, minus confidential material, will be made public. Legislators will have access to the confidential information upon signing confidentiality agree-

Legislators stake out positive approval

Both committees worked the administration's proposal intensely, and made changes proposed by committee members, the administration and legislative legal services.

House and Senate both disagreed with the administration's proposal giving the Legislature 30 days to disapprove a license granted by the administration if legislators felt the wrong choice had been made. If the 30 days passed with no legislative action, the license would be final.

The Senate bill gives the Legislature 60 calendar days to approve the issuance of the license by resolution. The House version calls for a bill approving the license and gives no timeline for such a bill to be passed.

Administration officials presenting the bill, led by Commissioner of Revenue Pat Galvin, have expressed concern that depending on how much time the Legislature takes in its approval phase, a licensee could lose the summer field session of 2008, delaying the project by a year.

All applications, minus confidential material, will be made public. Legislators will have access to the confidential information upon signing confidentiality agreements.

Both committees added a requirement that a licensee commit to negotiate a project labor agreement prior to the beginning of construction. Inclusion of a project labor agreement was the dominant change requested in the bills in public comment.

Evaluation criteria based on cash flows

Both committees expressed concern over the administration's original proposal for application evaluation criteria and while the House and Senate committee substitutes are not identical, they both base primary ranking of the projects on the cash value the state would receive from a proposed project. Other factors to be considered include such things as how quickly the applicant proposes to begin construction and how quickly the project will begin commercial operation.

In evaluating the project's likelihood of success the commissioners are given a number of things to consider including reasonableness, specificity and feasibility of the work plan, the applicant's plan to manage cost overruns and encourage shippers to participate in the first binding open season and the applicant's financial resources, experience and record of performance.

Rolled-in rates an issue

Both committee substitutes made changes in the requirement for defending rolled-in rates at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Galvin said the administration symmetry in the requirements that both the licensee and the shipper — in exchange for inducements for committing gas to an initial open season — commit to defend rolled-in rates at the FERC up to an increase of 15 percent over initial rates. The FERC will actually make the decision on rolled-in rates, and has a rebuttable presumption in favor of rolled-in rates on tariffs for the Alaska gas pipeline.

Both committees changed this requirement.

Rep. Ralph Samuels, R-Anchorage, said in House Oil and Gas that he was trying to find a middle ground on rolled-in rates and since the midstream entity must testify at the FERC in favor of rolled-in rates to get inducements, and since the FERC currently has a rebuttable presumption in favor of rolled-in rates, it seemed reasonable that the shippers may argue their own case, as long as FERC as the rebuttable presumption of rolled-in rates. That way, Samuels, said, the FERC can hear both sides. He said he was reticent to locking the state into arguing for a policy, and cited the requirement under the TAPS settlement methodology that required the state to argue in favor of TSM and the state ended up defending positions it didn't like.

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FINANCE & ECONOMY

Investors block first energy trust switch

By GARY PARK

For Petroleum News

anadian energy income trusts have received a short, sharp message from investors: Move carefully and don't be in a hurry to revert to corporate ranks because of the federal government's plans to change the tax rules for trusts.

A simmering revolt among investors blocked True Energy Trust's bid to rejoin the traditional corporate sector, but stopped short of overthrowing a majority of the trust's board.

It was the first test of the mood among investors since Ottawa announced last October that trusts would lose their tax sheltered status in 2011.

True's directors decided their entity, which produces about 20,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day, would be better off reverting to the corporate ranks.

In particular, they were motivated by True's dismal showing as the worst-performing among 35 members of the Standard & Poor's/Toronto Stock Exchange energy trust index over the past year.

True posted a net loss of C\$234 million in 2006, against earnings of C\$13.9 million in 2005, although cash flow edged up to C\$90.4 million or C\$1.79 per trust unit from C\$87.1 million or C\$3.47 million per unit.

But the trust's units have slumped from a high of C\$17.65 in mid-April 2006 to just over C\$5.85 at the end of March, forcing it to twice cut cash distributions as commodity prices dropped.

Conversion defeated at annual meeting

At True's three-hour annual meeting, 52 percent of unit holders opposed the conversion plan that needed 66 percent support to be implemented.

However, a majority of investors voted to retain the current board of directors instead of a slate presented by the dissident group.

"The question that got clearly answered today is when should a trust become a corporation," said True chief executive officer

Paul Baay.

"Shareholders are telling us that the time is certainly not now and that they still want (cash) distributions.

"It really was a 50:50 vote. We've got half the people telling us they want distributions and we've got the other half saying we want you to spend capital and drill up these lands," he said.

Baay said the board will now explore a new strategic course, including deciding what distributions unit holders will be paid in the future.

"The board is going to have to come to a balance that makes sense to people," he said.

What he won't do is resign as a result of the vote because the board retains the backing of unit holders, Baay said.

True had argued that making the move to a dividend-paying corporate structure would facilitate investment and development of its assets in southeastern Saskatchewan and central Alberta.

Dissidents: no advantage in being first

For the dissidents, Richard Lewanski told the meeting that there is no advantage to being the first trust to make the switch.

"We feel the conversion is premature and an excuse to create the new stock options and warrant plans for the current board and management," he said, referring to a disputed plan to institute a new award of share options.

Happy that the conversion and stock options were defeated, Lewanski said his group would still have "liked to change the board and the direction of the company and we're still hopeful of a change at the board level."

Critics of the True proposal said there was no sense in converting when the federal tax rules are not known and given that the new taxes will not be imposed until 2011.

The only argument in favor, according to some analysts, would be a plan by a trust to embark on large-scale acquisitions that would be turned down by the federal government.

GOVERNMENT

UAF scientist leads Beaufort expedition

The University of Alaska Fairbanks has announced that UAF researcher Jennifer Hutchings is leading a team of scientists that is studying the relationship between sea ice movement, stresses in the ice and the overall mass of the ice. The research team is spending the first two weeks of April at the U.S. Navy ice camp in the Beaufort Sea to deploy buoys and instruments for the measurement of sea ice stresses and movements

Weather systems in the Arctic cause the sea ice to move constantly, to form open water leads, pressure ridges and other sea ice features. Those features may affect the thickness and durability of ice, in response to the impact of climate change. Hutchings hopes that a better understanding of the complex process of ice movement and deformation will improve climate models, shed light on how sea ice has behaved in the past and provide insights into how the ice may change in the future, UAF says.

The UAF-led Beaufort Sea expedition forms part of the Cold Regions Research and Experiment: Dynamic Nature of the Arctic project, a UAF contribution to International Polar Year. The team includes scientists from the University of Delaware and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory.



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NATURAL GAS

Shell drops LNG plans in Louisiana

Offshore facility in Gulf faced opposition over environmental issues, but import capacity seems adequate for available supplies

By ALLEN BAKER

For Petroleum News

oyal Dutch Shell has dropped plans for a liquefied natural gas import facility 38 miles south of Louisiana's Cameron Parish, citing the substantial capacity already available for importing liquefied natural gas into the U.S. market, particularly along the Gulf Coast.

The Shell decision came on the heels of a March 13 cancellation by Chevron Corp. of a proposed West Coast import terminal in Mexico, near the California border.

Environmental groups claimed victories in both cases, but an ample supply of import capacity is the more likely factor.

Plenty of capacity

"The terminals that have already been committed will provide sufficient (LNG) capacity," Greg Koehler, Shell's project director for the Gulf Landing proposal, told the Associated Press on March 28.

Projects that already have federal approval, plus those currently operating, could theoretically import half of the 61 billion cubic feet of gas currently consumed daily in the United States, though there is nowhere near enough LNG available in the world market to provide that kind of supply.

U.S. import terminals in the Atlantic Basin already can bring in the equivalent of 1.7 trillion cubic feet annually, or more than 4 bcf daily. LNG imports last year amounted to 580 million cubic feet, or about 1.6 bcf daily.

Offshore LNG terminals originally were seen as a way to avoid NIMBY complaints from residents near the sites of onshore facilities. But they quickly drew fire for plans to use millions of gallons of seawater to heat the LNG and regasify it in what are called "open-loop" systems.

Offshore plans hit reef

Offshore LNG terminals originally were seen as a way to avoid NIMBY complaints from residents near the sites of onshore facilities. But they quickly drew fire for plans to use millions of gallons of seawater to heat the LNG and regasify it in what are called "open-loop" systems. The National Marine Fisheries Service found that openloop terminals would be harmful, because the chilling of the seawater in the shallow Gulf was found to kill marine creatures and eggs.

A ConocoPhillips plan for an LNG terminal off Alabama was abandoned last sum-

The Shell decision came on the heels of a March 13 cancellation by Chevron Corp. of a proposed West Coast import terminal in Mexico, near the California border. Environmental groups claimed victories in both cases, but an ample supply of import capacity is the more likely factor.

mer as political pressure mounted on governors in Gulf Coast states to veto the projects.

Similar projects have been making progress in New England, however, as Neptune LNG LLC received a deepwater port license on March 26 from the U.S. Maritime Administration for an offshore port in Massachusetts Bay.

Neptune, a subsidiary of Europe's Suez Energy, already operates an onshore LNG import terminal at Everett, Mass. The new system could import and regasify up to 750 million cubic feet of gas daily using an onboard regasification system. The project cost is about \$1 billion, including the ships, and the port is expected to start operating in 2009.

Excelerate Energy, based in The Woodlands, Texas, has proposed a similar terminal nearby called the Northeast Gateway Energy Bridge 13 miles southeast Gloucester. The Maritime Administration has said it will issue an operating license for that port also. Excelerate built a similar offshore terminal in the Gulf of Mexico but it has been largely inactive.

West Coast proposals

Offshore terminals also are under consideration on the West Coast, where Australian energy firms BHP Billiton and Woodside Petroleum have proposed LNG import facilities. Those have faced substantial opposition from local residents despite their locations more than a dozen miles from shore, and important decisions on those projects are expected this spring.

ConocoPhillips recently dropped plans for an LNG port at Long Beach after the city's harbor commission voted against the idea. But a Sempra Energy facility is currently under construction near Ensenada, Mexico, to serve the California market as well as Mexican utilities.

The Sempra terminal has an initial capacity of 1 bcf daily, with an expansion being sought to boost that to 2.5 bcf per day, more than a third of the amount California now consumes.

The Energia Costa Azul project is near the proposed site of the abandoned Chevron terminal, which would have had an initial capacity of 1.4 bcf daily.



NATURAL GAS

Pioneer notches new gas play in Alberta

Pioneer Natural Resources has posted success in northern Alberta, reporting the discovery of a new shallow gas field and the start of production from three wells at 18 million cubic feet per day.

The company has a 100 percent working interest and a 75 percent net revenue interest in the new field in the Atikamik area, assuming a 25 percent sliding-scale government royalty.

Pioneer said the field is located within a trend of aged gas fields that have so far produced 2.2 trillion cubic feet. The company hopes to produce a similar volume.

The initial discovery well was drilled in early 2006 in an area confined to winter field operations.

Horizontal drilling contributing to rates

Production is anticipated to reach a sustainable rate of 24 million cubic feet per day, although the company said facilities can be easily expanded to 40 million cubic feet per



Pioneer Chairman

The reservoir in the new field is at a depth of only 2,000 feet and the producing wells are flowing gas at rates five to 10 times the historical average for the trend, Pioneer said.

Horizontal drilling is being used for the first time in the area and is contributing to the high production rates.

Pioneer said it has accumulated a land position of 375,000 acres at an average working interest of 98 percent at a cost of less than C\$70 per acre.

The company said six look-alike prospects have been identified on the lands and two prospect wells have tested gas.

Pioneer Chairman Scott Sheffield said the new play is expected to make a significant contribution to his company's targeted production growth of 30-35 percent in Canada this year.

-GARY PARK





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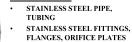
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EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Husky brings sparkle to Newfoundland

Husky Energy is providing the one real jolt of hope these days in offshore Newfoundland, piling up drilling success and obtaining regulatory approval for a 40 percent hike in production from its White Rose project.

With other major ventures being slowed by drilling setbacks, or blocked by failed negotiations with the provincial government, Husky is currently leading the way in the region.

It received regulatory and government clearance to hike output at the field to 140,000 barrels per day immediately from the previously authorized 100,000 bpd and is before regulators with an application to tie in production from the South White Rose extension, while evaluating opportunities to develop other newly discovered fields.

Husky is 72.5 percent operator of White Rose, with Petro-Canada holding the balance of 27.5 percent.

It also plans to spend C\$290 million this year drilling and completing a seventh production well at White Rose as well as delineating a discovery north of the main White Rose site.

The delineation program last year added possible resources of 138 million barrels to the proven, probable and possible total of 379 million barrels.

It's all welcome news for the Newfoundland government, with Natural Resources Minister Kathy Dunderdale proclaiming the latest production increase as proof of the "continued growing potential of our offshore."

She said other increases granted to the Hibernia and Terra Nova projects show all three are "performing well for the benefit of both the operators and the province."

That was an indirect reference to setbacks on other fronts, with partners in the Chevron-led Hebron-Ben Nevis development abandoning their plans a year ago after the collapse of fiscal negotiations with the Newfoundland government and the government's decision in January to overrule regulatory approval of an application to add the 223 million barrels of Hibernia South reserves to the core Hibernia project.

In its drive to obtain greater benefits for Newfoundland from the offshore, the province said it wanted more details on the benefits plan and how commercial arrangements would affect royalties and taxes. Operator ExxonMobil is currently reworking that application.

—GARY PARK

continued from page 3

AGIA

Galvin said the administration had significant objections to the change, which was adopted. He said the administration is very committed to rolled-in rates and noted that the state was not bound to speak in favor of those rates, just those who get inducements from making an initial shipping commitment. And, he noted, if it were in the state's favor, it could always waive the requirement and allow them to testify in opposition.

Revolving loan fund

House Oil and Gas worked through a lot of amendments, a number of which were offered by Rep. Mike Doogan, D- Anchorage, who provided cleanup language for the committee substitute, as well as a number of substantive amendments, some of which were accepted and some — including a ban on all confidentiality for application materials and a repeal of the Stranded Gas Development Act — were not.

Rep. Jay Ramras, R-Fairbanks, proposed and won acceptance for an amendment creating the Gas Utility Revolving Loan Fund to be administered by the Alaska Energy Authority to provide state-approved loans to gas utility companies only for constructing or extending new gas service in the state.

Galvin said the administration didn't object but had some concern about adding too much too AGIA. "We do want to focus on the primary goal" of the gas line, he said. ●

PIPELINES & DOWNSTREAM

Prince William Sound spill barges lack capacity

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ive oil-spill response barges stationed in Prince William Sound after the Exxon Valdez oil spill have less capacity than originally specified.

Tanker operators for oil companies BP, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil and others disclosed in a "notice of nonreadiness" to the state March 29 that barges can hold about 68,700 barrels or nearly 2.9 million gallons less than previously thought. The barges would play a critical role in the event of a large spill, serving as holding tanks for oil and oily water.

The new information trims the holding capacity of the five barges by 10 to 15 percent, said Betty Schorr, industry preparedness program manager for the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

DEC and state lawyers are reviewing the barge capacity shortfall, and might cite the tanker operators April 2 with a notice of violation. A civil fine could follow.

"If they're found out of compliance," Schorr said.

Tanker operators said a consultant discovered the capacity shortfall while reviewing the performance of oil-skimming and other equipment on the barges.

At least part of capacity error came from not accounting for the weight of spill cleanup equipment on the decks of the barges, Schorr said.

The tanker companies did the right thing and notified DEC officials, said Anil Mathur, president of Alaska Tanker Co., a Beaverton, Ore., company that hauls North Slope crude for BP. Despite the lower barge capacity, Mathur said tanker operators don't believe they've violated state law on oil spill response preparedness.

"No change in equipment has occurred," Alaska Tanker Co. manager Capt. Tom Colby wrote in the March 29 letter to DEC. "Rather, in the course of efforts to improve our barge system, we unexpectedly discovered that an assumption with respect to barge storage capacity was inaccurate. Out of an abundance of caution we disclosed this information to the department."

Discovery of the capacity error has not halted or slowed down oil shipments out of the Sound, DEC and oil company spokesmen said March 30.

The tanker companies also have voluntarily put extra precautions in place until the barge matter is settled, Schorr said.

Barges have been repositioned or put on standby in the Sound and in Cook Inlet; tug escorts for loaded tankers have been increased; and a one-way traffic zone for tankers moving through Valdez Narrows has been extended.

ASSOCIATIONS

Alaska fuel storage, handling group forms

Companies involved in the storage and handling of oil have a new business association: the Alaska Fuel Storage and Handling Alliance. Jim Beckham, the president and one of the founders of the new association, said that the association will provide small, regulated companies with the capability to mount education and advocacy programs. Small businesses, including many in rural Alaska, do not have the individual capacity to operate these types of program, Beckham said.

"The answer for these companies is an alliance," Beckham said. "Together they will be able to study issues, form positions and effectively present them to the Legislature, Congress or regulatory bodies. They will be able to speak with one voice that will have a greater impact on decision-makers."

For more information contact Jim Beckham at (907) 224-3190, or Bill Schoephoester (907) 351-3097 or e-mail schoephoester@gmail.com.

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PETROLEUM NEWS • WEEK OF APRIL 8, 2007

● EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

ANS oil production down 1.4 percent

Northstar back up, but most fields have declining February to March production averages; ANS averages 764,273 bpd for March

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

he BP Exploration (Alaska)-operated Northstar field began coming back up March 6 after going offline Feb. 16 for pipeline replacement, but average Alaska North Slope crude oil production for March was still down 1.36 percent from February, averaging 764,273 barrels per day in March compared to 774,837 bpd in February.

The numbers are in line with the fall 2006 production forecast of 740,000 bpd for fiscal year 2007, which ends June 30. That forecast was a drop of 7.9 percent from actual production of 845,000 bpd in fiscal year 2006. The fall revenue projection is 782,000 bpd for fiscal year 2008.

The fall forecast for the price of ANS crude oil on the West Coast was \$59.15 a barrel. Revenue's published March price was \$59.01.

The Alaska Department of Revenue Tax Division said a March 13 gas compressor problem at the BP-operated Endicott field resulted in a 5,000 bpd decrease in output.

On March 16 there was a 78 percent trans-Alaska oil pipeline proration caused by high inventories at Valdez after bad weather prevented tanker loadings. Output returned to 100 percent on March 18, the division said.

Inventories at Valdez started the month at 3.4 million barrels, topped 5 million barrels March 15 and peaked at 5.7 million barrels March 16. The level dropped to 3.8 million barrels March 18 and ended the month at 4.8 million barrels.

Northstar averaged 33,043 bpd in March, up 22.3 percent from a February average of 27,013 bpd, with production peaking at more than 49,000 barrels on a daily basis. The field's production had averaged 44,234 bpd in February prior to the shutdown, ordered after discovery of a pinhole leak in an eight-inch discharge pipe in the field's gas compression facility. Sixty feet of eight-inch and 120 feet of 14-inch pipe were replaced.

The only other field with a month-tomonth increase was the ConocoPhillips Alaska-operated Kuparuk field, where production increased 2.4 percent, averaging 168,632 bpd in March, up from 164,626 bpd in February. Kuparuk production includes West Sak, Tabasco, Tarn, Meltwater and Palm.

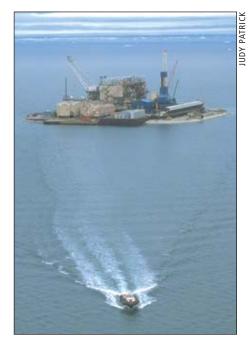
Lisburne has largest decline

The BP-operated Lisburne field had the largest month-to-month percentage decline, dropping 11.75 percent, to an average of 18,370 bpd in March compared to 20,816 bpd in February.

Production from the ConocoPhillipsoperated Alpine field dropped 4.2 percent, averaging 122,878 bpd in March compared to 128,210 bpd in February. Alpine production includes Fiord and Nanuq.

Production at BP's Milne Point field averaged 27,540 bpd in March, down 7.2 percent from a February average of 29,681 bpd. Milne Point production includes Schrader Bluff.

Production at BP-operated Prudhoe Bay averaged 343,060 bpd in March,



BP-operated Northstar field

down 2.68 percent from a February average of 352,522 bpd. Prudhoe production includes Midnight Sun, Aurora, Polaris, Borealis and Orion.

Greater Prudhoe Bay production, which includes Lisburne and some 33,000 bpd of Prudhoe Bay Flow Station 2 crude presently carried through the Endicott line, averaged 394,430 bpd in March, down 2.93 percent from a February average of 406,338 bpd.

BP-operated Endicott — including the 33,000 bpd of Prudhoe Bay oil — averaged 50,750 bpd in March, down 2.35 percent from a February average of 51,969 bpd. Endicott production includes Sag Delta, Eider and Badami.

The North Slope temperature at Pump Station No. 1 averaged minus 17.5 degrees Fahrenheit in March, compared to a five-year average March temperature of minus 9 degrees F. The February temperature averaged minus 10.2 degrees F.

Cook Inlet crude oil production averaged 15,773 bpd in March, up 1.56 percent from a February average of 15,530 bpd. ●

GOVERNMENT

Alberta admits it can't keep pace

Rapid growth in the Alberta oil sands is likely to outstrip government efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, said the province's Environment Minister Rob Renner.

The sheer volume of projects under construction or in the planning stages means there is no hope of Alberta achieving any absolute reduction in GHGs in the near future, he said. In fact, government estimates suggest emissions could be 64 percent above the Kyoto Protocol benchmarks by 2020, despite the province's plan to enforce a 12 percent cut per unit of production.

"Unless there are significant changes at the rate at which (projects) are developed, we could see an additional one-third in the industrial side in new (carbon dioxide) production," Renner said.

He said government, industry and ordinary citizens all have a role to play in reducing manmade emissions.

—GARY PARK

EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Chevron tests heavy oil prospects

Chevron Canada has wrapped up the first round of winter drilling at the northeastern Alberta site of its Ells River heavy oil project that it hopes will produce 100,000 barrels per day by 2015.

As part of getting a better fix on the reserves, 66 appraisal wells were drilled to depths of about 1,500 feet.

That will be followed by a technical evaluation of the data and more work on the production options, including a decision on whether to conduct a pilot project.

Ells River involves six leases covering 74,000 acres, with original oil in place estimated at 7.5 billion barrels. The leases were acquired at Alberta government land sales in 2005 and 2006 for C\$75 million.

Partners are Chevron Canada with 60 percent, with Shell Canada and Western Oil Sands each holding 20 percent. The same three companies own the Shell-operated Athabasca oil sands project.

—GARY PARK





GOVERNMENT

Less multiyear Arctic sea ice replenishing

By ALAN BAILEY

Petroleum News

ccording to a National Aeronautics and Space Administration report published April 3, a NASA study has found that in 2005 very little of the thick Arctic sea ice lost in summer was replenished during the winter.

"Replenishment of this thick, perennial sea ice each year is essential to the maintenance and stability of the Arctic summer ice cover," the report says.

Using satellite radar data NASA had previously discovered a 14 percent decline in perennial ice cover between 2004 and 2005 — the lack of replenishment suggests that this declining trend will continue, the report says. Some perennial ice, 10 feet or more thick, typically disperses during summer melting, but new, thinner ice forms during the following winter. Survival of some new ice through the next summer then replenishes the perennial ice cover.

"Recent studies indicate Arctic perennial ice is declining 7 to 10 percent each decade," said Ron Kwok of NASA's Jet The extent of Arctic multiyear ice from 2001 to 2006. In 2005 MY fraction

Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. "Our study gives the first reliable estimates of how perennial ice replenishment varies each year at the end of summer. The amount of first-year ice that survives

the summer directly influences how thick

very little multiyear ice was replenished.

the ice cover will be at the start of the next melt season."

Air movement variations

Kwok suggested that variations during

the 1990s in a large-scale air movement pattern known as the North Atlantic Circulation may have provided the trigger for the decline that is now seen in perennial ice — changing air circulation patterns appear to have caused a large increase in Arctic ice export.

Kwok said that unusual wind conditions in the Fram Strait on the northeast side of Greenland had also pushed ice out of the Arctic at an exceptionally high rate in 2005. And a study of Arctic temperature records back to 1958 found a warming trend that accelerated after the mid-1980s, a trend that suggests the likely continuing decline of perennial ice. Abnormally warm conditions in both the winters and the summers prior to the fall of 2005 have contributed to the recent loss of ice, Kwok said.

"We're seeing a decreasing trend in perennial ice coverage," Kwok said. "Our study suggests that, on average, the area of seasonal ice that survives the summer may no longer be large enough to sustain a stable perennial ice cover, especially in the face of accelerating climate warming and Arctic sea ice thinning."

NATURAL GAS

Deh Cho: No conservation, no pipeline

This time the last aboriginal holdout against the Mackenzie gas pipeline project has the backing of four environmental groups

By GARY PARK

For Petroleum News

he Deh Cho First Nation has issued another ultimatum to the Canadian government — either a sprawling area of the Northwest Territories is set aside as a conservation area or there will be no gas pipeline along the Mackenzie Valley.

And this time the aboriginal community has the backing of four environmental groups to set aside 60 percent of the land being claimed by the Deh Cho as part of its self-government negotiations.

Grand Chief Herb Norwegian told reporters in Calgary that unless Ottawa

agrees to the proposal the Deh Cho will block construction of the proposed pipeline.

He said the government has been "dragging their heels; they just haven't moved on Grand Chief Herb any issues. We need Norwegian told to move forward. reporters that unless We need some deci-

The Deh Cho, whose region cov-

ers 40 percent of the planned pipeline



Ottawa agrees to the proposal the Deh Cho will block construction of the proposed pipeline.

But Norwegian said it has been rejected by federal negotiators because it places too much emphasis on conservation. route and embraces 10 communities in

The land use plan was developed

over four years and approved by

the Deh Cho leadership last June.

the southwest region of the NWT, is the last aboriginal holdout against the proj-

The land use plan was developed over four years and approved by the Deh Cho leadership last June.

But Norwegian said it has been

rejected by federal negotiators because it places too much emphasis on conserva-

Conservation groups back move

Backing the Deh Cho are the World Wildlife Fund Canada, the Canadian Boreal Initiative, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and Ducks Unlimited.

Monte Hummel, president emeritus of the WWF, challenged Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister Jim Prentice to match his government's "green" rhetoric of late with action.

He said it is "rather breathtaking" that the government believes the proposal wants to protect "too much."

"Does Jim Prentice really believe that future generations are going to blame him or any of us for having protected too much of Canada?" Hummel said. "I don't think so."

Harvey Locke, a spokesman for the parks and wilderness society, said it "borders on the unbelievable to think that we would squander this opportunity to protect this world-class area" at a time of "rampant extinctions and high-speed climate change"

Norwegian said that if the federal government refuses to endorse the landuse plan and tries to push ahead with pipeline approval it will collide with a Deh Cho legal strategy.

He also warned his community is ready to take "direct action" where people would "defend themselves" and take steps to block development.

A spokeswoman for Prentice said the minister hopes to resume negotiations "in a matter of weeks."

She said the government has told the Deh Cho it is willing to work on a satisfactory solution to the land-use issue, but the place to resolve the dispute is at the negotiating table.

Captains of **Industry**

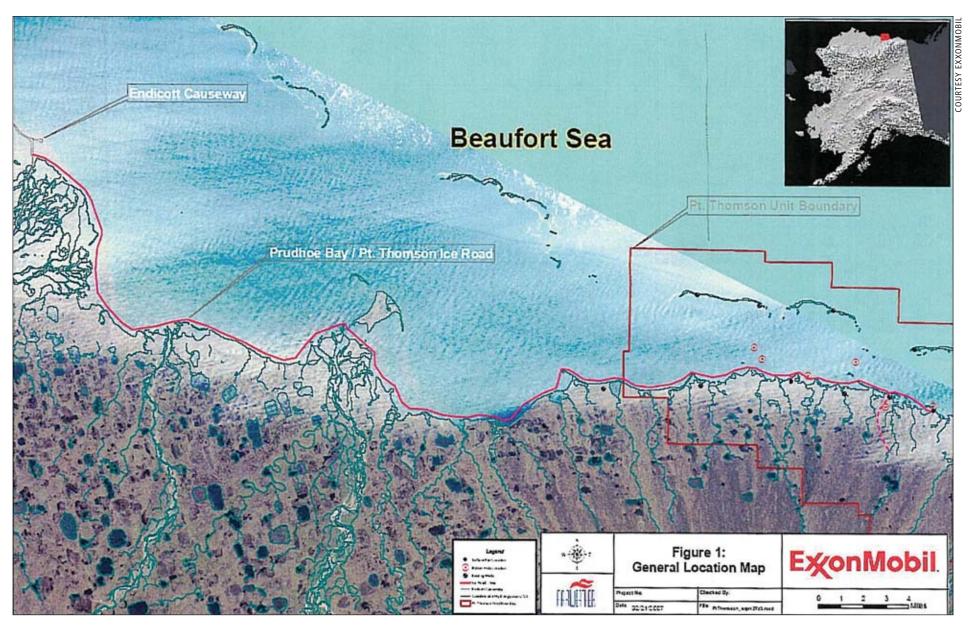
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PETROLEUM NEWS • WEEK OF APRIL 8, 2007



continued from page 1

EXXON

leases.

The seven wells Exxon proposes to drill—one per winter—between 2008-09 and 2015 appear to be the same seven wells the company agreed to drill by June 15, 2007, in its 22nd plan of development, and then later asked for the drilling deadline to be extended to June 15, 2009.

No oil well

What the March 23 proposal is clearly lacking is the remote oil exploration well Exxon had promised to drill by June 15, 2006, later asking for an extension to June 15, 2007.

In its decisions to terminate the Point Thomson unit and leases, DNR hoped to kick start development of the eastern North Slope field, even though Department of Law representatives said last year that they expect litigation could take two or three years.

The field's former owners, operator ExxonMobil Production, BP, Chevron and ConocoPhillips — along with a host of smaller owners — at one point were agreed on a gas cycling plan of development for Point Thomson, which would have meant the oil would have been produced first from the condensate and the gas re-injected. The recent brouhaha began in July 2005 when the owners said gas cycling was not economic.

Development drilling that was to begin by June 15, 2006, as previously agreed, was stretched to "three to three and one-half years before field startup," with field startup tied to a gas pipeline yet to be constructed.

Mark Myers, division director at the time, was concerned about the liquids in the high-pressure Point Thomson condensate reservoir, and shallower oil plays in the unit, a combination of valuable resources, since Point Thomson is thought to hold about 300 million barrels of oil and natural gas condensates, as well as 8 trillion to 9 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

"Point Thomson is a world-class asset and if it weren't already under lease you'd have every major oil company in the world lined up to acquire it," Myers told Petroleum News in August 2005. He said the state wanted to receive full value from Point Thomson, which would mean developing the liquids first, because producing the gas first could result in permanent loss of some of the oil and condensate.

"We'd like to see something similar to

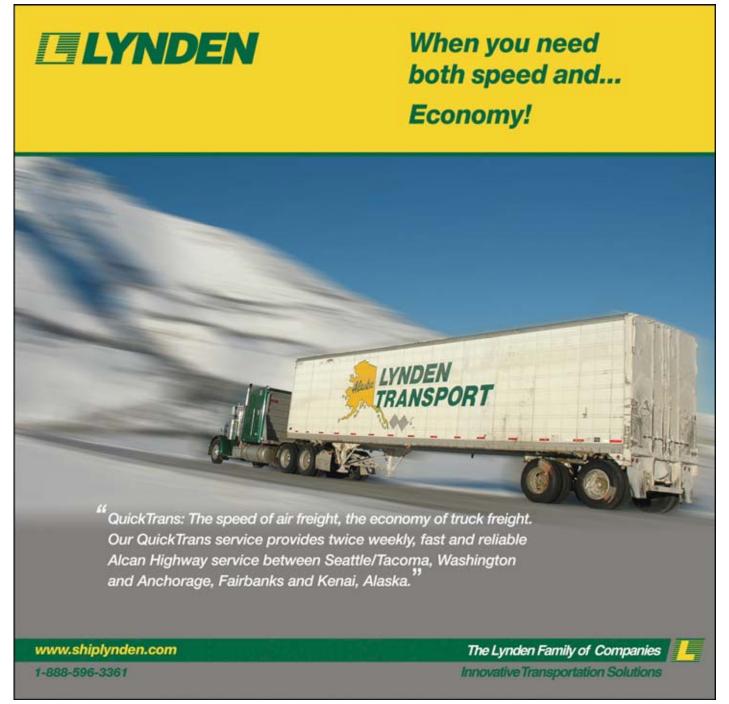
Prudhoe, if possible," he said. "Produce condensate first before going to a gas blowdown scenario."

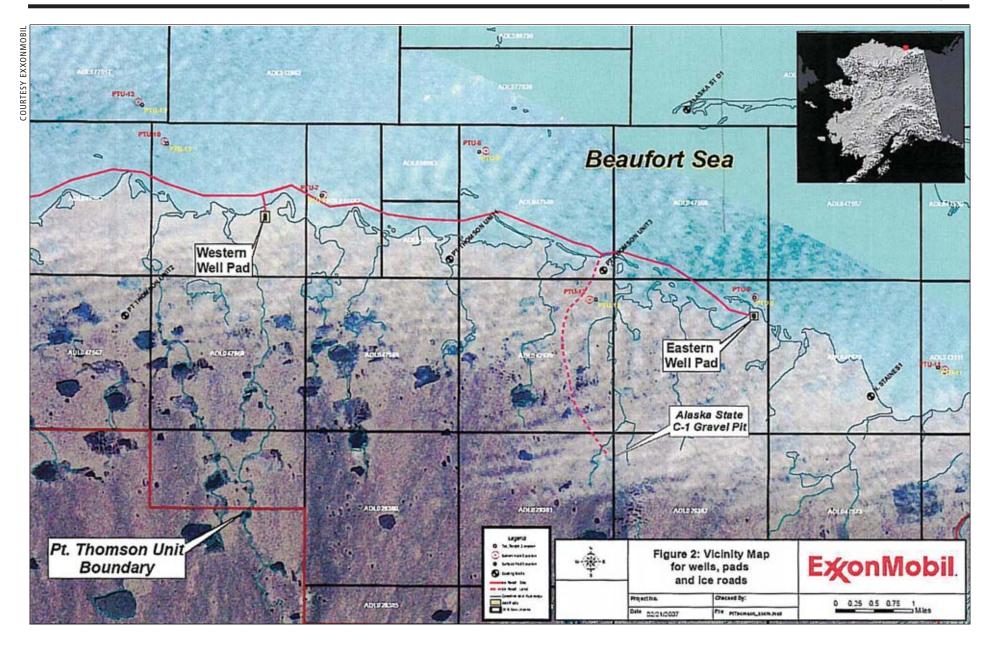
Unit terminated in 2006

The state signaled the end of its patience in the fall of 2005 when Myers found the Point Thomson unit in default for lack of an approved plan of development.

But a change in leadership at DNR that fall, and continuing negotiations over a gas pipeline fiscal contract between the administration of former Gov. Frank Murkowski and the major North Slope gas holders, BP, ConocoPhillips and Exxon, led to extensions of the appeal from Myers' decision by

see **EXXON** page 10





continued from page 9

EXXON

a new DNR commissioner, Mike Menge.

The inability of the administration to get legislative approval for the contract, and Murkowski's defeat in the primary, finally triggered Menge's Nov. 27 decision to terminate the unit.

Prior to filing a lawsuit, Exxon and

ConocoPhillips requested reconsideration of the unit termination. Acting DNR Commissioner Marty Rutherford (now deputy commissioner under Tom Irwin) denied their requests in December and affirmed Menge's decision "in all respects."

The former Point Thomson owners promptly filed a lawsuit and Exxon told the state it planned to file an administrative appeal on the division's termination of the 32 core leases in the unit.



So what is Exxon proposing to do in its March 23 filing?

Beginning in the winter drilling season of 2008-09, Exxon plans to drill the first of up to seven wells from two ice pads "on or adjacent to the coastal area of the eastern North Slope's Point Thomson unit."

The company is looking at approximately one well per winter season, expecting to be done drilling in 2015.

The two 600 foot by 600 foot ice pads — referred to as the eastern and western pads — might be "saved from year to year through the use of insulating and board techniques," Exxon said.

The company proposed to stake the pad and well locations in March 2007, which was eight days from ending by the time its paperwork was filed.

The timing of drilling operations "will be dependent upon the availability of materials and drilling equipment. Well heads, casing, and tubing are the longest lead material items and will require at least a year to receive. Sufficient time will also be required to specify, contract, properly equip and mobilize a drilling rig capable of drilling the high pressure, directional wells at Point Thomson," the company said.

Equipment, staging would take time

Because of these considerations Exxon said it couldn't start drilling next winter.

The company is also looking at the alternative of barging equipment, materials and supplies to existing Point Thomson gravel pad No. 3 during the summer and staging the items there.

Two other existing Point Thomson gravel pads, Nos. 1 and 2, might also serve as staging areas.

"Further alternatives under consideration are use of synthetic matting boards in lieu of or in conjunction with ice pads and constructing an ice pad during the winter of 2007-08 and insulating it so that it would be preserved over the following summer," the company said.

Drilling operations for each well are expected to take 70-80 days. Additional time may be required for coring and testing. Depending on coring and testing, a well might take two seasons to complete, Exxon said, noting that "year around drilling and well operations in the Point Thomson area have historically been done and are feasible."

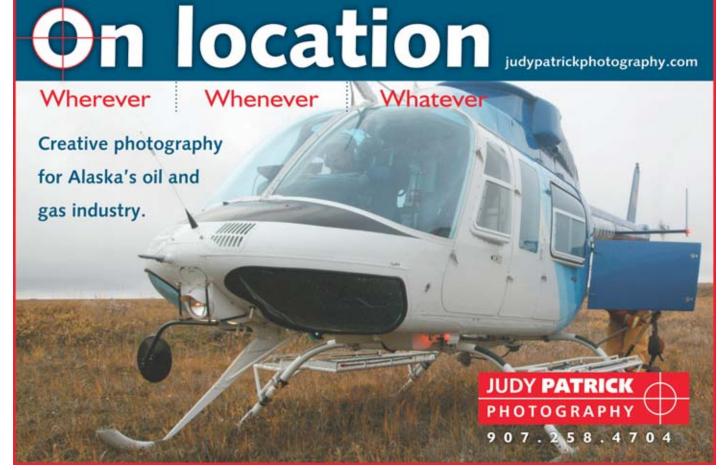
A sea-ice access road will be built from "the Prudhoe Bay area to the general Point Thomson area during each winter drilling season. This road, about 57 miles long, will follow the coastline eastward from the Endicott causeway to the vicinity of the Point Thomson Unit No. 3 drill site and the planned eastern pad."

The two ice pads might be converted to gravel drill sites should Exxon proceed with development.

All wells will be directionally drilled, the surface hole and bottom hole locations within Exxon operated leases.

According to Thompson the seven well locations are in two core unit leases. ●





PETROLEUM NEWS • WEEK OF APRIL 8, 2007

• GOVERNMENT

Both houses scrutinize PPT amendments

Alaska House Resources has bill assigned to a subcommittee and Senate Resources, just done with AGIA, will take bill up again soon

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

roposed amendments to the petroleum profits tax passed by the Alaska Legislature last year are jostling with the governor's Alaska Gas Inducement Act for committee time. A committee substitute for the House version, House Bill 128, passed out of Oil and Gas in early March and has been heard in House Resources and assigned to a subcommittee, as Resources clears its decks for AGIA.

On March 28 Resources Co-Chair Carl Gatto, R-Palmer, named Resources Co-Chair Craig Johnson, R-Anchorage, to chair the subcommittee, and assigned Bob Roses, R-Anchorage, and David Guttenberg, D-Fairbanks as members. Johnson said at the March 28 Resources meeting that he was uncomfortable deciding anything until the tax numbers are in and would like to have more information before making any decisions.

The companies' "true ups" — additional production tax liability for April 1 through Dec. 31, 2006 —were due April 2.

Guttenberg said April 4 that since the tax returns are confidential, the subcommittee will need to get a review of the returns.

Senate Bill 80, the companion legislation, was heard in Senate Resources in February, and has been on the backburner since as Resources worked on AGIA, which it passed out April 1.

Resources Chairman Charlie Huggins, R-Wasilla, said April 3 that Sen. Tom Wagoner, R-Kenai, the bill's sponsor, has made two changes to the bill.

The committee has heard the bill twice, Huggins said, and will take it up again after the Legislature returns from its Easter break.

Revenue will review model

The fate of the bills has drawn questions since April 2, when true-up payments were due, since the amounts received were less than what the Department of Revenue had projected.

Revenue received some \$813 in trueups, the additional tax liability due to the PPT for the period between April 1, 2006, when PPT took effect, and the end of 2006. Since taxpayers have been required to calculate their tax liability under PPT since Jan. 1, there will be no further trueup payments, the department said in an April 3 statement.

Revenue said it had anticipated total true-up payments of around \$950 million, but said its estimating job for the true-up payments "required a complex model with multiple moving parts" which forecast not only the probable PPT tax, "including new credits and classes of cost reductions," but also what payments would have been under the previous tax system on the gross, based on the ELF or economic limit factor.

"On top of this challenge," the department said, "came the unique complexities of 2006, with the backdrop of unusual production losses and higher costs" at Prudhoe Bay.

The department said it is "reviewing

the tax returns submitted with the payments and will have a better understanding of why the actual payments were lower than anticipated once these have been fully analyzed."

The department also said that based on the information it received in the PPT tax returns, "we will be looking closely at our models to continually improve our revenue forecasting ability."

But "because of the nature of a net profits tax, decision makers can anticipate greater volatility in revenue forecasts under the PPT" as compared to the ELF, perhaps as much as a 5 percent to 10 percent error factor, the department said.

The department noted that production tax amounts are subject to audit for three years and refund claims for three years after a return is filed. It also said that the amount paid by individual taxpayers is confidential by statute.

Maintenance the issue

PPT, a tax on the net, replaces a tax on the gross. What companies would be allowed to write off before calculating their taxes has been a concern to legislators, especially after corrosion problems surfaced at Prudhoe Bay last year.

The PPT as passed prohibits deductions for 18 categories of items, including spills and events due to gross negligence.

After the August spill at Prudhoe Bay the Legislature added a provision to the PPT that disallowed 30 cents per barrel of crude oil from deductions to cover maintenance.

The bills under consideration would add specific disallowances from deductions taken before the tax is calculated for costs due to lack of maintenance or improper maintenance.

Pedro van Meurs came up with the 30-cent solution last year and there has been discussion around a memo he wrote which described the 30 cents as a way to get around the state having to examine specific maintenance costs.

In addition to arguing that the 30 cents already covers maintenance issues, the companies have told legislators that because it takes time for the state to audit all the returns, it may be difficult to prove whether specific items were replaced due to improper maintenance or lack of maintenance

While the issue of going from a gross to a net tax was hotly debated in the Legislature last year, both Wagoner, and Kurt Olson, R-Kenai, the sponsor of the house bill, have said that this year's legislation is not an effort to return to a tax on the gross. •

GOVERNMENT

Alaska operators among best at MMS

Three out of the four companies who won stewardship awards this year from the U.S. Department of Interior's Minerals Management Service do business in Alaska.

ConocoPhillips, Shell Exploration and Production Co. and XTO Energy Inc. earned the Mineral Revenues Stewardship Award along with coal producer Foundation Wyoming Land Co., for timely payment of royalties and accurate production reporting, the MMS announced April 3.

The award, which is highly regarded in the oil and gas industry, also honors companies that demonstrated noteworthy cooperation with the Minerals Revenue Management Program in resolving issues related to reporting and compliance.

Established in 1987 to promote accurate reporting, the award distinguishes the best of more than 2,500 companies that submit monthly reports of mineral sales and production, and pay royalties for minerals produced from federal and Native American leases.

In fiscal 2006, ConocoPhillips submitted more than 1.5 million transactions reflecting royalty totaling about \$540 million and production data, while Shell E&P submitted nearly 40,000 and XTO Energy more than 137,000 comparable transactions worth \$175 million and \$62.7 million, respectively.

ConocoPhillips boasted a royalty reporting accuracy rate of 99.2 percent, and a production reporting accuracy rate of 98.5 percent; compared to 96 percent and 96.4 percent, respectively, for Shell E&P and 99.8 percent and 96.6 percent, respectively, for XTO Energy.

—ROSE RAGSDALE



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Groups lobby against Bristol Bay leasing

MMS final decision expected around May 1 on whether to include North Aleutian basin in 2007-12 five-year offshore leasing plan

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ishermen and environmentalists teamed up recently for a lobbying trip to Washington, D.C., in hopes of discouraging support for offshore oil and gas leasing proposals in Bristol Bay, one of the world's most prolific salmon fisheries.

Two months ago, the Bush administration removed a presidential ban on oil and gas drilling in Bristol Bay, an area under Congressional protection since 1990 following the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound the year before. The Congressional ban was lifted in 2003.

"The fishery is tied to the concept of the wild Alaska salmon in its pure environment," said Terry Hoefferle of the Alaska Marine Conservation Council. "Why would you bring an industry like oil into the middle of that? It's like painting a mustache on the Mona Lisa."

The U.S. Mineral Management Service has included the North Aleutian Basin, through which the Bristol Bay salmon migrate, in its proposed national plan for offshore oil and gas leasing from 2007 to 2012. A final decision is expected around May 1, according to Gary Strasburg, an agency spokesman.

Native corporation, borough favor leasing

Oil companies and local groups, who believe drilling could bring economic stability, have been encouraging the federal government to open Bristol Bay to exploration.

"It's about economic diversity," said Jason Metrokin, spokesman for the Bristol Bay Native Corp., the regional Native corporation for the area. He said the group supports fishing, but also believes there should be some way to find out how much oil and gas might be at stake.

The Aleutians East Borough also supports leasing.

Within Alaska's congressional delegation, Sen. Ted Stevens has taken the strongest stance on the issue. He believes the push to close off the region from oil and gas interests is being backed by "extreme national environmental groups." Rep. Don Young opposes the moratorium but argues for a public process free of interference from out-of-state interests.

"The fishermen have made a good argument for additional input from them into the process," he said.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski has opted to defer to local decision-makers.

"In most cases we're not going to be an advocate for development in an area where it's not certain there's a consensus in what people want to do," said her spokesman, Kevin Sweeney. "In Bristol Bay, it really appears that it's sort of a 50-50 in terms of those who are pro and against."

The administration of Gov. Sarah Palin, whose family fishes the bay, has responded in a similar fashion.

Palin "has not objected to the lease sale process provided that there's strong local support, adequate environmental safeguards, and every effort is made to minimize conflicts between commercial fishing and a possible lease sale," said John Katz, her Washington spokesman.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Palm oil backfires as renewable fuel

Virgin Asian rain forests have been destroyed to develop plantations; more greenhouse gases from farming than saved by burning

By ARTHUR MAX

Associated Press Writer

nly a few years ago, oil from palm trees was viewed as an ideal biofuel: a cheap, renewable alternative to petroleum that would fight global warming. Energy companies began converting generators and production soared.

Now, it's increasingly seen as an example of how well-meaning efforts to limit climate-changing carbon emissions may backfire.

Marcel Silvius, a climate expert at Wetlands International in the Netherlands, led a team that compared the benefits of palm oil to the ecological harm from destroying virgin Asian rain forests to develop lucrative new plantations.

His conclusion: "As a biofuel, it's a failure."

Scientists and policymakers from more than 100 countries are meeting in Brussels, Belgium, starting April 2 to report on the impact of global warming, including storms, flooding and the extinction of plants and animals.

Then in May, the group intends to issue recommendations on how best to fight it, through new technologies and possible use of alternatives. The lessons of palm oil are sure to figure into their discussion.

Long a primary ingredient in food and cosmetics, palm oil derivatives caught on about five years ago as a source of renewable energy, spurred by subsidies in many European Union countries. Imports have risen 65 percent since 2002.

Palm oil is attractive because it is relatively abundant, cheap at about \$550 per ton, and requires few or no modifications to existing power stations.

Unlike carbon-rich fossil fuels, palm oil is considered carbon-neutral, meaning the carbon emitted from burning it is the same as what is absorbed during growth.

Farming released more greenhouse gases

But the result of intensified farming has been to unleash far more greenhouse gases than will be saved at power stations.

The report issued late last year by Wetlands International, Delft Hydraulics and the Alterra Research Center of Wageningen University in Holland studied the carbon released from peat swamps in Indonesia and Malaysia that had been drained and burned to plant palm oil trees. About 85 percent of the world's palm oil comes from the two countries, and about one-quarter of Indonesia's plantations are on drained peat bogs, the report said.

The four-year study found that 600

million tons of carbon dioxide seep into the air each year from the drained swamps. Another 1.4 billion tons go up in smoke from fires lit to clear rain forest for plantations — smoke that often shrouds Singapore and Malaysia in an impenetrable haze for weeks at a time.

Together, those 2 billion tons of CO2 account for 8 percent of the world's fossil fuel emissions, the report said.

Friends of the Earth, another environmental group, called the report "astonishing," and said it shows that harvesting palm oil for fuel is counterproductive. "It undermines the whole project," said a climate specialist for the group, Anne van Schaik.

The study was not independently verified by the U.N. Climate Change Secretariat in Bonn, Germany, or by the World Resources Institute in Washington, D.C., the two leading monitoring groups. But experts said the research appeared credible. It is due to be published for peer review later this year.

Deforestation No. 2 cause of greenhouse gas emissions

Deforestation is the No. 2 cause of greenhouse gas emissions after the burning of fossil fuels, said Jeffrey Dukes, a biologist at the University of Massachusetts who was not part of the research. He said clearing peat swamps for plantations is "a double whammy."

It not only releases carbon trapped over many millennia, but destroys the most efficient ecosystem on the planet for sucking carbon from the atmosphere, Dukes said. Expanding production of palm oil is "a terrible decision. Whether or not it's consciously made, it's society going in reverse," he said.

Major power companies are divided on whether to continue or pursue palm oil generation.

Leon Flexman, of RWE npower, Britain's largest electricity supplier, said his company decided against palm oil after a year of study because it could not verify its supplies would be free of the taint of destroyed rain forest or peat bogs, he said.

The Dutch power company Essent announced in December it had stopped burning until it can trace and verify the sources.

Biox, a Dutch startup, said it plans careful scrutiny of palm oil sources but will proceed with construction of three 50 megawatt power stations that burn palm oil byproducts exclusively. That's enough electricity to light all the homes in Amsterdam.

"From the start, we knew we can't stay in business if we can't prove that production is sustainable," said Biox executive Arjen Brinkmann. "Until this report came out, peat lands was not an issue because we hadn't heard of it. Nobody had heard," he said, adding that it will now be a factor in the company's sustainability criteria.

So far, the reservations about palm oil do not seem to have affected the market. Production rose 6.6 percent last year and will increase another 5.5 percent this year to 37 million tons, according to Fortis Bank. Prices have risen 35 percent in the last year and are still rising, it said.

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KYOTO

governments.

In the process the opposition parties have pushed Canada to the brink of a federal election in late spring, with the environment as the dominant issue.

Oppositions' bill imposes timelines

The new act, Bill C-30, imposes:

- Kyoto targets to reduce GHGs by 6 percent from 1990 levels by 2012;
- Establishing or adhering to world-leading pollution standards;
- · Hard targets for industry to lower GHGs rather than the so-called intensitylevel limits that are tied to units of production; and
- A C\$20 per-metric-ton fine for carbon emissions above the targets, rising to C\$30 by 2012.

The Liberals, the former government and largest opposition party, are proposing absolute cuts in GHGs of 20 percent by 2020, 35 percent by 2035 and 60-80 percent by 2050.

"What we're really doing here is rewriting the law entirely," said Liberal environment spokesman David McGuinty, referring to the Harper government's Clean Air Act unveiled last fall.

"It is now up to the prime minister to decide whether he is going to abide by ... the will of parliament. What we have done is put Humpty Dumpty back together again in a way that perhaps the prime minister might not like."

Original bill made no mention of Kyoto

The original act avoided setting any cuts in GHGs until 2020, although some limits on large producers were to be phased in, starting in 2010 as a buildup to across-theboard reductions of 60 percent to 70 percent

But that bill made no mention of Kyoto requirements the government believes are unattainable and would be destructive to the national economy.

Bill C-30 results from the government's decision to send the initial bill to a special committee to deal with 100 amendments an opportunity the pro-Kyoto opposition parties seized to embark on a wholesale overhaul of the legislation.

Whether the new act will be sent to the House of Commons for a vote is a moot

Environment Minister John Baird said the government would "take some time to look at the entirety of the changes. I can tell you I'm not happy."

He accused the opposition of weakening a bill that was drafted to give the government power to reduce air pollution and GHGs which Harper said would "replace rhetoric with results, a plan that is going to move from short-term headlines to longterm progress."

"This is clearly more about politics than it is about serving the environment," Baird

He said the opposition removed provisions to create national air quality standards, to require annual reports on air quality and to boost research and monitoring of air quality.

Baird said he would not say whether the government would table Bill C-30 on April 16 after a two-week Easter break, but "at some point" he promised Canadians would have a chance to pass judgment on the actions Harper has taken on clean air and climate change.

Conservatives hope to govern until 2009

The Conservatives are hoping to govern

Coalition taking Imperial to court

Emboldened by growing pressure on the oil sands sector, a coalition of environmental groups has launched legal action to block approval of a C\$7 billion project by Imperial Oil.

Led by the Sierra Club of Canada, the groups are taking their case to the Federal Court of Canada, arguing a joint federal-Alberta regulatory panel "failed

to do its job" when it gave a green light earlier this year to the Kearl open-pit mining operation.

Imperial, which is 70 percent owned by Exxon Mobil Corp., plans an initial phase of 100,000 barrels per day and a possible 300,000 bpd by

The company is currently examining 17 environmental and technical conditions attached to the regulatory approval, while weighing costs and

Led by the Sierra Club of Canada,

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regulatory panel "failed to do its

job" when it gave a green light

earlier this year to the Kearl

open-pit mining operation.

timelines before making a final corporate decision within a year. "We think there is a very major problem with the environmental assessment process," said Sierra Club Executive Director Stephen Hazell.

For the panel to conclude that a strip mine the size of 20,000 football fields, with toxic sludge-filled tailings ponds "visible from space" does not constitute an environmental threat "makes a mockery" of the process.

A spokesman for the Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development noted that even the review panel said it was "deeply concerned" about the failure of governments to take measures to protect the environment.

"The joint panel has rubber-stamped another oil sands mega-project in the absence of clear answers about how to restore wetlands, rehabilitate toxic tailings ponds, protect migratory bird populations or address escalating greenhouse gas pollution," he said.

The coalition said the regulatory approval was based on "phantom" mitigation measures that are undeveloped and unproven.

The Kearl case shapes up as a significant test of a building showdown between the oil sands sector and environmentalists, who have been pressing for more extensive reviews.

—GARY PARK

until 2009, but because Bill C-30 involves spending new money and creating new taxes it would trigger an early election if adopted by the House of Commons over the objections of the Conservatives. Observers are speculating an election is possible on May 28 or June 4.

Defeat for the Conservatives could spell deep trouble for the entire oil and gas sector, with the oil sands fingered as Canada's largest environmental culprit.

"We're not looking for an election," Baird said. "If the Liberals want one that will be their call."

For now, he intends to press ahead with the government's agenda, including the release of emissions targets for the largest industrial contributors to GHGs, notably the oil sands operations and power plants, with the changes expected to take effect in 2010.

That announcement was originally promised for sometime in late March, but is now seen as possible government ammunition for a federal election campaign.

Regulations a worry to petroleum industry

Those regulations are a source of worry to the petroleum industry, which is faced with a double jeopardy as the federal and provincial governments push ahead with measures to combat GHGs and regain favor

Alberta has announced its own plans to legislate a 12 percent cut in GHGs per unit of production, starting July 1 and affecting about 100 industrial operations.

In British Columbia, Premier Gordon Campbell said his government will impose regulations to reduce GHGs by at least 33 percent below current levels by 2020.

In Saskatchewan, the government plans to unveil its plans in April, but has not indicated how stringent they will be.

What isn't clear to industries is whether provincial and federal actions will be blended or whether they will be cumulative, or

Greenberg said that what is important to investors, who view the oil sands as being in their early development stages, is certainty around the regulatory, fiscal and environment regimes if the flow of money into oil sands projects is to continue.

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what monitoring and reporting procedures will be enforced.

No one is more concerned than oil sands operators and investors.

Tom Greenberg, investment banking director with Credit Suisse Securities (Canada) told a late March conference that "people are very concerned about the direction that regulatory bodies are going to take with regard to GHGs, to royalty review (by the Alberta government)" and to the phasing out of federal government's accelerated capital cost allowance.

He said one of the key issues in the oil sands sector is "leverage to commodity prices" which has led to a significant run up in the equity valuations of oil sands compa-

But some "warning bells have begun to ring on the environment front, on the regulatory front, on the cost front and on the commodity front."

Greenberg said that what is important to investors, who view the oil sands as being in their early development stages, is certainty around the regulatory, fiscal and environmental regimes if the flow of money into oil sands projects is to continue.

It is also crucial for operators to communicate effectively with the market because investment decisions "can either allow a project to forge ahead or be killed in its infancy," given that investors have many other investment options.

Greenberg said the investment community is now taking a much closer look at how projects will be financed, how much they will cost, where the product will be sold and where construction labor will be obtained.

The oil sands companies have already seen their stock market values come under pressure in recent weeks.



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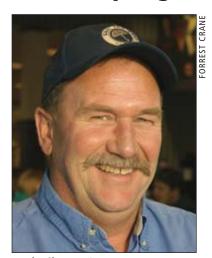
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Paul Wilcox has lived in Alaska since 1978 and has about 27 years in the equipment rental and trucking industries. His first love is trucking, but his job in Soldotna involves other challenging responsibilities, so every day is interesting. Paul is married with two children. He's a Pop Warner football coach, and loves family camping trips or just heading for the cabin hunting with his son. Camping without rain, bugs or mud is the Wilcox idea of heaven.



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• FINANCE & ECONOMY

Japan's Itochu gains foothold in Gulf of Mexico

Business conglomerate scoops up Range Resources interests for \$155M; Range had already sold onshore properties to Itochu

By RAY TYSON

For Petroleum News

apanese business conglomerate Itochu Corp., true to a worldwide expansion strategy that includes carving a niche for itself in the lucrative U.S. natural gas market, has agreed to acquire E&P independent Range Resources' property interests in the Gulf of Mexico for \$155 million.

The latest deal was announced just weeks after Range agreed to sell \$82 million worth of onshore Texas properties to Itochu and four months after Itochu actually entered the U.S. gas market.

Japan's fourth largest trading company, Itochu has had a wide-ranging trade in petroleum products in the United States, but never embraced the U.S. gas market as a player until mid-2006 when it partnered up with a gas sales firm headquartered in Kansas to establish a joint venture company named Kansas Energy LLC.

Itochu ended up taking control of more than 80 percent of Kansas Energy through two of its U.S. subsidiaries, Itochu International Inc. (45 percent) and ITC Natgas Holding Co. (35 percent). U.S.-based Bullseye Energy LLC owns the remaining 20 percent.

While Kansas Energy's business centers around the U.S. Midwest, Itochu plans to expand its sales territory to include the East Coast, "which constitutes an immense demand," and eventually the West Coast, Itochu said in a letter to investors.

In late February and preceding the recent sale of Range offshore properties to Itochu, Range completed the sale of onshore Austin Chalk properties in Central Texas to Itochu for \$82 million. Estimated reserves were not disclosed.

Further expansions possible

"Further in the future, while keeping sales of natural gas

at the core of our business, we have in mind an extension to areas such as investment in companies supplying natural gas to ordinary homes, participation in projects for development of gas wells in the United States, and supply of natural gas to independent power producers," Itochu said.

Japan's Nikkei business daily reported that Itochu's acquisition of Range property in the U.S. Gulf was part of the company's plan to spend about 100 billion yen (US\$849.3 million) to expand its U.S. natural gas business over the next three years. Itochu plans to spend about 25 billion yen on gas development in the U.S. in 2007 alone, Nikkei said.

The U.S. Gulf properties being acquired by Itochu include Range's interests in 37 production platforms in water depths ranging from 11 to 240 feet. None of the properties are operated by Range. At year-end 2006, Range estimated the properties contained proved reserves approximating 40 billion cubic feet of gas equivalent, representing just 2 percent of Range's total proved reserves.

As a result of the U.S. Gulf sale, Range said it would record a pre-tax gain of about \$100 million in the first quarter of 2007. This sale coupled with the February sale of Austin Chalk properties generated about \$237 million of aggregate proceeds for Range.

"In both cases, the properties were not integral to our future growth, so we elected to monetize them," John Pinkerton, Range's president and chief executive officer, said in a prepared statement. "Most important, the sales allow us to accelerate the development of other properties where we are confident that we can aggressively grow production and reserves in the future."

Itochu dates back to mid-1800s

Itochu, whose history dates back to the mid-1800s, oversees a huge business empire consisting of seven divi-

sion companies and more than 1,090 subsidiaries and associated companies worldwide and globally integrated. Itochu's operations range from the distribution of raw materials to the provision of finished products, including textiles; automobiles and industrial machinery; aerospace, electronics and multimedia; energy, metals and minerals; chemicals, forest products and general merchandise; food, finance, realty; and insurance and logistics services.

On the energy side, Itochu is involved in crude oil and gas exploration and development projects in such key regions as Azerbaijan, Algeria, U.K. North Sea, Indonesia and Australia. The company is also involved in natural gas development, including LNG projects in Qatar and Oman. Closer to Japan, Itochu is the largest private stakeholder in Russia's Sakhalin-I oil and gas development project.

Last year Itochu adopted a "shift to aggressive business" strategy as part of its Frontier-2006 initiative covering two fiscal years ending in March 2006 and ending in March 2007.

Eizo Kobayashi, Itochu's president and chief executive officer, told investors that Frontier-2006 would allow the company "to gain a foothold for becoming a highly profitable entity achieving over 100 billion yen in consolidated net income in a steady and sustainable manner."

Itochu is the second Japanese business conglomerate to gain a foothold in the U.S. Gulf. Through its Marubeni Offshore subsidiary, Marubeni acquired most of Pioneer Natural Resources' deepwater assets, including several significant discoveries near the BP-operated Thunder Horse field, the largest oil discovery in the Gulf of Mexico. Interestingly, Itochu and Marubeni are partners in a steel products company called Marubeni-Itochu Steel Co., which operates through more than 100 domestic and overseas subsidiaries and affiliates. ●

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BUFFETT

MidAmerican said it believes the producers will come to an open season if the project is economic.

But, once-burned twice-shy, the company seemed more concerned about the state than about the producers.

MidAmerican, and its wholly owned subsidiary Kern River, pursued the project in 2003.

"We felt like, frankly, we were a stalking horse to create leverage for the last administration," Kern River Gas Transmission President Kirk Morgan told Senate Resources. "And we're not coming up here to go through another beauty contest."

That is one reason the proposal of state matching funds in the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act is important, Morgan said. "The alignment that the \$500 million (from the state) creates is extremely important," he said, and not just to MidAmerican: "It's an important signal to the marketplace; it gives the project much more credibility."

MidAmerican did not ask the state for a

\$500 million commitment, he said. The state is offering that commitment in exchange for achieving several of its goals: getting the project started, controlling the timeframe and commercial issues.

MidAmerican likes AGIA

Morgan said MidAmerican likes AGIA and thinks moving North Slope gas to market "is undeniably necessary and the time is now to push it forward."

The key is to "determine the appropriate balance of risks and rewards for all stakeholders," he said.

There is an alternative: "The North Slope producers have for years articulated

their must haves before advancing the project," including: tax and royalty certainty on both oil and gas; regulatory certainty in the United States and Canada; cost reductions through technology; and federal enabling legislation.

"This approach is effectively saying that the project will get started if and when all the preconditions have been met and all concessions have been extracted," Morgan said.

MidAmerican believes "the project can be advanced concurrent with resolutions of issues that today remain outstanding," he said. Stakeholder alignment is critical, he said and MidAmerican's "approach does not exclude interested parties or discount new ideas which may be offered to help manage project risks." The North Slope producers will play a critical role as shippers and sellers of gas to other shippers and "MidAmerican, as an independent pipeline, is impartial and in a unique position to help facilitate solutions when stakeholder interests diverge."

The company supports the open and transparent process in AGIA "and while we can understand debate over what constitutes the best pipeline development proposal, it's harder to understand why parties would object to a process that calls for an open and

see **BUFFETT** page 16

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BUFFETT

transparent comparison of proposals."

Investment surety an issue

Asked by Rep. Nancy Dahlstrom, R-Anchorage, in House Oil and Gas, and by Sen. Lesil McGuire, R-Anchorage, in Senate Resources, about a requirement in the bill that the state's licensee continue beyond a failed initial open season — one that doesn't draw enough gas commitments to allow the project to go forward — to acquire a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission certificate, MidAmerican had a different view than TransCanada, which said it would not want to advance to a FERC certificate after a failed open season.

Morgan said it would depend on why the open season failed.

"We expect to have completed the full top-to-bottom cost estimate and be able to offer a definitive tariff so that potential shippers have the knowledge of what they're committing to."

If the failure was because the project wasn't economic, there are provisions in AGIA dealing with an uneconomic project, he said, "and that might be a legitimate reason to walk away."

But what if an open season fails "and all of the cost studies and market studies that we've done show the project to be economic?"

First of all, Morgan asked, "why would it fail? Does somebody not want to make money here?"

The producers have two choices, selling gas at the wellhead or shipping gas; he said he has never heard the producers say they would warehouse the gas.

"If it is clear to us that the project is economic and the open season fails because people wouldn't commit their gas because maybe they want to build the pipeline rather than us, we would continue to FERC certification."

The provision in AGIA allowing for up to five years for sanction after FERC certification for a project that doesn't have gas is important, Morgan said. "We don't want to make it easy to boycott the project," and set up a situation where the licensee goes away and it's the producers' project again.

Morgan said "if the project is demonstrated to be economic" he does not think the producers would withhold their gas. He said he thinks the scrutiny such a move would draw from the U.S. Congress, the Alaska Legislature and the public would be considerable, because the producers would be "withholding gas from the United States market when people are

continued from page 1

THREAT

The Lower 48 needs Alaska North Slope natural gas, Morgan said in presentations to House Oil and Gas and Senate Resources March 29.

"Projects of this scale can easily be delayed — that's been the history of this project," he said.

Getting the gas to market will require "proper planning, organization and execution" and if those don't occur, and the project doesn't move forward, the project and development of the resource will be relegated to "the next energy crisis where goals are frequently compromised in the interest of expediency."

Young said April 3 in a Juneau press conference that he's recently heard the suggestion in Congress that the federal government take over North Slope gas to get it to Lower 48 markets.

"The gas line is something that must be done," he said, and the Alaska Legislature and the governor have "to work together to reach a solution to develop that gas line."

"If the producers aren't interested in it then we have to find a way to make them interested."

Young said that isn't meant as a threat. But, he said, in the course of work on an alternate energy bill, "for the first time I've heard people, because of the need, say what about Alaskan gas? Why aren't we doing something?"

"And then I heard the words which I don't like to hear but they did come out: 'Maybe we ought to nationalize it.' That does not make me happy," Young said. "But a Congress can do this. A Congress can in fact take a resource under the national emergency clause and make it part of the nation for the good of the security of the nation.

"I don't think it would be good for the state," Young said. "But if somebody else is thinking that way, and there's no action taken — and I say this to the producers as well as the state legislators — there is a potential of something very harmful occurring in the state such as the Alaska National Lands Act, where they took 27 million acres of our land away from us that we'd selected."

"It can be done," he said, "so there's a real challenge to us and I think Alaskans have to wake up to that."

—KRISTEN NELSON

paying \$600 in the winter for a heating bill."

Samuels: the producers are still sitting on the gas

House Majority Leader Ralph Samuels, R-Anchorage, asked Morgan in House Oil and Gas how a partnership with MidAmerican would improve the state's position.

"The frustration we all have is that since those three companies have the gas and we feel we are leveraged by those three companies — at the end of the day, all ... roads lead to those three companies," he said.

If the state partners with MidAmerican and there is a failed open season, Samuels said the reason the producers would give would be "the same reason that we always hear — that the taxes are just too high. Now I'm getting leveraged by you and them."

The leverage doesn't go away because the state is dealing with MidAmerican instead of Exxon, he said, predicting that if there were a failed open season MidAmerican would be saying "I tried to get the gas and I couldn't get it." And it would be MidAmerican that would be saying: "If you just give them this they'll show up at this next open season."

The leverage doesn't go away, Samuels said, the only difference is that it's

"Warren Buffet and Rex Tillerson leveraging me. ... It's not getting better," he said, referring to ExxonMobil's CEO and the fact that MidAmerican is a subsidiary of Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway.

Alignment is required

"We hope to make it better," Morgan told Samuels, and said he considers the issue to be about tax stability not the level of taxes.

"Whatever the tax level is, that will be factored into the economic analysis of the project and it either will be commercial or it won't be commercial," he said, adding that he doesn't think the information is available today so that legislators could know "whether you need to reduce taxes or whether this project might be wildly economic and you don't need to do anything."

What's important is that things don't change once the investment decision is made.

Morgan said just as he needs to know the return on a pipeline — and would have difficulties if FERC could come back and change the rate of return on a pipeline once it is built — the producers need to know what tax rate the state will charge.

The issue is that "investor expectations are set when we make this investment" and "changing the game midway through — baiting and switching — giving them

low taxes for 10 years and then an unknown after that" is a problem in a project that is already risky because of unknowns around future gas price and ultimate costs of the project, he said.

As an alternative to a 10-year fixed rate, which Morgan said wasn't sufficient for a line with a 35-year expected life, he suggested the state consider fixing the rate for the volume of gas committed in the initial open season. Although even if all of the known 35 trillion cubic feet were committed, it's not enough, he said.

Low tariffs needed to attract additional gas

That lack of gas is one reason the pipeline has to keep the tariffs low.

"There's not enough gas: 35 tcf isn't enough," Morgan said.

"We have to encourage new exploration to fill up this pipe so we can extend the life of the project and get a better rate."

He said MidAmerican wants the resource committed. "We're going to design a tariff that we think will encourage new exploration and will encourage a long-term commitment of the resource by the North Slope producers."

Sen. Bert Stedman, R-Sitka, and Resources Chairman Charlie Huggins, R-Wasilla, both asked Morgan how important the \$500 million was, and if MidAmerican would walk away if the state matching funds were taken out of AGIA.

Morgan said MidAmerican did not ask for the \$500 million but "the \$500 million does a lot of things. It gets you a project structure on major elements that will lower the tariff no matter who's selected. It gets you an expedited schedule. It's kind of a two-for in that ... it does attract pipeline investors like our company to the table to pursue a very risky project but it also flows right through to the resource owner in terms of a lower tariff."

Huggins asked if any of the things in AGIA are "must haves" for MidAmerican.

"Investment protection is a 'must have' for us," Morgan said. If MidAmerican partners with the state and "the state decides there's an easier road, I'm going to just change horses here and support another project, there is a provision for treble damages in there."

"That is investment protection, long-term, to us."

So is the five years to get sanction for a project that has a FERC certificate but no gas, because that five years provides that "there's not an easy wait-'em-out period."

Alignment is also critical and "I think the \$500 million commitment really helps align the parties to make this happen and will make it happen in the most expeditious manner possible." ●



Providing coverage of the oilfield service and supply industry in Alaska and northern Canada

DIRECTORY





1st Quarter 2007

Service companies involved in Alaska and northern Canada's oil and gas industry

A

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Alaska Coverall

Alaska Dreams

Alaska Frontier Constructors

Alaska Interstate Construction

Alaska Marine Lines

Alaska Railroad Corp.

Alaska Rubber & Supply

Alaska Steel Co.

Alaska Telecom

Alaska Tent & Tarp

Alaska Textiles

Alaska West Express

Alliance, The

American Marine

Arctic Controls

Arctic Foundations

Arctic Slope Telephone Assoc. Co-op.

Arctic Structures

Arctic Wire Rope & Supply

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B-F

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Brooks Range Supply

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Chiulista Camp Services

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Cruz Construction

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Doyon LTD

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Engineered Fire and Safety

ENSR Alaska

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ESS Support Services Worldwide

Evergreen Helicopters of Alaska

Equipment Source Inc.

F. Robert Bell and Associates

Fairweather Companies, The

Flint Hills Resources

Flowline Alaska

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Frontier Flying Service

G-M

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Great Northern Engineering

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GPS Environmental

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H.C. Price

Hilton Anchorage

Holaday-Parks

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Industrial Project Services

Inspirations

Jackovich Industrial & Construction Supply

Judy Patrick Photography

Kenai Aviation

Kenworth Alaska

King Street Storage

Kuukpik Arctic Catering

Kuukpik/Veritas

Kuukpik - LCMF

Last Frontier Air Ventures

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Lynden Air Freight

Lynden Inc.

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MWH

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NANA/Colt Engineering

Natco Canada

Nature Conservancy, The

NEI Fluid Technology

NMS Employee Leasing

Nordic Calista

North Slope Telecom

Northern Air Cargo

Northern Transportation Co.

Northland Wood Products

Northwest Technical Services

Offshore Divers

Oilfield Improvements

Oilfield Transport

P.A. Lawrence

Pacific Power Products

Panalpina
PDC Harris Group

Peak Oilfield Service Co.

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Petroleum Equipment & Services

Petrotechnical Resources of Alaska

PGS Onshore

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Prudhoe Bay Shop & Storage

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O-Z

110/

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Schlumberger

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Spenard Builders Supply

STEELFAB

3M Alaska

Tire Distribution Systems (TDS)

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iota

Totem Equipment & Supply

Tubular Solutions Alaska

UAA Department of Engineering

Udelhoven Oilfield Systems Services
Unique Machine

Univar USA

Usibelli

U.S. Bearings and Drives

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Welding Services

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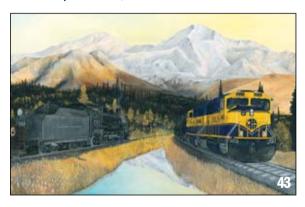
XTO Energy

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PETROLEUM DIRECTORY

First quarter 2007

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Cover photo: Carlile heavy haul project involving the transport of nine Hudson Cooler's for ConocoPhillips during the 2006 Alpine expansion. The coolers originated in Houston, Texas, and were transported to Alaska's North Slope. Courtesy Carlile

Trinity Inspection Services, LLC, to establish Anchorage, Alaska, office

With a dedicated team of NACE and AWS-CWI inspectors, Trinity offers quality visual inspection services that provide value long after projects are completed

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

A.Trinity was founded in 1999 as Trinity Consulting & Inspection Services by Joe Gibbs and two other partners. In 2004, I purchased the controlling interest and shortened the name.

Q.Where is Trinity Inspections located?

A. Our corporate office is located in Covington, Louisiana

to serve our Gulf Coast clients. We also have a satellite office in Fort Smith, Arkansas serving our mid-west clients and plan to open an office in Anchorage, Alaska as soon as our work there is scheduled.

Q. Who heads up your company?

A. I am majority stockholder and CEO. My background is in accounting and busi-

ness management, as well as being a National Association of Corrosion Engineers level I trained coatings inspector. This background prepared me for the day-to-day challenges of running Trinity Inspections.

Joe Gibbs is the

business and person-

nel manager. His



Trinity CEO Linda Gibbs provided information for this article

background experience and current certifications with the American Welding Society, as a Certified Welding Inspector, and NACE Level III inspector, make him adept in visual inspection for all our clients' needs.

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



NACE coating inspector performing continuity test on a 16-inch pipe anode

A. Our primary business sector is the oil and gas industry. Most of our work is during the construction and maintenance stages of pipelines, treatment facilities, tank farms and offshore platforms. We have also inspected water lines for municipal utility agencies.

We offer third party visual inspection of welding and coatings, project management, logistics, safety inspection, monitoring, training and team building and product traceability.

Q.Who are the company's main clients?

A. Trinity has Master
Service Agreements with several major oil and gas companies, most of which are doing business in Alaska and the gulf coast.
We also provide expert witness services for several attorneys and a major paint company.

Q. How many employees does your company have?

A.Trinity prides itself on handpicking the inspection staff to meet our clients' needs. Whether it is one inspector, or a full team, we have the resources to provide a quality, trained staff for any given project. We generally have up to 200 inspectors in our database to choose from.

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

A.We are looking forward to getting back to Alaska. We have ties in Fairbanks, as Joe grew up and graduated from Lathrop High School in Fairbanks. We are now pursuing work in Alaska, through our contacts in Anchorage and plan to open an office this year.

Q. Is the company changing any of its services? If yes, please describe what and

wbere.

A. We are upgrading our traceability program, Pipe Life ©. The program will simplify our reporting procedure, while adding many new statistical features for client engineers. Basically it's customized to meet the hectic demands of each engineer involved on the project at the touch of a button. The data will be available only to

secure users through a website.

Q.What is your company's main strength?

By Paula Easley

A. Our main strength is our employees. With our multi-skilled inspection teams and their knowledge, skills, and experience in the oil and gas field, Trinity has stayed very competitive over the past eight years.

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

A.After completing the BP Mardi Gras, Endymion, Thunderhorse, Cannonball and Noel projects, we took an unexpected Katrina remodeling break. Now we are back on track, and working on a large company acquisition as well as a possible alliance with one of Anchorage's up and

coming star companies.

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

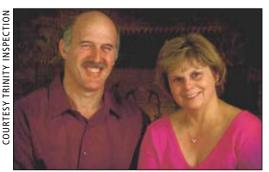
A. We have purchased a new server to store all our clients' traceability data and warehouse it throughout the project – longer if necessary. We recently converted our other server into a secure Web server. It is online via a dedicated T1 line, with a bulletproof security system. Each server has a daily, weekly, and monthly backup system in place. This has been tried and tested with huge success! I also have Microsoft certifications MCP, MCSE and MCDBA.

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

A. So far our most challenging job was providing the inspection staff to monitor welding and coating of BP's Mardi Gras 350-mile pipeline project in the Gulf of Mexico, along with the traceability of each phase of the coating and welding process. The records management was massive. Nevertheless, with the help of the entire site team, it was a huge success. Many lessons were learned and we expect the next job will be much less labor intensive – hence the new version of our traceability records program.

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

A. Our biggest obstacles for completing work is that we are dictated by the schedules of others, i.e., coating contractors, welding contractors, lay barges, and Mother Nature. It is hard sometimes to set a completion date on most projects. We also must overcome many different personnel issues during these unpredictable periods. Fortunately, we love a challenge.



Joe and Linda Gibbs



Exxon Diana Hoover platform buoyancy can coating being inspected in venders yard by NACE coating inspector

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

A. Like many small companies, we strive to maintain a multi-skilled staff at competitive rates, along with a benefits package that will keep our employees and their families happy (insurance, 401K, profit sharing, safety bonuses, etc.). This is a big challenge, and one we strive very hard to accomplish. Both our clients and our employees are counting on us to do this successfully.

I should mention that Trinity lost a significant number of inspection staffers to other projects, areas of the country, and even to career changes during Hurricane Katrina. Getting back up to speed was a challenge.

Q.A humorous story from your company's years in the business in Alaska?

A. Maybe a story in the making. As a young child growing up in Fairbanks, Joe licked the frost off a swing set pole... yep, you guessed it, tongue stuck to pole. Hot coffee was used to free the young Joe. We think he left behind some skin, and repelled his desire for coffee. However, some men never learn form their boyhood mistakes, as Joe says he's looking forward to getting back to Alaska, and can't wait to lick the frost off the Alaska Pipeline. As for me, I'll just stick to throwing snowballs.

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

A.Trinity will have its eight-year anniversary in April 2007. In December 2006 Joe, our business manager, will have completed 17 years as an NACE Certified level III + coatings inspector and an AWS-CWI for 14

February 2007 marked my third year as a Woman Owned Business (in a man's world!) and I greatly appreciate the support many people have given me. Joe and I, best friends and business partners, have wonderful clients, employees, and friends that make every day a landmark event.

Q. Average length of time an employee works for the company? Are you hiring?

A. People in the inspection field tend to work as nomads, project to project. Project length is the hardest to predict. We work our inspectors until they complete the project, for three months to five years, and move them to the next project if timing is right. If not, inspectors will work elsewhere until we have another project.



An offshore platform dry-docked for refurbishment — Trinity Inspection Services monitors all phases of platform maintenance, coating and welding inspections and corrosion surveys.

We are always accepting resumes; we log onto our database and pull up applications when specific skills are required by the job. Email resumes to jgibbs@trinityinspect.com.

Q. Safety Record?

A. Our safety record is outstanding. Accident free since 1999. With over one million man-hours recorded, we have had no workers comp insurance claims, no lost time, and no recordable accidents. Safety is number one. We believe it so much that we put our bonus money here!

Q. Does Trinity maintain a website?

A. Yes, we encourage anyone interested in our services and capabilities to visit us at www.trinityinspect.com, or call us at 888.973.2121.

Colville, from 1950s pioneer to well-known provisioner in the Prudhoe region

Long tenure in challenging part of the world credited to Colville's seasoned staff and dedication to customer needs

Q.Where is Colville located? More than one location?

A. We're in two locations at Prudhoe Bay, near the Deadhorse Airport. Fuel and solid waste services are at the Colville pad and our Brooks Range Supply complex contains the Napa Industrial Supply store, the Prudhoe Bay General Store, and the U.S. Post Office.

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

A. Colville was formed in 1953 by one of Alaska's pioneer bush pilots, Bud Helmericks, as the Arctic Tern Fish & Freight Co.As indus-



Mark Helmericks, Colville CEO, provided information for this article

trial development arrived in the far north, first with the Distant Early Warning Line and then oil exploration and development, the company moved into oil field services. The company incorporated and began utility operations in 1981. Fuel services commenced in 1985; then in 2000, it acquired Brooks Range Supply and expanded into industrial supply.

Q.Who beads up Colville and who is on its senior management team?

A. Mark Helmericks, son by Paula Easley of the founder, is president and CEO. Doug Clinton, a retired colonel and former North Slope pilot and rolligon operator is vice president; Rick Hofreiter is North Slope operations manager; and Becky Gay, recently a project manager for AIDEA and the Alaska Energy Authority, is special assistant to the president for business development.

Another long-time staff member on the management team is Marketing Director Craig Welch, who has a solid background in North Slope supply and valuable customer



knowledge based on his many years as general manager of Brooks Range Supply.

Rounding out the team are Colville operations managers Gary Cooper and Lyle Winter, Brooks Range Supply operations managers Mike Kunkel and Rob Peterson, and Joe and Debbie Bernard, managers of the Prudhoe Bay General Store.

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

A. Colville and Brooks Range Supply are honored to have long-standing relation-

ships with nearly every company doing business within the North Slope industrial area.

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

A. There are four full-service companies operating as primary business units that provide direct support to the oil industry, the local community and the ever-increas-

ing seasonal tourist: Fuel and industrial gas – Colville, Inc.; Solid waste – Colville Solid Waste Services; Industrial supply – Brooks Range Supply; Community, general store, retail – Prudhoe Bay General Store and Post Office.

O. Who are the company's main clients?

A. Colville's diversified client base consists of the oil, aviation and trucking industries, Prudhoe Bay service companies, North Slope communities, and locals and visitors.

Q. How many employees does your company have?

A. Colville has 87 employees across all business units.

Q. Does your company have subsidiaries?

A. Brooks Range Supply, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Colville, Inc.

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

A. Colville has essential equipment customized for each business unit, including a fleet of fuel trucks and special ramp-fueling rigs for quick airline refueling; tractor and tanker trucks for fuel support services along the Dalton Highway; a bulk fuel tank farm and gas station; solid waste compactor trucks, hook-truck loaders, 150 large roll-on/roll-off "bear-proof" industrial dumpsters, and the flatbeds to haul them all over the field, including to exploration sites over ice roads.

Other equipment includes a fleet of expeditor-sized trucks for immediate response to customer needs; loaders and graders; and forklifts and other warehouse equipment in both Prudhoe locations. Planned equipment purchases include an expanded fleet of tankers and tractors.

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

A.Although Colville has always prided itself on being a North Slope company, owned and operated by residents of the region, recent high levels of oil industry activity prompted opening an office in Anchorage.

Q. Is the company changing any of its services?

A. Colville is investing in expanding ecommerce and electronic sales and purchase capabilities, upgraded biofuel and waste reduction and recycling capabilities, and expanded on-site fuel storage and management capacity.

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

A. Our people, with their years of experience and enthusiasm for good customer service, are our main strength. Colville has been careful to grow prudently in a way that offers people long-term jobs with good prospects for future growth. In return, both the company and our customers are rewarded with some of the best talents in the business.

Q.Any new developments for the company in 2006?

A.The company outgrew its original bank and moved to Northrim Bank. This allowed access to expansion capital and enhanced e-commerce opportunities to better serve our customers.



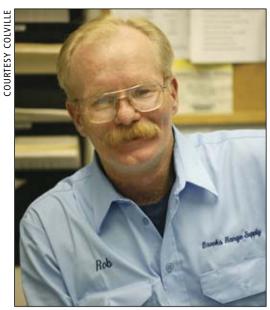
Colville roll-off truck unloading at Milne Point

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

A. Enhanced e-commerce and biofuels capability are the most notable.

Q.What is the most challenging job you have undertaken?

A. Finding and delivering fuel to North Slope customers during the recent shutdown of half the field was our most recent



Rob Peterson, Brooks Range Supply general manager

challenge. Not only was it sudden and unanticipated, it came during the busy fuel season and required an immense logistics response from our employees to keep our customers, including the oil industry, supplied with fuel. We are very proud of our employees for reshuffling their schedules so Colville could go the extra distance it took to respond what could have been a slopewide fuel emergency. This was a big example of Colville's "going the extra mile" for its customers.

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

A.This past season there has been a per-

sistent shortage of bed space in Prudhoe. Our camp has been completely filled and the local residence camps have also been filled to capacity. We have, on occasion, had people sleeping on the sofa in the TV room, and have had to bypass project opportunities because of lack of bed space.

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

A. Keeping a steady stream of fuel available to customers. Managing solid waste streams from a booming industry. Keeping trained, skilled and safe workers on staff are goals and challenges of the company.

We have a good working relationship with most of the regulatory agencies. Historically we have found them to provide

a good balance between protecting the interests of the public while promoting responsible industrial development.

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

A. The offshore developments in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas are extremely interesting and potentially much larger than the on-shore oil developments. Colville will be operating offshore this coming summer with a boat specifically designed for arctic waters.

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

A. In the early years of the fuel business, village customers would often pay in every form of currency besides cash. Colville fuel delivery drivers would return with a bag – literally, a large bag – containing Post Office money orders, triple counter-signed payroll and corporate checks, permanent fund dividends, skin masks, smoked fish, fur mittens, carved ivory, and even a baleen boat. It was good fun, except perhaps for the accountants who had to tally up the details.

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

A. Nothing special besides looking forward to another half-century of Alaska service.

Q.What is the average length of time an employee works for the company? Are you biring for any positions?

A. Most of our people have worked with us for 10 years or more. With our stable workforce, we're not looking for additional employees at this time.

Q.What is your company's safety record?

A. Good. Colville requires continuous staff training for workplace safety and offers incentives, including a shared safety bonus, for accident-free operations.

Q. Does Colville or its partners or subsidiaries maintain websites?

A. www.colvilleinc.com and www.brooksrangesupply.com.

Kenworth Alaska offers 'World's Best Trucks' from upgraded facilities this year

With expert sales, parts and service personnel, Kenworth meets the transport needs of Alaska's industries

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

A. Kenworth Alaska's parent company is Kenworth Northwest, located in Seattle. John Clearwater was the original owner from 1967, opening the Anchorage location in 1974. Marshall Cymbaluk purchased the dealer group in 1998. In 33 years, we've traveled just about every road in the state, helping Alaska grow with our dependable top-notch equipment.

Q. Where is Kenworth Alaska located? More than one location?

A. We have two locations. Anchorage, located at 2838 Porcupine Drive, is undergoing an extensive expansion and remodel, doubling the size of our current facility. Completion

Jim Scherieble, Alaska General Manager, provided information for this article

date is June 2007. Our Fairbanks branch just moved into its new location, 2262 Van Horn Road, which brings a state-of-the-art, full-service facility to the Fairbanks area.

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

A. Marshall Cymbaluk is By Paula Easley the owner and CEO. Paul Henehan is CFO. Ken Mason is COO. They are all located in Washington. Jim Scherieble is Alaska's general manager and is located in Anchorage.

O. What is the company's primary business sector and services?

A. Our business is selling and servicing medium-duty and heavy-duty trucks in the state of Alaska. Our two locations provide truck sales, parts and service for all types of trucking companies and private owners.



ucts to every truck application - from oil field support, highway transportation and intercity delivery, to construction. Our service departments are full service, from engine overhauls, drivetrain repair, brake and suspension maintenance, to general servicing. Our parts departments provide

Our sales department can offer prod-

quality, name brand replacement parts at competitive prices.

> Q. Who are the company's main clients?

A. We enjoy a wide range of customers in Alaska. Our oilfield support customers include Veco Alaska, Peak Oilfield Services, ConocoPhillips, and Alyeska Pipeline Services. Our highway customers include Carlile Transportation, Weaver Bros./Doyle Fuel, Food Services, Spenard Builders Supply, Alaska Freight Transport and Sourdough Express, just to name a few.

Q. How many employees does Kenworth have? How many in each of its



COURTESY KENWORTH ALASKA

The new T660, with its leading-edge aerodynamics, reliability and high resale value, make it an excellent investment.

locations?

A. Our entire company has 275 employees. In Alaska we have 37 employees, 12 in Fairbanks, 25 in Anchorage. We're proud to have the most experienced people in the industry on staff.

Q. Describe your inventory in general terms.

A. We try to have new stock truck inventory available for our customers, usually line haul trucks, dump trucks and intercity delivery trucks for immediate delivery. Special orders are 7-10 weeks out. Our parts inventory for Alaska averages over 1.1 million dollars.

Q. You've indicated the need to expand your operations in Anchorage and detailed your recent Fairbanks expansion. Describe the expansions and reasons for

A. Both our locations had outgrown our facilities and we're now in a position to

serve our customers with spacious and functional facilities. Not only are our service departments much larger, but our parts showrooms, lobbies and office spaces have also increased to meet our present and future needs. Customers will have a lounge area to wait in while their vehicles are being repaired. The Fairbanks location has higher visibility, better parking and greater access. The Anchorage facility will have more access gates and a paved and landscaped exterior.

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

A. Kenworth is known as "The World's Best" in the trucking industry. We have a wide variety of highway and vocational trucks to fit the Alaska truck market. Kenworth builds luxury highway trucks, sturdy dump and log trucks and heavyapplication off-road trucks for the oilfield and mining industries.

We're known for providing our customers with the experience and integrity Alaskans expect, and we work hard to protect that reputation.

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

A. The trucking industry is changing rapidly. We, as dealers, have to change with it to keep up with technology. Kenworth has implemented a state-of-the-art electronic dash console, and ABS brake systems for trucks and trailers. The new technology requires special training and understanding



Kenworth Fairbanks showroom

truck for line haul applications. With the superior maneuverability provided by its setback front axle, the T600 is the perfect truck for pick up and delivery and regional haul applications.

The T660 is designed and built for driver comfort. Whether you drive yourself or hire drivers, anyone would appreciate the quiet cab, controls where you need them and high quality interior appointments. The T660's 64" front spring, proprietary eightbag air suspension and cab/sleeper suspension combine to provide an exceptionally smooth ride. It's also designed to be easy to maintain. This, coupled with its leadingedge aerodynamics, reliability and high resale value, make it an excellent investment.

> Q. What do you see as your company's biggest challenge in the next five years? Regulations? Government poli-

> A. No question, it's the new engine emission regulations for 2007. 2010 brings even tighter exhaust emission controls, meaning new technology and more particulate filters.

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

A.Alaska's continuing economic growth and the increased activity on the North Slope look to be our greatest opportunities for the future.

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

A.We're looking at having some sort of shindig this summer to celebrate the grand opening of our "new" Anchorage facility.

Q. What is the average length of time an employee works for the company? Are you biring for any positions?

A.We have a group of core employees who have been with Kenworth Alaska for many years. Our repair shops historically have had the most turnover, and we are always looking for diesel technicians to add to our shops.

Q. What is your company's safety record?

A. The Kenworth Alaska branches have a good safety record. Our industry has many moving and rolling parts and vehicles. We utilize safe work habits, have improved our working environment, and hire qualified people to ensure that our employees remain safe.

Q. Does Kenworth maintain websites?

A.We certainly do.We encourage people to visit us at www.kenworth.com or www.kenworthalaska.com.Then come in to either our Anchorage or Fairbanks locations. Our email address is: sales@kenworthalaska.com.



Kenworth Fairbanks facility, 2262 Van Horn Road

to repair and maintain this equipment. New diesel engine exhaust emission standards for 2007 also require training and tooling to troubleshoot and repair the new engines.

We're excited about the new T660, Kenworth's most highly evolved aerodynamic long haul conventional. Its unsurpassed aerodynamics makes it a perfect

Air Liquide's innovations for Alaska projects increase productivity, investment return

Employees of Alaska's most experienced industrial gas and welding supplier, Air Liquide, are the 'go to' guys

Q.When was Air Liquide founded and what was its original name?

A.At 105 years, we're the oldest industrial gas manufacturing company in the world. In 1902, our French parent company, Air Liquide, was the first to develop a viable process for liquefaction of gases found in the air. It was a collaboration of two men, Georges Claude, a passionate researcher, and Paul Delorme, a prudent visionary. Their discovery led to the creation of the industrial gas industry, which today is improving

the productivity and safety of many manufacturing processes.

Q.Where is Air Liquide located?

A. Here in Alaska we manufacture and package our gas products in Anchorage and Palmer, and we have stores in Anchorage, Fairbanks,



Brian Benson, regional sales manager, answered questions for this article

Kenai, Homer and Delta Junction. We supply and serve our gas products customers through a network of five additional independent distributors. Globally we're in 70 countries on five continents.

Q. Who heads up your Alaska operation and who is on the senior management team?

A. Bob Cook is our Alaska regional manager, I am the regional sales manager, Kevin McDaid is administrative manager, and Dave Cushman is the rental equipment manager and welding technology specialist. Our main Alaska office and air plant are located in Anchorage, with an acetylene and cylinder maintenance plant in Palmer, Alaska.

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

A. We have no partnership arrangements.

Q. What is the company's primary



Air Liquide gas manufacturing plant in Anchorage, Alaska

business sector? What services does the company offer?

A.We supply the secondary metals trade primarily with manufacturing and repair, but also the mining, medical, scientific, and food industries. Basically we handle anything that needs welding with everything – including the equipment to do the job, and any kind of gas, or gas technology. These technologies include on-site gas generation (distillation/filtration systems for oxygen, nitrogen, CO2, and methane); productivity

enhancing gas mixes for welding; laser and lab mixes of any molecule, mix, or purity; water treatment and environmental equipment; as well as the standard nitrogen services, gas and field work for the pipeline and energy sector.

In addition to the field services and repair, we have a fully equipped shop for any kind of repair to any kind of welding equipment and a rental department which rents virtually any kind of welding equipment in the western hemisphere. In a nutshell, Air Liquide is the one-stop shopping place for any kind of welding equipment,

bulk or minibulk liquefied gas, or packaged gas products in Alaska.

Q. Who are the company's main clients?

A. Our clients are secondary metals manufacturers, fabrication houses, oil companies, utilities, hospitals, labs and food distributors.

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

A.We have about 63 employees in the state, and 40 are in the Southcentral Region.

By Paula Easley

Q. Describe your essential equipment in general terms.

A.We produce and supply bulk gases, acetylene, CO2 and dry ice. We have recently upgraded our air distillation equipment and storage and have no immediate plans for further upgrades.

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

A. Sixteen months ago we opened a new retail location in Delta Junction. For the time being we have no other expansion plans.

Q. Is the company changing any of its services?

A. We are providing more and more direct gas services for smaller nitrogen projects, and upgrading customer equipment to new and more efficient standards. Customer field service is a growing area for us, and is complemented by our welding equipment and repair departments.

In addition to being the warranty dealer for all of the major welding equipment manufacturers in America, we recently took on Milwaukee Electric Tools as a warranty station—the only one in Anchorage and of two in the state.

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

A. Our strength is in our people and our dedication to service; the corporate culture stresses the importance of the customer's problems over any other. We have the state's most experienced crew in this industry, with all but two salesmen having between 10 and 25 years of experience.

Air Liquide is confident in Alaska's unique position in the world of energy and mineral production, and has, and continues, to invest in our infrastructure to meet our customer's needs. We work with our clientele to assure the most cost effective, successful outcome; and in the end, their success means ours as well.

We also maintain an inventory of hard goods and other welding products that would usually seem excessive by Lower 48 standards, but here availability is an issue. When you need it, you have to have it. We pride ourselves on meeting that need.

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

A.We were recently awarded contractual agreements with some larger clients in the construction and oil and gas fields, and are working on experimental projects with customers to increase energy production.

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

A.Air Liquide has laboratories in the Midwest, on the East Coast, and in Paris. The company's commitment to technology and innovation has kept it at the forefront of the high-tech business of industrial gases. We pride ourselves on this dedication to innovation.



Mat Sanders, left, and Terry Rollings with Air Liquide's custom designed, small purge/pigging system.

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

A. Lately it's been this interview.

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

A. We face each job with the understanding that it is the most important job there is, and that's certainly true for the customer. The most difficult part of the job is handling logistics and scheduling with the usual limited budgets and staffing.

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

A.The biggest challenge as I see it is in manpower and the "graying" of the workforce, both in our industry and in the customer's. We have to keep the company profitable, yet provide the customer with the best service and newest technology at the lowest price. That keeps life interesting I guess.

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

A. I am very optimistic about our future

development. We all need to become more involved in the political process to make sure obstructionists don't prevent future generations of Alaskans from experiencing opportunities to enhance their own lives in this great state. I want to rest assured that my grandchildren can remain here and work at jobs they enjoy. Beyond that, mining, oil and gas projects and the roads and infrastructure to support these develop-

ments will continue to benefit our organization as well as the rest of Alaska.

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

A. Let's see. Can't tell that one... or that one... guess we'll have to say we're humorless, at least for publication.

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

A.We host an annual summer trade show and barbecue in Anchorage and Fairbanks as a get-together for vendors and customers. We might as well celebrate our 105th year in business at each event. We celebrated the 100th anniversary and it was lots of fun.

Q. What is the average length of time an employee works for the company?

A. We have guys that have just come on board and others that have over 35 years with us. I would guess an average would be 20 years or so. There isn't much turnover.

Q. What is your company's safety record?

A. We are extremely safety conscious, with weekly safety meetings for every employee group. The goal for our program is less than 1.0 RFR, with a target of ZERO.

Q. Does Air Liquide maintain a website?

A. There's a wealth of information at the company's U.S. website, www.us.airliquide.com. We are currently working on increasing our Internet presence specifically for our Alaskan and Hawaiian operations and hope to have it up and running in the coming months.

ACS provides customer-focused, integrated telecommunications throughout Alaska

Alaska Communications Systems' technology solutions simplify Alaskans' lives with cutting-edge, integrated services and third-generation wireless network capabilities

Q.When was ACS founded and what was its original name?

A. Since about 1932 we have served Alaskans through the company's predecessors. ACS came together through a rollup of Alaska firms focused on local telephony, long distance, Internet and wireless, situated in disparate locations, operated under different brands and with different ownership structures. The founding group brought those together in early 1999 under the brand of

Alaska
Communications
Systems and then the
company IPO'd on
the NASDAQ in late
1999. The company
operated with its
founding group of
managers until
October 2003 when
the board of directors recruited Liane
Pelletier to take ACS
to the next development stage.



Sheldon Fisher, senior vice president of sales, provided information for this article

Q. Where is ACS located?

A.ACS is headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska. Company offices and ACS stores are located throughout Alaska including in Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka, Kodiak, Valdez, Anchorage, and Fairbanks.

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

A. Liane Pelletier is chief executive officer, president and chair of the board of directors. Ms. Pelletier joined ACS in September 2003 after spending 17 years at Sprint Corporation, most recently as chief integration officer and member of the executive management committee.

The senior management team includes: David Wilson, senior vice president and chief financial officer; David C. Eisenberg, senior vice president of corporate strategy,



ACS' advanced CDMA mobile wireless network is always being tested. CDMA is the world's most rapidly expanding wireless network

development and marketing; Sheldon Fisher, senior vice president of sales; Anand Vadapalli, senior vice president of network and information technology; Leonard Steinberg, vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary; and S. Lynn Erwin, vice president of human resources.

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

A.ACS is a customerfocused, facilities-based integrated telecommunications provider. It is the only Alaskan
provider that owns infrastructure for all
four telecommunications product lines:
local, long distance, Internet and wireless.
Through DISH Network, ACS also offers
satellite television.

By Paula Easley
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Q. Who are the company's main clients?

A.ACS serves the state's business and residential customers. It has established a strong and enjoyable working relationship with numerous industries and companies within Alaska, including oil and gas.

In 2005,ACS further expanded its CDMA (code division multiple access) wireless voice and data network to the North Slope, offering the first digital telecommunications equipment in the area. The CDMA sites are located in Alpine,

> Kuparuk and Deadhorse.The sites support CDMA phones on ACS' network and, in Deadhorse and Kuparuk,ACS provides wireless Mobile Broadband data capabilities at download speeds bursting

to 2.4 Mbps. ACS Mobile Broadband subscribers experience high-speed connectivity to the Internet from their portable computers and EV-DO enabled Pocket PCs and handsets.

Q. How many employees does ACS bave?

A.As reported to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in March 2006, ACS employs 1,030 Alaskans, with the majority in Anchorage.

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

A.ACS is constantly investing in and exploring for more opportunities in Alaska. By far, the most comprehensive expansion is the installation of ACS' multi-million dollar investment of its CDMA wireless voice and data network throughout Alaska. Since May 2004, ACS has established CDMA technology from Ketchikan to Kuparuk, focusing on the most populated areas, its major road and marine corridors, and tourist destinations. CDMA provides the best voice quality, fastest wireless data speeds, greatest security through its coding, and GPS location capabilities. It is the world's most rapidly expanding wireless network technology, with coverage throughout 70 countries. As noted above, ACS has recently expanded wireless data capabilities on the North Slope by enhancing its network to include Mobile Broadband capabilities.

Q. Is ACS changing any of its services?

A.ACS is always enhancing its services and constantly offers new services to meet demand and the growing changes in technology. Most recently ACS added Mobile Broadband capabilities to the Slope. ACS mobile broadband subscribers experience high-speed connectivity to the Internet from their portable computers and EV-DO enabled Pocket PCs and handsets

Q. What is your company's main strength? Main competitors?

A.The CDMA wireless technology ACS supports in Alaska is among the best in the nation. There are numerous distinct benefits to ACS' wireless voice and data network including its ubiquity, quality, and speed. When it comes to speed, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau were the third, fourth, and fifth markets in the entire country to offer Mobile Broadband wireless data. There are still major cities in the Lower 48 without this capability.

Mobile Broadband data speeds are comparable to DSL and in the more populated areas, including Fairbanks, the Mat-Su Valley, Anchorage, Kenai, Soldotna, Juneau and now the North Slope speeds burst to 2.4 Mbps – nearly six times the next closest competitor with Edge. Our only statewide competitor is Cellular One.

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

A. Over the last year, ACS has focused on introducing, enhancing, or expanding its CDMA wireless coverage to new markets,

clients and projects throughout Alaska. You can read about ACS' multi-million dollar investment at www.acsalaska.com or on its investor website at www.alsk.com. Highlights include new CDMA wireless coverage on the North Slope, in Ketchikan, Kodiak, Sitka, Valdez, Glennallen, and Tok, expansions along the Glenn Highway and Parks Highway, and enhancements throughout Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula.

ACS is also attracting nationwide news coverage with innovative projects such as ON ACS, which integrates local phone service with wireless and provides free mobile-to-home and home-to-mobile calling. Other innovative projects include what's called Internet Anyplace, which integrates DSL high-speed Internet with our Mobile Broadband service so business and residential customers can connect to high-speed Internet at work, home, or literally on the road.

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

A. With ACS' rapidly expanding network, perhaps the biggest obstacle encompasses weather-related delays. Many remote sites require helicopter access and consequently, especially as we expand CDMA wireless coverage in Southeast Alaska, we have to wait for appropriate weather.

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

A. Perhaps the biggest challenge for ACS will be communicating the importance of a fair, competitive telecommunications marketplace in the state.

Q.What do you see as future trends or opportunities from events such as long-term weather fluctuations, resource development, etc.?

A. We expect the overall demand for telecommunications service in Alaska will grow, particularly as a result of the increasing demand for wireless voice and data services following the launch of our CDMA network, the growth in demand for DSL and Internet access services due to higher business and consumer bandwidth needs, and increasing demands for private network services.

Q. What is the most humorous story from your company's years in the busi-

ness in Alaska?

A. The most humorous stories perhaps derive from the construction of cell sites throughout Alaska. They are certainly more humorous in retrospect, but run-ins with bears, moose, snow, rain, and winds can often leave our employees stranded for days in the most remote of areas, waiting for the right time to escape. Alaska animals can impact our customers directly as well – like the time three moose stood in our front courtyard, ripped apart the trees, and prevented many customers from entering or leaving our flagship store on 600 Telephone Avenue.

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

A. Essentially, it was three years ago when Liane Pelletier arrived at ACS and the new senior management team formed. Since then, we have enjoyed rising revenues, cash flow, stock price, and the deployment of a stock dividend, which has also risen during the team's tenure.

Q. What is the average length of time an employee works for the company? Are you hiring for any positions?

A.ACS employees spend an average of 8.4 years working for the company.ACS is always seeking new team members. Current postings can be found on ACS' consumer website at www.acsalaska.com.

Q. What is your company's safety record?

A. Our safety record is strong and ACS emphasizes safety every day, especially before every meeting with a mandated "Safety Minute of the Week" at the onset.

Q. Does ACS or its partners maintain websites?

A. Our consumer website is at www.acsalaska.com, serving customers looking for products and services, and those who would like more information regarding ACS' charitable involvement in Alaska communities. ACS also hosts an investor website under its stock symbol ALSK at www.alsk.com. The investor site meets corporate governance standards and provides a transparent look into the operational and financial conditions of ACS.



What's cooking in the 'kitchens?'

Two offshore Cook Inlet prospects that Escopeta Oil plans to explore laid groundwork for their unusual names millions of years ago

By ROSE RAGSDALE

For Petroleum News

In exploring Cook Inlet, Escopeta Oil geologists gained their inspiration for naming two offshore oil and gas prospects that they hope to explore this year.

The prospects, Kitchen and East Kitchen, are the logical names to reflect the prehistoric drama they believe unfolded deep within the earth eons ago. But the only dishes that Houston, Texasbased Escopeta says these "kitchens" will serve up are copious quantities of highgravity crude oil and natural gas.

Geologist Walter Wells joined Escopeta President Danny Davis and the company's former Alaska exploration executive Bob Warthen years ago in drafting the unusual names for the prospects.

The inspiration came from an underlying theory that led to their discovery — that they contain the source rock for many of Cook Inlet's known oil fields.

"The prospects sit on an area where the oil is generated, in the central Cook Inlet Basin," said Davis in a recent interview. "That's where you cook everything up, in the kitchen isn't it?"

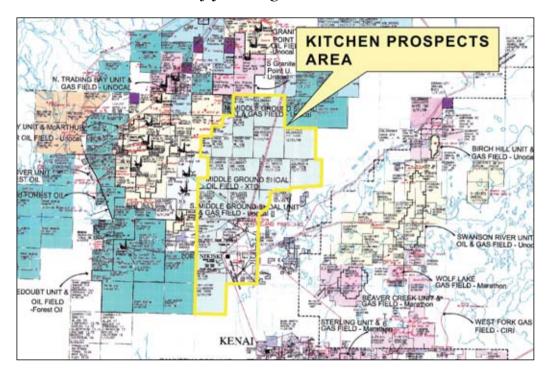
Davis said Escopeta's concept for the two prospects grew out of analysis of exploration and research done more than a quarter of century ago by the U.S. Geological Survey and Atlantic Richfield Co.

"It's not something we made up. It's something we got educated to," Davis said. "It's a published fact that the oil recovered, so far, in Cook Inlet is 4 percent of the total there. That means there's 96 percent of the oil left to find."

USGS work intrigued Escopeta

The Escopeta team became intrigued by work done by USGS scientists Leslie B. Magoon and George E. Claypool.

Magoon and Claypool published a research paper in 1981 titled, "Petroleum Geology of the Cook Inlet — An



Exploration Model," that reflected their theories.

ARCO also explored the area and concluded that oil likely was generated at a greater depth and migrated into more recent structures, including some that have been developed into oil and gas fields. These include the Middle Ground Shoals, Granite Point, North Cook Inlet McArthur River and Swanson River fields.

"We believe Kitchen kept cooking oil for a long time, millions of years," said Frank Banar, a geologist who works with Escopeta as a consultant today.

Escopeta's geologists also believe the oil and gas they've identified sits on top of a structure that ARCO and Shell explored more than 20 years ago, said Banar, who also explored Cook Inlet in the 1980s on behalf of Mobil Oil Corp.

North Slope lured companies away

The discovery of Prudhoe Bay in 1968 lured away to the North Slope most of the companies that were busy hunting for oil finds in Cook Inlet nearly 40 years ago.

Only recently has the industry

renewed its interest in the basin.

The relative lack of exploration activity in Cook Inlet piqued Escopeta's interest, and it wasn't long before company's geologists announced several promising prospects.

The Kitchen prospect, an enormous feature covering 12,000 to 15,000 acres, is believed to lie at the 2,500-foot depth of the Sterling formation and the 16,500-foot depth of the Hemlock formation, according to Davis. Nearby, the East Kitchen, spread across 9,000 acres, is thought to be situated at 3,500 feet in the Beluga formation and 15,000 feet in the Hemlock.

Banar said the prospects are situated in the thickest part of the basin. "That means (they) contain enough thickness to put enough pressure on the Mesozoic layer of the earth to get the shale rocks at that depth hot enough to 'cook up' the oil," Banar said. "It's where the rocks got hot enough to cook the oil out."

Escopeta believes Kitchen and East Kitchen each could hold more than 500 million barrels of oil and about 1 trillion cubic feet of gas.



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Anchorage, AK 99518

Contact: Tom Ulrich, vice president Phone: (907) 562-5420

Fax: (907) 562-5426

E-mail: Alaska@amarinecorp.com Website: www.amarinecorp.com

American Marine Corporation specializes in marine construction, commercial diving, pipeline and platform inspection, repair and maintenance, underwater welding, dredging, vessel support, crew boat services and vessel inspection and repairs.

Offshore Divers

5400 Eielson St. Anchorage, AK 99518

Contact: Don Ingraham, owner/mgr. Contact: Leif Simcox, owner/oper. mgr.

Phone: (907) 563-9060 Fax: (907) 563-9061

E-mail: dingraham@offshoredivers.com Website: http://www.offshoredivers.com Offshore Divers is an Alaska owned diving contractor specializing in sub-sea oilfield work on mooring systems, pipelines, platforms and docks in Cook Inlet, on the North Slope and in Valdez.

Underwater Welding

American Marine Corp.

6000 A St.

Anchorage, AK 99518

Contact: Tom Ulrich, vice president

Phone: (907) 562-5420 Fax: (907) 562-5426

E-mail: Alaska@amarinecorp.com Website: www.amarinecorp.com

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Kenworth Alaska

2838 Porcupine Dr. Anchorage, AK 99501

Contact: Jim Scherieble, branch mgr.

Phone: (907) 279-0602 Phone: (800) 478-0602 Fax: (907) 258-6639

E-mail: parts@kenworthalaska.com E-mail: sales@kenworthalaska.com Website: www.kenworthalaska.com

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Contact: Tom Clements, branch mgr.

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Kenworth Alaska is a full service truck dealership in two locations – Anchorage and Fairbanks. New and used truck sales, parts and service.

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1625 Old Steese Hwy. Fairbanks, AK 99701

Contact: Steven Angel, fleet sales mgr.

Phone: (907) 459-4044 Fax: (907) 450-4007

E-mail: fleetsales@seekins.com Website: www.seekins.com

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11151 Calaska Circle Anchorage, AK 99515

Contact: Paul Sander, manager

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Website: www.3m.com

Serving Alaska for over 34 years, 3M Alaska offers total solutions from the wellhead to the retail pump with a bRd. range of products and services - designed to improve safety, productivity and profitability.

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Contact: Jerry Freel, VP operations AK

Phone: (907) 452-7151 Fax: (907) 452-3800

E-mail: jfreel@holaday-parks.alaska.com Website: www.holaday-parks.com

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steel.

Weld/Repairs/Manufacturing

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1820 Marika St. Fairbanks, AK 99709

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Phone: (907) 452-7151 Fax: (907) 452-3800

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P.O. Box 850, Stn. T Calgary, Alberta T2H2H3

Contact: Terry Murtagh, mgr. of business devel-

Phone: (403) 203-2138 Fax: (403) 236-0488 E-mail: sales@natco-ca.com

Website: www.natcogroup.com

Natco Group engineers, designs and manufactures process, wellhead and water treatment equipment and systems used in the production

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STEELFAB

2132 Rail Road Ave. Anchorage, AK 99501

Contact: Janet Faulkner, vice president

Phone: (907) 264-2819 Fax: (907) 276-3448

E-mail: jfaulkner@steelfabak.com

STEELFAB is the largest Alaskan-owned steel service center in the state. It provides pressure vessels, modules, special design items and raw steel products.

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Phone: (907) 563-3012 Fax: (907) 562-1376

E-mail: pat.hanley@umalaska.com Website: www.umalaska.com

The design, development, manufacture and distribution of oilfield construction, mining, fishing and government parts to industry quality standards.

Welding Services

P.O. Box 7248 Nikiski, AK 99635 Mile 20.5 Kenai Spur Hwy. North Kenai, AK Contact: Keith T. Raham Phone: (907) 776-8279 Fax: (907) 776-3311 Cell Phone: (907) 252-5466

General Contractor #27005. Oilfield and general welding fabrication and repair services including aluminum, stainless steel and carbon

Wire Rope

Arctic Wire Rope & Supply

6407 Arctic Spur Rd. Anchorage, AK 99518 Contact: Jill Reeves Phone: (907) 562-0707 Fax: (907) 562-2426

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Arctic Wire Rope & Supply is Alaska's largest and most complete rigging supply source. We specialize in custom sling fabrication (wire rope, web, chain, and polyester round.)

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Contact: Kevin O. Meyers, president & CEO

Phone: (907) 265-6134 Fax: (907) 265-1502

XTO Energy

810 Houston St. Fort Worth, TX 76102

Contact: Vaughn O. Vennerberg II

Phone: (817 870-2800 Fax: (817) 870-0379 Kenai office 52260 Shell Rd. Kenai, AK 99611

XTO Energy, established in 1986, is engaged in the acquisition and development of quality, long-lived producing oil and gas properties and





Northern Air Cargo converts jet fleet to 737 cargo planes

Alaska's largest air cargo carrier recently announced the purchase of three new Boeing 737-200 cargo freighters to replace the company's existing 727 aircraft. Northern Air Cargo's new acquisition completes the company's fleet modernization plan and marks the start of a commitment to customers to enhance service levels and operational efficiencies at the 16 main hubs served around the State.

COMPANYNEWS

The first of the three new planes will fly scheduled routes including Bethel, Nome and Kotzebue as new procedures are implemented and efficiencies are developed.

The company realizes that "today's customers demand better service and schedules, and these new aircraft will allow for greater frequency and reliability," said Mark Liland, NAC's director of marketing.

"The introduction of the B-737 to our current air cargo fleet represents the beginning of a new era for Northern Air Cargo and our customers," said Stephanie Holthaus, NAC's vice president of cargo. "Customers will notice the improvement in service and schedule adherence this



state-of-the-art aircraft has to offer."

The twin-jet B-737 has earned an industrywide reputation for being fuel efficient, easy to maintain and environmentally friendly. Shippers favor the dynamic cargo system that provides greater care and flexibility for the goods shipped — especially the rolling sheets, which offer speed and precision in bringing freight in and out of

the aircraft.

The versions being used by NAC have eight pallet positions or hard floors, which will carry approximately 30,000 pounds and can accommodate cargo ranging from telephone poles, to snow machines, to igloos.

NAC will incorporate two more B-737s

see NAC page 41

COMPANYNEWS in brief

Lynx Enterprises gets a face-lift

ASRC Energy Services Lynx Enterprises, Inc. has recently undergone a name change to ASRC Energy Services, Regulatory & Technical Services.

Under the Lynx name AES-RTS has provided regulatory services that include environmental and regulatory consulting for permitting, compliance and planning activities.

AES-RTS will continue to operate in the same capacity while expanding its range of services to continually meet client needs.

Expansion has included the division of RTS into two main sectors — the Regulatory Services division and the Technical Services division. The addition of a Technical Services division has allowed the company to include environmental sciences, expanded GIS services, civil and geotechnical engineering, geo-

see next page

Cruz Construction completes move for FEX



Cruz Construction recently completed the 270-mile move of the Doyon Arctic Wolf sub-base for FEX from Deadhorse west to its Amagaq location. FEX, part of Talisman Energy, began drilling in mid-February at the NPRA site. Steiger rubber track tractors were used to execute the move.

continued from page 40

NAC

into its Alaska statewide network by the end of May 2007. NAC will also continue the use of its DC-6 fleet, "the workhorses of Alaska" which are used to provide charters and flagstops for project freight to mines, oil and gas fields, the military and globally marketed seafood companies.

"Now more than ever, air carriers need to maximize their operational efficiency, and this plane will accomplish that for NAC," says Dave Karp, NAC's COO.

NAC's selection of the three converted B737-200s completes the company's jet fleet modernization plan. Once all three 737 aircraft are engaged in flight operations, the company will have enough lift to serve all markets plus expand services to satisfy future growth.

Founded in 1956 as an air cargo provider supporting rural communities and camps around the State, Northern Air Cargo is Alaska's largest and longest-serving Alaska air cargo carrier.

NAC serves 16 scheduled locations and over 100 charter and flagstop destinations throughout rural Alaska. A subsidiary company of Saltchuk Resources, NAC also encompasses NacLink, a freight forwarding company, Northern Air Aviation Services and Northern Air Maintenance Services.

With a fleet of four jet and turbine aircraft and five Douglas DC-6 aircraft, the company employs 280 people and has annual revenue in excess of \$50 million dollars.

Focused primarily in rural Alaska, Northern Air Cargo also provides charter service throughout the United States and internationally.

NAC performs logistics, air, ground and maintenance support for large and small industries including oil and gas, mining, construction and wild Alaska seafood. Additional information on Northern Air Cargo, Inc. is available on the NAC Web site at www.nac.aero.



logical services and hydrology.

Bernie Nidowicz, a petroleum engineer, is the AES-RTS principal-in-charge.

Nidowicz describes the recent changes as a process. "We want to serve our clients to the best of our ability, and these steps are crucial. The synergistic energy and capabilities of AES-RTS and our staff are growing in all directions, and the forecast is bright."

The company sees great potential for new development on the North Slope.

To meet demands, AES-RTS went from having 28 full-time employees in January 2006 to its current number of 47. From 2005 to 2006 the number of field employees increased from 10 to 45.

In the past AES-RTS put its primary focus on the regulatory aspects of projects, but with recent changes and additions RTS is geared to assist both established and new clients within all phases of the project life cycle.

The addition of professional services and experienced staff members has AES-RTS feeling primed for an expanded market and a broader cliental base.

Alaska Airlines introduces first cargo-passenger plane

Alaska Airlines unveiled its first cargopassenger plane in a new fleet February 1. The modified Boeing 737-400 is part of the Seattle-based company's \$100 million plan to upgrade its cargo operations. Airline officials say the fleet will primarily focus on Alaska along with some Seattle flights.

"This is about our recommitment to the Arctic and other rural parts of the state," Bill MacKay, the airline's senior vice president for Alaska said of the upgrades launched by an all-cargo freighter last summer.

The first of four combination planes was scheduled to begin service February 2 from Anchorage to the communities of Nome, Kotzebue, Barrow and Fairbanks as well as the industrial outpost of Deadhorse near Prudhoe Bay. The planes are designed to carry more cargo and have more comfortable passenger cabins than the 737-200s the new planes are replacing.

The front half of the aircraft can accommodate four cargo pallets and the other half has all-leather seating for 72 passengers and features more legroom and larger overhead bins.

Three more 737-400's are scheduled to operate by this spring, MacKay said.

Pemco World Air Services in Dothan, Alabama, converted the new planes from all-passenger aircraft that joined the Alaska Airlines fleet in 1992. The airline also has options with Pemco to convert a second freighter and fifth combination aircraft, but no decision on that has been made, MacKay said.

The new fleet will have no effect on all-passenger aircraft with flights to and from Alaska, officials said.



This is an 8X size coverall, first ever of its size requested.

Alaska Textiles is about accommodation

Alaska Textiles can provide a customized fit for any size of its Korbana coverall. The garment is flame resistant, made of Indura Ultrasoft fabric and is used on the North Slope by many companies Alaska Textiles currently outfits.

Recently the company-custom made a size 8X coverall for a worker on the slope. It was the largest Alaska Textiles ever manufactured and shows "how committed we are to customizing products for our diverse slope workers," said Clif Burnette, vice president.

The coverall has a heavy-duty, two-way brass zipper with a pleated bi-swing back. Extras include two patch breast pockets with a flap and pencil slot on the left pocket and sleeve, and two hip pockets with a snap closure on the left hip pocket. Also included is a 2-in-1 utility pocket on the right leg, with side access to pants with a snap closure. For more information contact Alaska Textiles in Anchorage at (907) 265-4880.

Arctic Controls welcomes Erica Snare

Arctic Controls would like to welcome Erica Snare as the newest edition to its team. Snare has taken over administrative duties at the company. A long-time Alaskan, Snare had the unique opportunity to travel throughout rural Alaska during her "other life" as a geologist. She credits her experience at remote work sites for her attention to detail, ensuring every order that comes through Arctic Controls is processed correctly and delivered on time to clients. Snare says she's enjoyed working with everyone at the company. "It's been a rewarding experience and I look forward to continued work with great customers and the rest of the sales team here at Arctic Controls."

Arctic Wire Rope honored as manufacturer of the year

On February 20 Arctic Wire Rope & Supply received the Made in Alaska Manufacturer of the Year Award sponsored by the Alaska Department of Commerce and the Made in Alaska Program.

Accepting the award on the company's behalf was Jill Reeves, sales manager, Gary Moore, rigging shop foreman, and Disston Lagnas, sewing department foreman.

The presentation took place at the Made in Alaska Anchorage workshop at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage.

Arctic Wire Rope & Supply was established in 1983 by Eric McCallum, the company's owner and president. The company has been certified in the Made In Alaska program since April 15, 1994.

Arctic Wire Rope & Supply provides custom-made wire rope and nylon slings and harnesses, and does on-site fabrication and testing of harnesses, braces and slings for use in an industrial environment such as on oil rigs.

Any active Made In Alaska permit holder is eligible to receive the Manufacturer of the Year award. When deciding who should receive the award, the program considers time in business, innovations, job creation, originality and representation of the Alaska spirit.

Nelson promoted to president, CEO at ASRC

Mark Nelson has been named president and CEO of ASRC Energy Services. Nelson was promoted to the position from his job as chief operating officer of ASRC Construction Holding Company. The promotion went into effect January 11.

Nelson has more than 20 years of management experience, which includes senior vice president of AES Operations and Maintenance and vice president and president of APC Natchiq.



Mark Nelson, president and CEO, ASRC Energy Services

A 24-year resident of Alaska,

Nelson holds a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Idaho, is a certified project management professional from the Project Management Institute and has an Alaska mechanical administrators license.

In addition to his professional work, Nelson is a member of the advisory board for the University of Alaska Anchorage's Engineering Science Project Management program. He also serves as both vice chair of the board and chair of the finance committee for Covenant House, and is active in various United Way committees.

ASRC Energy Services is a subsidiary of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. The company provides integrated engineering, procurement, construction operations and maintenance services for energy and communications projects around the world.

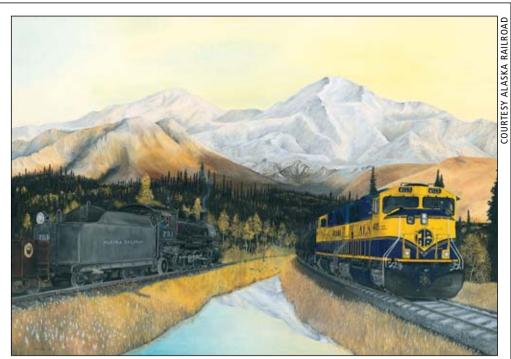
Carlile's new driver simulator a first in Alaska

Carlile Transportation Systems has purchased and installed a new truck-driving simulator at its Anchorage terminal. The state-of-the-art, computerized simulator is the first of its kind in Alaska and is custom designed to mimic specific Alaska roadway conditions for enhanced driver training and safety.

The simulator is realistic, high resolution, and interactive.

Both new and experienced drivers will use the simulator to become familiar with a specific truck style and road conditions before they get out on the highway. It can be programmed to mimic varying weather and road conditions such as hills, ice, fog or road hazards like debris or stalled vehicles.

The computer retains driver performance and can be replayed by an instructor for training purposes. It's expected to be helpful for testing drivers for the often challenging Alaska Haul Road.



"Reflective" by North Pole artist and railfan Art Chase

Alaska Railroad annual print released in December

The Alaska Railroad Corporation released its annual print in December 2006. "Reflective" by North Pole artist and railfan Art Chase continues the tradition of artwork featuring the Alaska Railroad.

Chase's design for the 2007 Alaska Railroad print includes a graphic salute to the steam engines of past and present. The print features locomotive #751 signifying the past, a new AC power locomotive signifying movement toward the future, and the solid constant that signifies Alaska — Mount McKinley.

"I was trying to come up with a steam-oriented idea, but I also know that the railroad has always been forward thinking," said Art Chase. "I am really excited about this painting. I have wanted to create an Alaska Railroad annual print for a number of years."

Preferring the mediums of oil painting, pencil drawing and airbrushing, Chase's self-taught style is described as "tight and detailed".

An Alaska resident since 1980, Chase is a 23-year veteran of the Air Force and Air National Guard and now works for the Federal Aviation Administration overseeing and trouble shooting the navigational system programs across the state.

Prints cost \$50, posters cost \$25, and pins cost \$5.

The 2007 poster, print and pin are available through ARRC's online gift shop, at the Alaska Railroad Depot Ticket Windows or by calling 1(800) 544-0552 or 265-2494 in Anchorage.

"The new training simulator will enhance Carlile's safety program by reducing accidents, improving driver skills, increasing fuel economy, saving costs and saving lives," said company president, Harry McDonald. "It also allows for non-driving employees to get practice behind the wheel so they can train to move into a driving position."

AECOM Acquires RETEC to Merge with ENSR

AECOM Technology Corporation, a global provider of professional technical

and management support services for the transportation, facilities and environmental markets, announced on January 29 the acquisition of The RETEC Group, Inc., an environmental management consulting and engineering firm.

RETEC will be integrated with AECOM's ENSR subsidiary, an environmental service platform serving public and private sector clients worldwide. The combined firm already has a strong presence throughout the United States, Europe, Asia and Latin America.

"By joining forces with ENSR, we can provide our clients with greatly expand-



Alan (AJ) Rookus and Brian Mangold, project managers at Kuparuk

Lounsbury spotlights employees, recent project

AJ Rookus and Brian Mangold, both resident project managers at the Kuparuk field, recently celebrated their 25-year anniversary with Lounsbury and Associates.

Lounsbury believes they may be

looking at a new record for the longest consecutive period as alternates on the North Slope — over 20 years.

Recent hire Jeremiah Cornell, P.S., has joined Rookus and Mangold at



Jeremiah Cornell, survey technician

the company's Kuparuk office as a survey technician. Cornell holds a BS in surveying engineering from Ferris State University and is licensed as a professional surveyor in Michigan.

The company, through Nunamiut/Lounsbury, would also like to announce its recent completion of surveying work, ice road alignment staking, and well and icepad construction for Anadarko's Jacob's Ladder project. The company staked approximately 14 miles of ice road from DS-17 in Prudhoe to the Jacob's Ladder Well C pad.

Nunamiut/Lounsbury, LCC is a joint venture in cooperation with the village corporation for Anaktuvuk Pass.

Nunamiut/Lounsbury was formed to pursue engineering and surveying contracts in support of oil and gas exploration and development on the North Slope.

ed services," said Ben Genes, president of RETEC. "For clients with international operations, we can offer a much broader global platform for service delivery."

ENSR is a worldwide environmental service company, serving industrial and commercial companies and government agencies, with 2,000 employees and over 95 offices worldwide.

ENSR provides consulting, engineering, remediation, and environmental health and safety management solutions. It has won numerous environmental business and health and safety awards from companies such as BP, Textron and ExxonMobil Asia Pacific, as well as from the Environmental Business Journal.

RETEC is an environmental management consulting and engineering firm that specializes in solving complex problems throughout the business life cycle from new asset development to ongoing operations as well as final asset disposal and restoration. RETEC brings to ENSR a strong focus on the oil and gas industry, electric and gas utilities, and also the transportation and manufacturing sec-

"Acquiring RETEC is another important milestone in our goal of achieving environmental market leadership," said Bob Weber, ENSR president and CEO. "Our two companies share strong business values and an unwavering commitment to superior client service - a foundation of our overall business strategy."

Murtagh takes on new role at NATCO

Terry Murtagh recently took on the new position of manager of business development for Canada and Alaska.

Murtagh has had a long and notable career with NATCO working as a project manager and manager of the technical operations division before moving into business development.

NATCO is a provider of wellhead process equipment, systems and



Terry Murtagh, manager of business development, Canada and Alaska

services used in the production of oil and gas. For over 75 years the company has designed, manufactured and marketed production equipment and services used for onshore and offshore work in

many of the major oil and gas producing regions of the world.

Schlumberger releases second well cementing book

On February 20 Schlumberger announced the publication of the second edition of Well Cementing, a comprehensive reference book originally published in 1990.

Available from the SPE Bookstore, the book describes current cementing technologies and includes full-color illustrations and photographs.

Chapters on cement chemistry, cement additives, rheology, mud removal and cement-formation interactions communicate theoretical and practical information.

More than 20 industry experts representing operators, service companies, manufacturers, government agencies and academia contributed to the book.

Dominique Guillot of Schlumberger and Erik Nelson, consultant and retired from Schlumberger, edited this second edition.

Schlumberger is an international oilfield services company supplying technology, information solutions and integrated project management for the purpose of optimizing reservoir performance for customers working in the oil and gas industry.

STEELFAB builds 15 modules for Pioneer

STEELFAB is in the process of fabricating 15 steel modules for installation on the Oooguruk gravel island drill site currently under construction in the Beaufort Sea. The Oooguruk field will be operated by Pioneer Natural Resources on the North Slope. Richard Faulkner, STEELFAB's president, said the 750,000pound job designed by EEIS Consulting Engineers should be completed in early

STEELFAB is Alaska's largest locally owned steel fabricator and service cen-

Pinnell joins Univar, still finds time to fish

Kelly Pinnell has joined the ranks of the customer service professionals at Univar USA in Anchorage. "Pinnell's solid can-do Alaskan attitude compliments his genuine



Kelly Pinnell, customer service, Univar

pursuit of customer satisfaction," according to Ken Lambertsen, Univar branch manager. Raised in Michigan while dreaming of Alaska, Pinnell learned the Midwestern values of hard work coupled with adventure.

Since being in Alaska Pinnell has established himself as one of the state's premier fishing enthusiasts and has written two books about fishing in the Great Land. Univar suggests you give Pinnell a call; he's always available to discuss a company's chemical requirements, or the art of fishing.

If you'd like to meet Pinnell, stop by the Mt.View Sports booth or check out one of his seminars at this year's Great Alaskan Sportsman Show in Anchorage March 29 - April 1, where he'll be showcasing his books.

Usibelli's been busy

Usibelli Coal Mine has a number of notable announcements this quarter.

Since January 27, 2004, the company has achieved 1,105 consecutive no-lost-time injury days. Keith Walters, UCM general manager reports, "this is a significant accomplishment considering the challenging conditions we work in every day, while maintaining an impressive on-time delivery schedule to our customers."

Joe Usibelli, Jr., president of UCM, said, "I am tremendously proud of every employee. We enjoy a very professional and dedicated workforce with great leadership and teamwork. Accomplishments like this don't come easy. One of our primary goals is to take care of people and provide a secure and safe workplace."

Partners in defense — On January 11, 2007 The Defense Logistics Agency recognized UCM with the Business Alliance Award. The award is for outstanding efforts to partner with the Defense Logistics Agency and improve the Agency's mission — providing supplies and services to America's war fighters. DLA Director, Army Lieutenant General Robert T. Dail presented the award for Outstanding Readiness Support.

Partners in environment — During the



From left, Donna Frankel, Defense Energy Support Center contracting officer; Lieutenant General Robert T. Dail, Defense Logistics Agency director; Keith Walters, Usibelli Coal Mine general manager; and Colin Keith, Usibelli Coal Mine purchasing agent.

Northwest Mining Association conference in Reno, Nevada in January 2007, UCM was recognized for outstanding environmental stewardship.

International contract — UCM recently secured an export contract for three shipments of coal to South America during the first half of 2007. The Alaska Railroad will transport the coal from Healy to the Port of Seward where it will be loaded on Panamax vessels capable of approximately 70,000 tons payload.

Well-earned promotion — Scott Stowell has recently been promoted to the position of assistant maintenance manager at Usibelli Coal Mine in Healy, Alaska. Stowell has been with UCM for more than 30 years. Keith Walters, the General Manager said, "Scott understands mining operations and maintenance of equipment exceptionally well and has a lot of experience in the shops and the supply warehouse, and is the resident expert in regard to environmental compliance."

Xtel International introduces three new products

Xtel International has developed a DC voltage/current sensor that draws less than 2mA. The sensor is primarily used to measure the forward and reflected RF power of an antenna system and can also be used with current shunts to measure DC current draw of equipment.

Intended for operators of remote communications sites, the product's low cur-

rent consumption is useful for keeping track of VSWR and DC power usage or power generation.

Xtel has also introduced a low power, low temperature video camera that doesn't require a computer or heater to operate.

The camera works with an XTA callout unit and allows the user to receive alarms via telephone and email while providing access to live video on demand. The company says the camera is "great for forestry and other environmental monitoring groups."

Xtel would also like to announce that it's finalizing the new Xtel Monitoring Web site

The site will gather information from XTA callouts and give users the ability to generate work orders based on alarms, view graphical representations of logged data and download logged data for further analysis.

With an appropriately equipped XTA, clients will be able to receive an alarm on their phone, listen to local audio in real time through the phone line, zoom in with the camera in live mode and have a log of events for their records. Clients will also be able to rent space on Xtel's Monitoring site, something the company is doing to save clients the cost of developing or hosting their own.

For more information on additional products in development that focus on low power, low temperature, remote site monitoring and control, email sales@xtelinternational.com.

A day on the job at North Slope Telecom





Clockwise from top: Installing a microwave antenna in Kuparuk. The antenna was used to provide network and telephone communications to a new satellite field.

phone communications to a new satellite field.

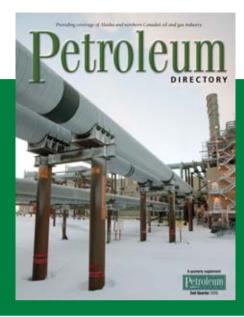
A North Slope Telecom tower crew installs antennas for two-way radio and cellular coverage on an ice road in NPRA during the winter exploration season of 2005.

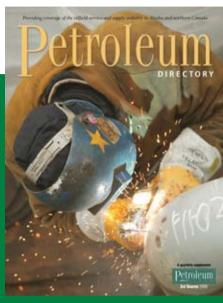
Installing an antenna on Reef Island. The radio system being installed was designed to support tanker operations in Prince William Sound.

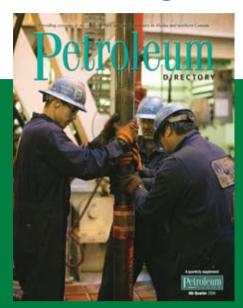
Photos courtesy of North Slope Telecom



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