

## Legendary geologist Ken Bird dies; Rutherford to Pantheon; RDC's 50th

ON APRIL 23, Kenneth "Ken" Bird passed away peacefully at home in Palo Alto, California at 85 years of age.

Ken's professional geological career is legendary. During his senior year at Oregon State University, he was hired by Shell as a summer intern to participate in geological field investigations in northern Alaska. A year later, during continued work with Shell, he was injured in an Alaska North Slope rockfall leading to a life-long disability.

Ken then spent 5 years completing M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in geology at the University of Wisconsin followed by 45 years exploring Alaska for the oil industry and the U.S. Geological Survey.

His scientific leadership in highly visible and politically volatile USGS projects, including petroleum-resource assessments of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, non-federal lands, and the global Arctic contributed substantially to a deep understanding of the geological history and petroleum-resource potential of those regions.

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## Armstrong: '500 to 800 million barrels of recoverable oil' found

On June 10, Bill Armstrong told Petroleum News that "500 to 800 million barrels of recoverable oil" is his estimate for the Sockeye discovery on the Lagniappe block on Alaska's eastern North Slope.

On April 24, APA Corp. and its partners Lagniappe Alaska LLC, an Armstrong company, and Oil Search (Alaska) LLC, a subsidiary of Santos Ltd., announced the results of a successful flow test of the Sockeye-2 exploration well.

APA's Apache holds a 50% working interest, operator Lagniappe and partner Santos each hold 25% working interests in the 325,411-acre exploratory Lagniappe block which is located on state of Alaska lands.

"This is very exciting for us, our partners and for the state of Alaska," Armstrong said in a June 10 text to PN.

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## Hilcorp sole Cook Inlet bidder, takes five tracts, 21,802 acres

Hilcorp Alaska was the sole bidder in the state's spring Cook Inlet areawide oil and gas lease sale, taking five tracts, an estimated 21,801.79 acres, at the fixed price of \$40 per acre, for a total of \$872,071.60.

The bid variable for the Cook Inlet sale was net profit share, with no royalty. Hilcorp bid the minimum 5% net profit share on all five tracts.

There were no bids in the Alaska Peninsula areawide, held at the same time. The variable for the Alaska Peninsula sale was the cash bonus bid and a 12.5% royalty, with a minimum bid of \$5 per acre. There are no active state leases in the Alaska Peninsula areawide sale area. Alaska Peninsula tracts last received bids in 2014.

Bids were submitted through EnergyNet beginning May 19,

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## FINANCE & ECONOMY

# ANS cuts above \$70

Iran-related Middle East tensions, China agreement fuel crude rally

By STEVE SUTHERLIN

Petroleum News

West Texas Intermediate crude skyrocketed \$3.17 June 11 to close at \$68.15 per barrel, while Brent vaulted \$2.90 to close at \$69.77, surging as Middle East tensions intensified due to the geopolitical situation involving Iran.

The Alaska North Slope crude price for June 11 — which is estimated by the Alaska Department of Revenue — was not yet released as Petroleum News went to press early June 12.

Crude slid on June 10, taking ANS down 39 cents to close at \$70.35 — maintaining a toehold for a third consecutive day above \$70, which it touched last for a single day April 22 with a close

of \$70.35 on April 22. WTI was down 31 cents to close at \$64.98 and Brent edged 17 cents lower to close at \$66.87.

On June 10, ANS closed at a \$5.37 premium over WTI and a \$3.48 premium over Brent.

ANS — having consistently traded at a premium over WTI and Brent of late — likely closed above the two benchmarks on June 11, to maintain its perch above the \$70 level for a fourth day.

Middle East geopolitical heat added rocket fuel to a host of other bullish factors for crude June 11.

The U.S. administration said it had achieved an agreement with China on tariffs and other trade issues, easing fears that tariffs might impede the economies of both nations and cool

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## NATURAL GAS

# Glenfarne on Alaska LNG

Company founder in Q&A with Gov. Dunleavy on merits of Alaska project

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News

Brendan Duval, CEO and founder of Glenfarne, is determined to get the Alaska LNG Project done. That was his comment at the conclusion of a Q&A session he did with Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy in Anchorage June 5 at the Alaska Sustainable Energy Conference.

In March Glenfarne became 75% owner of Alaska Gasline Development Corp.'s 8 Star Alaska subsidiary, gaining the obligation to finance and build Alaska LNG.

The plan is to build the project in phases —



BRENDAN DUVAL



MIKE DUNLEAVY

starting with the pipeline between the North Slope and the west side of Cook Inlet, bringing natural gas to Southcentral. The liquefied natural gas facility at Nikiski and the Arctic Conditioning Plant on the North Slope would come later, along with extension of the pipeline under Cook Inlet and the addition of compression along the line.

## Financing

The initial pipeline phase is estimated to cost

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## GOVERNMENT

# Reducing NPR-A restrictions

Proposed rollback of regulation changes mainly impacts 'special areas'

By ALAN BAILEY

For Petroleum News

The recently announced proposal by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management to rollback additional environmental protections introduced by the Biden administration for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska primarily impact what are referred to as "special areas," areas that have been identified as needing particularly stringent environmental protection.

BLM oversees the NPR-A under the National Petroleum Reserves Production Act, which was passed in 1976. And the agency maintains regulations that spell out specifically how the agency manages the NPR-A under the terms of the NPRPA. The statute and the associated regulations

*The revised regulations implemented by the Biden administration in April 2024 incorporated the two new special areas into the NPR-A regulations, thus mandating the use of these special areas, regardless of any revisions to the IAP.*

encompass three mandates: the need to conduct an oil and gas leasing, exploration and development program; the protection from that program of environmental, historic and scenic resources; and the maximum protection of surface values within special areas.

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