



Petroleum Directory inside



Insider this week: Alberta on its way to OPEC? Former Phillips executive still missing

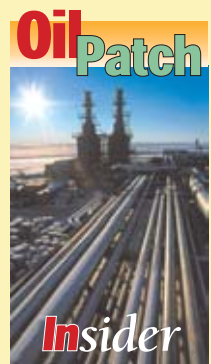
For three decades, the oilmen of Alberta have often squirmed as the rest of Canada has portrayed them as Blue-Eyed Sheiks, with strong overtones of getting rich at someone else's expense.

Now, rather than fight the label, they have been invited to cross the divide and take an observer's seat at OPEC.

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries President Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, who is also Qatar's oil minister, said July 10 in Calgary he would "be happy to see Alberta" take its place alongside other observers: Russia, Mexico, Oman and Argentina.

He said Alberta, as one of the world's top 10 hydrocarbon producing regions, would be welcomed by the cartel.

If it happens, it would culminate years of flirting with world oil politics by Alberta, starting in 1989 when the province attended a session of OPEC and non-OPEC producers.



see **INSIDER** page A15

CALGARY, ALBERTA

Gasline debate over

Two Arctic gaslines best bet, says Kvisle, debunking over-the-top option

By **GARY PARK**

Petroleum News Calgary Correspondent

It would be no cheaper to move natural gas from both the North Slope and Mackenzie Delta in a single pipeline than in two separate systems, said TransCanada Chief Executive Officer Hal Kvisle, in debunking proponents of an "over-the-top" option.

Endorsing Alaska's desire to have its own overland route, he said the debate over one pipeline or two is "pretty well concluded by now."

Taking issue with those who argue the economic merits of linking Alaska gas into a pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley, Kvisle noted there are many economic factors to be weighed.

Speaking July 14 to the annual summit of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region in Calgary, he said all pipelines have to be carefully sized to "move only the amount of gas that's available to be



TransCanada CEO Hal Kvisle

moved."

Both the proposed Mackenzie Valley and Alaska Highway systems are "sized and designed" to operate at "maximum efficiency," he said. Thus it would be "no cheaper to move the gas through a single pipeline."

However, Kvisle said the original work done by engineers suggests that an onshore connection from Prudhoe Bay to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories "would be the cheapest" option.

Kvisle dismisses Beaufort Sea route

Failing an onshore tie-in, he dismissed the Arctic Resources bid for a pipeline under the

see **GASLINE** page A12

UNITED STATES

Earnings slide, profits rise

Independents drop 20% in second quarter; profits for Pioneer, Evergreen

PETROLEUM NEWS HOUSTON STAFF

The leading U.S.-based independents could see more than a 20 percent decline in 2003 second-quarter earnings compared to the first quarter, due almost entirely to an erosion in oil and gas prices.

Still, profits for the second quarter ending June 30 should be about 45 percent higher than the year-ago quarter when commodity prices were languishing, according to a Petroleum News survey based on Thompson/First Call estimates for 15 exploration and production companies.

Earnings projections for the 2003 third quarter are flat to second-quarter estimates, reflecting uncertainty over factors that can dramatically influ-

ence U.S. natural gas prices, including weather.

Second-quarter estimates reflect an average gas price of \$5.40 per million cubic feet and an average oil price of \$29 per barrel, compared to a more robust first-quarter average of \$6.59 per million cubic feet for gas and \$34 per barrel for oil.

Companies surveyed by Petroleum News during the week of July 13 are Devon Energy, Anadarko Petroleum, Burlington Resources, Apache, Kerr-McGee, Noble Energy, Unocal, XTO Energy, Pioneer Natural Resources, Chesapeake Energy, EOG Resources, Forest Oil, Tom Brown, Newfield Exploration and Evergreen Resources.

see **EARNINGS** page A15

BRISTOL BAY, ALASKA

Bristol Bay road considered

Road could spur oil-gas extraction, end fish reliance; LNG facility possible

By **ELLEN LOCKYER**

Petroleum News Contributing Writer

Alaska's state administration is pushing forward with a plan that could result in exploitation of hundreds of millions of barrels of oil. Gov. Frank Murkowski said July 10 that the state is considering building a road along the Alaska Peninsula the 180 or so miles from King Salmon to Chignik to access hydrocarbon-rich state and Native corporation lands. Murkowski said the road will be constructed with the proceeds of a state oil and gas lease sale tentatively scheduled for the peninsula in 2005.

An agreement between the state and the Bristol

If the state ... petitions the Interior Department to remove the (Bristol Bay OCS) moratorium, then Interior would consider it and make a recommendation to the president: "This is not a departmental decision. This is a presidential decision."
—Robin Cacy, MMS

Bay Native Corp. requires the state to hold annual areawide lease sales in the region as soon as possible. Murkowski said the area under consideration is a "jewel that has been sitting idle for 30 years."

see **ROAD** page A13

BREAKING NEWS

A6 Greenspan spurns: Federal Reserve Board chairman opposes Alaska gasline subsidies, endorses Mackenzie project

A7 Heinze appointed: Alaska Natural Gas Development Authority names former ARCO executive Harold Heinze CEO

A10 B.C. stirs things up: Frustrated with federal foot-dragging, province is trying to drive decisions on offshore drilling

Alaska - Mackenzie Rig Report

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

Alaska Rig Status

North Slope - Onshore

Doyon Drilling			
Dreco 1250 UE	14 (SCR/TD)	Milne Point, drilling S-pad MPS-14i	BP
Sky Top Brewster NE-12	15 (SCR/TD)	Idle, Endicott Island	BP
Dreco 1000 UE	16 (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Available
Dreco D2000 UEBD	19 (SCR/TD)	Alpine, drilling CD2-55	ConocoPhillips
OIME 2000	141 (SCR/TD)	Drilling 1B-pad, 1B-20	ConocoPhillips/ Winstar

Nabors Alaska Drilling			
Trans-ocean rig	CDR-1 (CT)	Stacked, Prudhoe Bay	Available
Dreco 1000 UE	2-ES (SCR)	Prudhoe Bay, 15-23A	BP
Mid-Continent U36A	3-S	Stacked, Prudhoe Bay	Available
Oilwell 700 E	4-ES (SCR)	Prudhoe Bay, DS 6-02	BP
Dreco 1000 UE	7-ES (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Kuparuk	ConocoPhillips
Dreco 1000 UE	9-ES (SCR/TD)	Prudhoe Bay, V-111	BP
Oilwell 2000 Hercules	14-E (SCR)	Stacked, Prudhoe Bay	Anadarko
Oilwell 2000 Hercules	16-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Camp Lonely	Available
Oilwell 2000	17-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Point McIntyre	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist -2	18-E (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Available
OIME 1000	19-E (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	ConocoPhillips
Emsco Electro-hoist Varco TDS3	22-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Milne Point	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist Canrig 1050E	27-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Available
Emsco Electro-hoist	28-E (SCR)	Stacked, Deadhorse	Available
OIME 2000	245-E	Stacked, Kuparuk	ConocoPhillips

Nordic Calista Services			
Superior 700 UE	1 (SCR/TD)	W-16	BP
Superior 700 UE	2 (SCR)	Milne Point, L-1A	BP
Ideco 900	3 (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Kuparuk 1Q pad	Available

North Slope - Offshore

Nabors Alaska Drilling			
Oilwell 2000	33-E (SCR/TD)	Stacked until October	BP

Seatankers			
Dreco 147	SDC	Rig cold stacked	EnCana

Cook Inlet Basin - Onshore

Marathon Oil Co. (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contractor)			
Taylor	Glacier 1	Kenai Gas Field, KU 14X-6 WO	Marathon

Inlet Drilling Alaska/Cooper Construction			
Kremco 750	CC-1	Stacked, Kenai	Available

Nabors Alaska Drilling			
Rigmasters 850	129	Happy Valley	Unocal
National 110 UE	160 (SCR)	Stacked, Kenai	Available
Continental Emsco E3000	273	Hansen #1	ConocoPhillips

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

Evergreen Resources Alaska			
Wilson Super 38	96-19	Stacked in yard	Evergreen Resources Alaska Corporation
Engersol Rand	1	Stacked in yard	Evergreen Resources Alaska Corporation

Cook Inlet Basin - Offshore

XTO Energy (Inlet Drilling Alaska labor contract)			
National 1320	A	Idle	Idle
National 110	C (TD)	Testing, C 13-13LN post-frac	XTO

Nabors Alaska Drilling			
IDECO 2100 E	429E (SCR)	Osprey, Redoubt Shoal RU #4RD	Forest Oil

Unocal (Nabors Alaska Drilling labor contractor)
Not Available

Kuukpik			
	5	Working on A-10 redrill, Tyonek platform	ConocoPhillips

Mackenzie Rig Status

Mackenzie Delta-Onshore

Akita Equitak			
Dreco 1250 UE	63 (SCR/TD)	Stacked, Swimming Point, NT	Petro-Canada
	64	Stacked, Inuvik, NT	Available

Central Mackenzie Valley

Akita/SAHTU			
Oilwell 500	51	Stacked, Norman Wells	Available

Nabors Drilling			
Oilwell 500	62	Stacked, Norman Wells	Available

The Alaska - Mackenzie Rig Report as of July 16, 2003.
Active drilling companies only listed.

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

This rig report was prepared by Wadeen Hepworth



Cook Inlet Platform

Courtesy Offshore Divers

Baker Hughes North America rotary rig counts*

	July 11	July 4	Year Ago
US	1065	1077	848
Canada	382	375	270
Gulf	103	103	103

Highest/Lowest

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

*Issued by Baker Hughes since 1944

The Alaska - Mackenzie Rig Report is sponsored by:



Rig start-ups expected in next 6 months

Seatankers

EnCana will move the SDC from the McCovey drill site in Beaufort Sea across the Canadian border to Herschel Is. in August.

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Foshee named El Paso president

Houston-based El Paso Corp. said July 16 that its board of directors unanimously elected Douglas Foshee, currently executive vice president and chief operating officer for Halliburton, as president, chief executive officer and a director of El Paso, effective Sept. 2.

Ronald Kuehn Jr., El Paso's CEO, will continue as chairman of the board.

Foshee joined Halliburton in 2001; prior to that he held various positions with Nuevo Energy, Torch Energy Advisor and ARCO International Oil and Gas.

El Paso is the leading provider of natural gas services and the largest pipeline company in North America.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Bristol Bay Naives ask Stevens to pull OCS drilling moratorium from bill



SEN. TED STEVENS

A moratorium on Bristol Bay outer continental shelf oil and gas development has been a feature of U.S. Department of the Interior appropriations bills in recent years, but it is not included in the appropriations bill for the upcoming fiscal year, FY '04, which begins Oct. 1.

"At the request of the Bristol Bay Native Corp, Sen. Stevens did not include that moratorium this year," Melanie Alvord, press secretary for U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, told Petroleum News July 17. She said the bill is out of committee and awaiting action on the Senate floor.

The U.S. Minerals Management Service handles leasing on the outer continental shelf. In addition to the removal of the moratorium from the Interior appropriation, presidential action would be needed (see story page 1).

WASHINGTON, D.C.

API says Rocky Mountain best chance for near-term gas U.S. region

On July 16, Red Cavaney, president of the American Petroleum Institute, called on the U.S. Congress to resolve the country's growing natural gas shortage.

Cavaney said the Rocky Mountain region can produce the most natural gas in the near-term because of its large gas reserves and its ability to bring supplies to U.S. markets within two years. He urged Congress, which is on the verge of passing a new national energy policy bill, to open more federal lands in the Rocky Mountain basins to natural gas drilling.

Cavaney also complained of obstacles to obtaining drilling permits and a lack of pipelines to move the gas from the Rocky Mountain region. (See "Enbridge wants to build gasline from Powder River" in the July 7 issue of Petroleum News.)

The U.S. Department of Energy recently completed a detailed study of one of the natural gas-bearing regions in the Rocky Mountains, the Greater Green River Basin of Wyoming and Colorado. DOE found that nearly 68 percent of the area's technically recoverable natural gas resource — as much as 79 trillion cubic feet of natural gas — is either closed to development or under significant access restrictions.

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

Petroleum News (ISSN 1544-3612) Week of July 20, 2003

Vol. 8, No. 29

Published weekly. Address: 5441 Old Seward, #3, Anchorage, AK 99518

(Please mail ALL correspondence to:

P.O. Box 231651, Anchorage, AK 99523-1651)

Subscription prices in U.S. — \$52.00 for 1 year, \$96.00 for 2 years, \$140.00 for 3 years. Canada / Mexico — \$165.95 for 1 year, \$323.95 for 2 years, \$465.95 for 3 years.

Overseas (sent air mail) — \$200.00 for 1 year, \$380.00 for 2 years, \$545.95 for 3 years.

"Periodicals postage paid at Anchorage, AK 99502-9986."

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Petroleum News, P.O. Box 231651 • Anchorage, AK 99523-1651.

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NORTH AMERICAN BRIEFS

Noble puts up \$25.2 billion for jack-up

Noble Corp. exercised its option to purchase the premium jack-up drilling unit, the Trident 19, from a subsidiary of Schlumberger for \$25.2 million, the company said July 11.

In December 2002, Noble paid an option fee of \$10.8 million to the seller for the right to acquire the unit. Noble's aggregate purchase price for the Modec 300C, independent leg, cantilever jack-up is \$36 million, the company said.

The Trident 19 is currently in the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates and being assimilated into Noble's Middle East fleet, which totals 10 units. The unit has been renamed the Noble Gene House.

"We are confident the unit will be under contract by late third quarter of 2003," said Noble CEO James Day.

Rowan posts loss; pledges turnaround

Rowan Cos., although incurring another loss in the 2003 second quarter, said the quarter represented a "dramatic turnaround" in its effort to return the drilling company to profitability.

The Houston-based contractor weighed in July 15 with a second-quarter loss of \$6.6 million or 7 cents per share on revenues of \$158.1 million. That compares to a loss of \$17.2 million or 18 cents per share on revenues of 131.4 million in the first quarter and a loss of \$8.7 million or 9 cents per share on revenues of \$148.5 million for the year-ago period.

Despite the red ink, revenues in the second quarter grew by 20 percent over the first quarter and losses were cut by two-thirds, the company pointed out.

With all 23 Rowan offshore rigs now under contract, "we believe our operating results will continue to improve during the third quarter," Rowan Chairman Bob Palmer said.

Offshore rig utilization was 88 percent during the second quarter versus 82 percent in the first quarter and 87 percent in the year-ago period, Rowan said. The average day rate of \$39,400 in the second quarter increased 13 percent from the first quarter.

Land rig utilization was 76 percent in the second quarter compared to 68 percent in the year-ago period, and the company's average day rate of \$10,600 increased 8 percent from the first quarter and 4 percent from last year's second quarter, Rowan said.

—PETROLEUM NEWS HOUSTON STAFF

• GULF OF MEXICO

Gulf operators work to restore production

Hurricane Claudette forces shutdown of 264 platforms, 41 drilling rigs and nearly a quarter of gulf production; most damage onshore

PETROLEUM NEWS HOUSTON STAFF

Claudette, although not as intense as the hurricane that swept through the Gulf of Mexico last year, nevertheless forced offshore operators to shut in nearly a quarter of the region's production ahead of the storm, according to statistics furnished by the U.S. Minerals Management Service.

By the time Claudette struck the Texas coast July 15, operators had evacuated 264 offshore platforms and curtailed production amounting to 332,942 barrels per day of oil and 2.536 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas.

That hit represented about 21 percent of normal daily oil production of 1.6 million barrels and 18 percent of daily natural gas production of 14 billion cubic feet.

Major gulf producer ChevronTexaco alone reportedly shut in 120,000 barrels per day of oil and 425,000 million cubic of per day of gas ahead of Claudette.

Additionally, 41 drilling rigs or nearly 30 percent of the 140 rigs currently operating in the gulf were evacuated, according to MMS. The 264 shut-in platforms represented just over 6 percent of the gulf's 4,060 platforms.

Crews returning

By July 16, however, many operators already had begun returning crews to offshore platforms and rigs as Claudette, a modest category one hurricane, moved well inland and rapidly dissipated into a trop-

By July 16, however, many operators already had begun returning crews to offshore platforms and rigs as Claudette, a modest category one hurricane, moved well inland and rapidly dissipated into a tropical depression.

ical depression.

MMS said that the number of evacuated platforms and drilling rigs in the gulf had declined to 128 and 17, respectively, and reported daily production shortfalls of 200,409 barrels of oil and 2.197 billion cubic feet of natural gas.

ChevronTexaco said it had restored about half of the production it shut in and re-deployed about 90 percent of the 1,800 workers evacuated from offshore platforms. Shell and ExxonMobil, also major gulf producers, said they also had begun to re-man platforms and to restore production.

Shell had evacuated 300 personnel and shut in daily production of 50,000 barrels of oil and 250,000 million cubic feet of gas, while ExxonMobil had evacuated about 250 personnel and shut in daily production of 43,000 barrels of oil and 250,000 million cubic feet of gas.

Meanwhile, Williams said it expected to have all of its gas supply that was cut by producers to be flowing through the Transco pipeline system by July 17. Transco transports gas to markets in the Southeast and Northeast from producing platforms in the gulf.

The Houston Ship Channel, a major water link to

see **CLAUDETTE** page A5

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HOUSTON, TEXAS

Transocean issues warning on earnings, drilling outlook

Big offshore drilling contractor Transocean ran up the red flag ahead of its scheduled July 29 second-quarter earnings release, saying July 17 that it would report a net loss between 13 cents and 15 cents per share. Analysts had expected the company to make around 5 cents per share.

Transocean attributed the expected loss to several factors, including downtime on rigs and a labor strike in Nigeria. Excluding charges, the company said it still expected to lose between 5 cents and 7 cents per share.

Transocean also warned that it expects "a difficult earnings environment" for the remainder of 2003. The company said it anticipates lower profitability in the company's Gulf of Mexico shallow water and inland water jack-up and barge fleet and "diminishing opportunities" for semi-submersibles and drill ships in the North Sea, Brazil and Southeast Asia.

The company said it expected second-quarter revenues of roughly \$604 million versus \$616 million reported in the first quarter.

In addition, operating costs during the second quarter were expected to exceed previously announced guidance of \$400 million to \$410 million, largely due to unexpected costs associated with a drilling riser separation from its Discoverer Enterprise in deepwater Gulf of Mexico, Transocean said.

The drill ship is now back at work at BP's big Thunder Horse field in Mississippi Canyon following the May 21 incident, the company said, adding that it is exploring whether modifications to the riser system used on eight of its drill ships are necessary.

—PETROLEUM NEWS HOUSTON STAFF



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• LONDON, ENGLAND

Non-OPEC crude could drop oil prices in 2004, predicts IEA; Herrera say it's unlikely

By KAY CASHMAN

Petroleum News Publisher & Managing Editor

Oil supplies from independent producers in Russia and West Africa will overtake growth in global demand for crude next year, potentially undermining the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' efforts to maintain high oil prices, the International Energy Agency said July 11.

In its monthly oil market report the Paris-based agency said that oil prices are likely to remain firm for the rest of the year, but increasing output from non-OPEC producers and the eventual recovery of Iraq's crude exports will pose a challenge to the oil cartel to keep prices within its \$22-\$28 per barrel price target window.

World demand in 2004 is expected to grow by 1.05 million barrels per day to

79.1 million after an increase this year of 1.01 million bpd.

IEA said it saw non-OPEC countries pumping another 1.32 million bpd into the market in 2004, as compared to a growth of 1.11 million bpd in 2003.

The extra non-OPEC oil should be more than enough to supply incremental world oil demand, the agency said, with OPEC losing market share for the fifth year in a row. (See page 1 related OPEC story.)

IEA expects demand for OPEC crude next year to drop by 700,000 bpd to 24.6 million bpd, 1.1 million bpd less than the agency estimated the cartel produced in June.



ROGER HERRERA

"Pressure for lower OPEC production may prove particularly intense early in 2004 (second quarter)," when demand sinks to a seasonal low, IEA said in its report.

Herrera predicts OPEC will hold firm

Petroleum News' favorite oil price guru, oil and gas consultant Roger Herrera, does not think OPEC will allow crude prices to get down below \$20 per barrel.

"Many of the OPEC nations are a rag-tag bunch who are too practiced in graft to be logical, but unless one can identify some obvious self interest in allowing oil prices to decline significantly it is difficult to see why they would allow oil prices to stray outside their agreed range, between \$22 and \$28. ... I think they will try hard not to let that happen," Herrera told Petroleum News July 17.

"They cheat on each other all the time and therefore their ability to control output, and therefore price, is not as acute as it should be. ... Still, OPEC has demonstrated that it has the means to control the price of oil and I argue that they will use those means," he said.

Peak oil production biggest concern

But if the price of oil does go below \$20, which Herrera insists is "highly unlikely ... we should all be concerned because it will stimulate economic recovery and worldwide demand for oil

"Many of the OPEC nations are a rag-tag bunch who are too practiced in graft to be logical, but unless one can identify some obvious self interest in allowing oil prices to decline significantly it is difficult to see why they would allow oil prices to stray outside their agreed range, between \$22 and \$28." —Roger Herrera

and thereby accelerate the time to peak oil output," after which time Herrera, and a worldwide contingency of scientists, believe oil production will go into permanent decline. (The Hubbard curve, which was accurate in predicting the peak in U.S. domestic production, predicts a peak in world oil production in the next three years.)

"After that, life will probably become very difficult," Herrera said. The variables that could affect the price of oil in the "next year or so are very unpredictable given the politics of the Middle East and our presidential election. It would be a hazardous exercise to guess," he said.

More interesting than the short term oil price "is the relative value of the dollar and euro and the possibility that petrodollars will be replaced by petroeuros. Who knows, more surprising things have happened recently," Herrera said. ●

continued from page A4

CLAUDETTE

area refineries, was re-opened to tanker traffic early July 16, the U.S. Coast Guard said.

Claudette and her 80-mph winds appeared to have caused far more damage onshore than offshore as the storm whipped Texas coastal communities, causing major flooding and knocking down

power lines. About 130,000 homes and businesses reportedly lost power during the storm.

Last year offshore producers were hit hard by back-to-back storms — Tropical Storm Isidore followed by Hurricane Lili — between Sept. 23 and Oct. 18. MMS estimated that more than 14.4 million barrels of oil and 88.9 billion cubic feet of natural gas were unavailable for U.S. consumption because of the shutdown of oil and gas operations in the gulf. ●

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GULF OF MEXICO

Pioneer gas production up 39 percent in North America

Pioneer Natural Resources said July 17 that it has set a new record for quarterly gas production from North America with approximately 48 billion cubic feet of gas produced during the second quarter, up 39 percent from the first quarter of the year. Pioneer said gas production from its Gulf of Mexico deepwater Canyon Express and Falcon projects met expectations, "putting the quarter's worldwide oil and gas production at approximately 14.5 million barrels oil equivalent."

Pioneer operates and has a 100 percent interest in the Falcon field. Canyon Express is a three-field development. Pioneer has interests in two of the fields: Aconcagua 37.5 percent; Camden Hills 33.3 percent.

WYOMING

CanScot adds to U.S. coalbed methane holdings in Wyoming

Calgary-based minnow CanScot Resources has enlarged its footprint in Wyoming's Powder River basin, the second largest source of coalbed methane in the United States.

Through its wholly owned U.S. subsidiary Tika Energy, CanScot paid \$800,000 to boost its working interest in the Big Bend area of Johnson County, Wyo., to 78.3 percent or 6,540 net acres, from 25 percent.

Tika has participated in more than 80 coalbed methane wells since 1999 in a basin that produces 950 million cubic feet a day.

As operator, it plans to drill eight wells this year on some of the 90 potential development sites it has identified at the Big George coal seams that are east of Big Bend, where the seams are 50 to 80 feet thick at depths of about 1,200 feet. Big George wells average 300,000 cubic feet a day.

—GARY PARK, Petroleum News Calgary correspondent

RUSSIA

Northern Bear leads world natural gas output, exports

Russia is the rapidly emerging world natural gas giant, leading the way in both production and exports, according to the BP Statistical Review of World Energy.

Total Russian production last year was 19.69 trillion cubic feet, bolstered by the start of production from the Zapolyarnoye field, and exports to 18 countries totaled 4.55 tcf.

In taking over top spot among producing nations, Russia bumped the United States to second place at 19.44 tcf, while Canada held third spot at 6.5 tcf, of which 3.86 tcf was shipped to the United States.

The BP review estimated Russia's oil production surged by 642,000 barrels per day. The other leaders in the growth stakes

see **NATURAL GAS** page A8

• MACKENZIE DELTA, CANADA

Slashing through red tape

Regulators deliver speedy response to Mackenzie gas pipeline filing

BY GARY PARK

Petroleum News Calgary Correspondent

After 20 years of being bogged down in doubt, disagreement and delay, Canada's Mackenzie Gas Project is taking on a new image.

From the filing of the preliminary information package for the C\$5 billion scheme it took less than two weeks for the 11 regulatory agencies overseeing the project to report that the document has been "evaluated and accepted as complete."

A formality perhaps and only a small step on a long road, but also a sign that a carefully constructed "single-window" approach to the regulatory phase might work.

It comes just two years after then-Natural Resources Minister Ralph Goodale promised a "one-project-one-assessment" model for the environmental review.

A memorandum of understanding with government, regulatory and aboriginal groups set the

lofty goal of establishing a "framework to ensure that impacts of any northern pipeline proposal receive careful consideration."

"The parties are also mindful of a desire to avoid duplication in the evaluation of any project."

Northern Pipeline Agency resurrected

To speed the process, the Canadian government also resurrected the Northern Pipeline Agency, created initially to deal with the regulatory issues related to development of Arctic gas and rendered inactive when a market downturn in the 1980s and aboriginal resistance scuttled the first serious attempt to bring Arctic gas on stream.

The regulatory timetable now shifts to the formal stage, expected to stretch over 24 to 30 months.

It includes filing separate applications, likely in 2004, to develop the Mackenzie Delta's three anchor fields, the gas gathering system and the pipeline proper along the Mackenzie Valley.

If all goes according to plan, the hearings should be concluded in 2005, followed by facility and pipeline construction in the 2006-08 period, setting the stage for the first deliveries between

see **FILING** page A7

• NORTH AMERICA

Greenspan spurns Alaska gas pipeline "subsidies"

Federal Reserve chairman endorses "fully commercial" Mackenzie project

By GARY PARK

Petroleum News Calgary Correspondent

For the second time, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan has warned that a shortage of natural gas could undermine a fragile U.S. economic recovery, but he does not see a subsidized Alaska pipeline as the answer.



ALAN GREENSPAN

Sticking to his market-knows-best theme, he told the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources July

see **GREENSPAN** page A8

ConocoPhillips calls them "incentives"

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan says subsidies for an Alaska gas pipeline are not necessary at projected natural gas prices.

Joe Marushack, vice president Alaska North Slope gas commercialization for ConocoPhillips Alaska, told the Alaska Natural Gas Development Authority board July 7 that legislation ConocoPhillips is proposing for an Alaska Highway natural gas pipeline project is necessary if a gas pipeline is going to be built.

Federal legislation, he said, "is needed to

see **INCENTIVES** page A8



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• ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Alaska gas authority names Heinze CEO

Temporary offices will be at Joint Pipeline Office in Anchorage; next meeting July 28, web site to be set up

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News Editor-in-Chief

The Alaska Natural Gas Development Authority voted unanimously July 14 to approve Harold Heinze as the authority's chief executive officer. Heinze, a former president of ARCO Alaska and commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, had a short-term contract through the governor's office to do background and startup work for the board of directors of the authority and subsequently applied for the CEO slot.

The authority, established by ballot initiative 3 in November's general election, is charged with designing, constructing, operating and maintaining a natural gas pipeline system from the North Slope to Prince William Sound. It received \$150,000 in funding from the Legislature.

Steve Porter, Department of Revenue deputy commissioner, said Heinze will be a Revenue employee under a contract that ends about March 15 and totals some \$67,000.

Heinze said he and Porter have looked at temporary office space at the Joint Pipeline Office in the Sunshine Mall in Anchorage. The office setup there is more than adequate for a couple of people, Heinze said. The pipeline office also has a large board room, and "that is where all the information is. The office would be located within 50 feet of the state's storehouse of information on pipelines and the gas issue."

Next meeting July 28

Heinze suggested that the board hold its next meeting in two weeks, and it was set for July 28. He said he would have a short list of candidates for the second position, a research assistant/administrator, and a progress report on each of the authority's longer-term project elements. And, he said, the authority web site will be set up.

The Division of Oil and Gas will be asked to present "a rundown on Alaska's gas reserves ... where the gas is in Alaska, what fields and what leaseholders..." and the Department of Revenue will talk about the basis of the different kind

Heinze also said he would go over "a preliminary list of alternatives" the authority should be looking at, and discuss how things should be crossed off the list in the future.

of models the authority will be looking at to evaluate a project.

Heinze also said he would go over "a preliminary list of alternatives" the authority should be looking at, and discuss how things should be crossed off the list in the future.

Porter said the Department of Revenue would provide an update on information available to the public on negotiations under the state's stranded gas act.

Dealing with the market

Board members also discussed getting information from the market.

David Cuddy said Sempra Energy has offered to share more information on its proposed Baja California LNG project if the authority signs a confidentiality

see HEINZE page A8

continued from page A6

FILING

late 2008 and late 2009.

The preliminary information package, although not a formal application for the pipeline and field development, triggers other processes, including the National

The regulatory timetable now shifts to the formal stage, expected to stretch over 24 to 30 months.

Energy Board, Canadian Environmental Assessment, Canadian Oil and Gas Operations and the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management acts.

It outlines plans for a gas-gathering system from the Taglu, Parsons Lake and Niglintgak fields to gas compression and natural gas liquids facilities at Inuvik in the Northwest Territories.

The thinking at this stage involves two pipeline legs — one of almost 800 miles to deliver raw gas to the northwestern corner of Alberta and one of 300 miles to carry 12,000-15,000 barrels a day of gas liquids to Norman Wells in the Central Mackenzie Valley.

The liquids would then flow into the existing Enbridge crude line from Norman Wells to northern Alberta.

But if a combined line for gas and liq-

uids becomes the final choice, the NGL facility would be built at Norman Wells rather than Inuvik.

Firm transportation agreements in 2005, once permits issued

Firm service transportation agreements will be executed in 2005 once regulatory permits have been issued. If there are no commitments other than from the anchor fields, the Aboriginal Pipeline Group can use its pre-development expenditures to gain an equivalent ownership position in the pipeline, at the expense of the producers' group.

Details of the actual route will be

Among the unknowns is the response from environmentalists beyond their allegations two years ago that the cooperative deal on streamlining the pipeline review seemed crafted towards approval rather than a rigorous assessment

determined during "further technical and commercial studies, socio-economic and environmental impact assessment" as well as public consultations.

The current map shows five compressor stations which could boost pipeline capacity to 1.9 billion cubic feet per day from the "base case" of 1.2 bcf per day.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Chevron: 20 tcf recoverable at Jansz

ChevronTexaco said July 16 a production test in the Jansz gas field some 125 miles off the northwest coast of Western Australia has demonstrated "the field's extensive production potential." The company said the Jansz-3 well, tested in the WA-18-R permit area, flowed at more than 72 million cubic feet a day.

Appraisal drilling on the Jansz field earlier this year indicated a field size in excess of 760 square miles with an interpreted 1,300 foot gross gas column. Including an extension of the Io-Jansz structure into the adjacent Chevron-operated WA-267-P block, Chevron said it estimates the field contains approximately 20 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas.

Combining its stake in Io-Jansz with additional interests in the North West Shelf and greater Gorgon ventures, Chevron said it is the largest holder of uncommitted gas resources in Australia, in excess of 25 tcf. Chevron, operator of the Gorgon joint venture, is seeking approval to develop a gas processing plant on Barrow Island, off the northwest coast of Australia, for the development of Gorgon gas. Initial development is pegged at US\$7.2 billion, and "is a key to unlocking the vast resources in the greater Gorgon area."

The preliminary information package is intended to help the regulatory agencies "identify their roles and obligations" in the regulatory phase.

For now, the delta producers' group has listed seven challenges that the project faces: A favorable gas-market outlook; verification of sufficient delta reserves without the need for costly exploration in the Beaufort Sea; sound returns for the owners; safe and environmentally acceptable operations; timely regulatory approvals; stable government fiscal terms; and backing from the financial markets.

Among the unknowns is the response from environmentalists beyond their allegations two years ago that the coop-

erative deal on streamlining the pipeline review seemed crafted towards approval rather than a rigorous assessment.

A spokesman for the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee said at the time that the governments and First Nations were focused only on "how to approve this proposal."

But an official with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is emphatic that the federal government will show its commitment to a high-quality assessment.

"We want to achieve it in a manner that facilitates coordination and provides opportunities for participation," he said. ●



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QATAR

ConocoPhillips and Qatar Petroleum to develop large-scale LNG project

Qatar Petroleum and ConocoPhillips said July 11 that they have signed an agreement for development of Qatargas 3, a large-scale liquefied natural gas project in Qatar to service the U.S. natural gas market. The companies said the agreement provides the framework for necessary project agreements and completion of key feasibility studies.

Qatargas 3 will produce 7.5 million tons of LNG per year, with average daily sales volumes projected at 1 billion cubic feet. Startup will be in the 2008-2009 timeframe. Gas will be from Qatar's North field and the project will include "a new, first-of-class LNG train" at Ras Laffan Industrial City, and a fleet of state-of-the-art LNG carriers.

ConocoPhillips will purchase the LNG and be responsible for re-gasification and marketing in the United States.

LNG capacity in Qatar is 14 million tons per year. That will rise to 26 million tons per year by the end of 2005, with expansion plans to reach 40 million tons per year by 2010.

Many other proposals in works

ConocoPhillips described a number of other expansion and green field projects to the Alaska Natural Gas Development Authority board July 7. Gary Endorf, who is with ConocoPhillips Alaska's gas group, discussed 13 projects, including expansion and green field, which would put 68.9 million tons per year of LNG onto the world market by 2007. Of those 68.9 million tons, 9.5 million tons are committed now, he said, and 24.2 million tons are committed in 2010, which leaves 44.7 million tons per annum uncommitted in 2010.

Of those projects, ConocoPhillips is the majority partner in the Darwin LNG project, expected to start up in 2006 with 3 million tons a year of LNG.

Compared to the just-announced 7.5 million ton a year Qatargas 3 project, the 13 Endorf discussed range in size from 2 million ton per year expansion projects (Qatargas de-bottleneck) to 9 million ton per year green field projects (Sakhalin II).

ConocoPhillips is reportedly also partnering with ChevronTexaco for an LNG project offshore Venezuela which could be in production by 2009 (see below).

—KRISTEN NELSON, Petroleum News editor-in-chief

VENEZUELA

U.S. majors Chevron and Conoco eye LNG project in Venezuela

ChevronTexaco and ConocoPhillips are assembling plans to invest \$2.1 billion by 2009 in a liquefied natural gas project to tap 4-6 trillion cubic feet of probable reserves offshore Venezuela.

The supermajors expect to start drilling the Loran Block of the Delta Platform in 2004. Facilities include a 190 mile pipeline to an LNG processing plant.

ConocoPhillips joined the project in June with a 40 percent stake, with ChevronTexaco retaining 60 percent. But once commercial production starts, Venezuela's state-owned PDVSA has an option to acquire 35 percent.

The project would operate adjacent to a long-planned \$2.5 billion LNG venture by Shell, Japan's Mitsubishi and PDVSA, which intends to use BP's LNG plant in Trinidad to process some of the gas.

Venezuela is hoping to attract \$4 billion in LNG spending over the next six years, aiming to build exports to the United States.

continued from page A7

HEINZE

agreement. John Kelsey said that with the authority's short timeframe and the narrow window of opportunity for getting Alaska LNG into the market, the authority should get all of the information it can, "even if we have to sign a confidentiality form in order to get that."

Heinze said he would be happy to address issues related to interacting with the market at the July 28 meeting. He said part of any conversation with California markets "has to be what they can do to

help us. There's a quid pro quo as part of that conversation." He said he wasn't sure that the authority knows what to ask for right now, "but I know we should ask for some help."

Heinze said the California situation is complicated because of the regulatory agencies there, and he said it will be hard to talk to commercial enterprises without understanding the regulatory framework and what the state of Alaska's standing is with California's agencies. He said he thinks it is necessary to talk with private enterprise and the agencies simultaneously. ●

continued from page A6

NATURAL GAS

were Canada at 168,000 bpd — although the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers put Canada at only 123,000 bpd — Angola at 163,000 bpd, Brazil at 163,000 bpd and the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan at 153,000 bpd.

BP said world consumption climbed

2.6 percent from 2001 to 9,405 million tonnes of primary energy use, dominated by China's 28 percent increase in coal consumption.

Natural gas consumption rose 2.8 percent, including a 3.9 percent increase in the United States, but world oil consumption gained only 29,000 bpd to 3.25 million bpd.

—GARY PARK, Petroleum News Calgary correspondent

continued from page A6

GREENSPAN

10 that government financial help is not needed when gas prices are expected to remain above \$4.50 per million British thermal units through 2009.

Profitability at that level is "quite adequate by any measure," he said.

Greenspan, noted that Canada's is proceeding with a pipeline from the Mackenzie Delta to the Lower 48 pipeline structure, with "as best I understand it, minimal to no subsidies at all. It is a fully commercial project."

The comment was made in response to Democratic Sen. Jeff Bingaman, who asked whether the Alaska subsidies in the Senate version of the energy bill would help ease future U.S. gas prices.

Push for more production

Again, Greenspan called for a push to increase North American production and "major expansion" of U.S. facilities to import liquefied natural gas as a "safety valve" to strengthen U.S. supplies.

"I would much prefer that we met domestic consumption with effectively North American production," he said, although LNG could be a solid back-up to U.S., Canadian and Mexican volumes.

"LNG is the ultimate safety valve, even if we don't use it," he said. "Without the flexibility such (LNG) facilities will impart, imbalances in supply and demand must inevitably engender price volatility."

For now, he warned that perceptions of shrinking long-term supplies are "beginning to price some industrial demand out of the market," although he was not certain whether those losses are temporary or permanent.

continued from page A6

INCENTIVES

improve the risk profile of the project."

The regulatory side of the proposed federal legislation, he said, is basically to provide "certainty around the U.S. permitting process, because you can spend years and years and years, investing billions of dollars, and never get to your permits." The regulatory legislation, he said, would provide "timing certainty."

On the fiscal side, the risk profile of the project needs to be improved because of the volatility of gas prices.

"Commodity price, extreme high volatility, that's been the single biggest problem" in the way of getting Alaska gas to market, Marushack said. The federal tax legislation, he said, addresses that volatility problem, and "is structured similar to other federal incentives."

What is proposed is a credit against federal income tax for very low natural gas prices — Marushack called it "essentially an insurance policy." The

Gas-fired industries at risk

However, Greenspan predicted that gas-fired industries are in danger of losing business to foreign competitors, where energy is cheaper.

He told the committee that today's tight gas markets have been a long time coming and "distant future prices suggest that we are not likely to return to earlier periods of relative abundance and low prices soon."

Meanwhile, despite gains in U.S. storage, Lehman Brothers analyst Thomas Driscoll estimated U.S. production declined 3.0-3.5 percent in the second quarter, compared with a year earlier. For Canada, which supplies about 16 percent of U.S. needs, he is still counting on a decline of 2.0-4.0 percent this year.

He told the committee that today's tight gas markets have been a long time coming and "distant future prices suggest that we are not likely to return to earlier periods of relative abundance and low prices soon."

With gas seizing such high-level attention, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham announced July 9 that his department will hold a second summit at an unspecified date later this year on both the supply outlook and LNG.

He said LNG-exporting countries — such as Trinidad, Algeria, Australia, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates — will be invited to the meeting.

Abraham is also stressing the importance of conservation and has launched a "smart energy use tour" to promote better use of gas and electricity, which is increasingly being generated by gas-fired power plants. ●

government studied the proposal and projected, based on public data, that gas prices wouldn't get low enough for the mechanism to kick in.

What if the unexpected happened and natural gas prices dropped low enough to trigger the federal tax credit? "If it does kick in, the consumer gets the benefit of that" lower natural gas price. And without the tax mechanism,

The regulatory legislation, he said, would provide "timing certainty."

Marushack said, "the risk is just probably too great to see this

project go."

And the proposed loan guarantee?

That, he said, would conceivably lower the interest rate for the project, which would make the tariff lower, raising the royalty to the state of Alaska.

As for letting the market decide when the project should be built, with recent gas at reaching extremes of \$2 and \$10, how do you decide when the market is ready? Marushack asked.

—KRISTEN NELSON, Petroleum News editor-in-chief



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• BAJA CALIFORNIA

Baja LNG: market has room for one terminal

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News Editor-in-Chief

Market fundamentals support a liquefied natural gas terminal on the West Coast, but significant challenges remain. And while a number of LNG terminals are in the planning stage, the market only has room for one, Gerardo Rivera told the Alaska Natural Gas Development Authority board July 7.

Rivera, who is with the ConocoPhillips LNG Group out of Houston, said eight projects are in development along the West Coast, with those in Baja California probably the farthest along: Marathon near Tijuana; Sempra and Shell north of Ensenada; and ChevronTexaco offshore near the Mexican Coronado Islands.

Projects face major challenges

Mitsubishi, Crystal Energy and Calpine all have projects in Southern California.

The Marathon project has one of its permits, the CRE from the energy regulatory commission in Mexico, but there is a significant amount of opposition to the project from residents of Tijuana, he said.

The Shell and Sempra proposals are farther along: Both have their environmental permits and Rivera said he believes they will get their CRE permits. But both face local opposition.

ChevronTexaco is talking about both onshore and offshore facilities and Rivera said the focus is on an offshore facility north of Rosarita. "One of the biggest hurdles there is that the government of Mexico does not have standards and regulations established for an offshore facility yet." ChevronTexaco has no permits.

The most prominent project in Southern California is the Mitsubishi project at Long Beach, which has some local support, but has yet to clear the California coastal commission.

Crystal Energy is a small company proposing to use an

existing platform offshore Oxnard to bring in a ship, offload, re-gasify and deliver gas directly to the market. This project is also in very preliminary stages. Technology of offload from an LNG ship to a fixed platform is not yet proven, he said.

Calpine is also looking at using an existing oil platform which is near abandonment.

Three key permits needed

Projects in Mexico require three key permits: the CRE from the energy regulatory commission, the MIA environmental permit from the Mexican equivalent of the Environmental Protection Agency and local land use permits from municipalities and states.

No project has all three permits, he said.

ConocoPhillips also has a Baja California terminal project at Rosarita, a project which has been under way since early 2001. Just a year ago, the company's application for an environmental permit for the facility was denied. ConocoPhillips has learned that "there's a significant amount of opposition in the community" to industrial development, Rivera said, partly because of a lack of understanding about what LNG is, and partly because residents question why facilities should be built in Baja to supply gas to California. When told about permitting difficulties in California the Baja response is: "if you can't even get approval in your country,

why come down here?"

Rivera said that while a number of projects are being developed, "there remain some significant hurdles before they will get to the point where they'll actually have a project that will break ground..."

Market for 1 tcf; 8 tcf worth of projects

Rivera said that while ConocoPhillips believes "the market fundamentals support an LNG import project along

When one projects gets its permits and breaks ground, Rivera said, the seven other projects will be dropped.

the West Coast," there are eight projects with total capacity of more than 8 trillion cubic feet a day of re-gasification capacity. The reality, he said, is that the market supports one terminal.

All of the terminal activity is "a little misleading," he said. "You can't assume that there's that much demand down there. The demand is about a bcf a day, which is one terminal, 7 million tons per annum of LNG capacity." When one projects gets its permits and breaks ground, he said, the seven other projects will be dropped.

ConocoPhillips believes most of the supply for that one West Coast terminal "will come from excess supplies in Asia Pacific," where projects with lower cost structures are under development. It's the lower cost structure that is significant, he said — how does the cost structure for Alaska LNG compare to LNG from Indonesia or LNG from Sakhalin? Because Alaska LNG would be at a cost disadvantage, LNG from Asia-Pacific areas could "come in at a lower cost in California than an Alaska LNG project."

In addition to permitting, there are a lot of commercial issues remaining, he said, a lot of hurdles to overcome.

And as for West Coast developers committing to buying LNG for terminals, Rivera said it's a bit of a chicken and egg deal: "the developers want to buy the supply, but then the sellers — the producers — want to see who's going to be the winning developer." A developer who locks up supply could be called the winner, he said, but if a producer commits to a developer who doesn't build a facility, the producer misses out on the opportunity to sell 7 million tons a year to the eventual winner.

"So there's only going to be one terminal there," Rivera said: "No one wants to commit to the particular developer because there's still a long ways to go before the deals are going to be complete." ●

Because Alaska LNG would be at a cost disadvantage, LNG from Asia-Pacific areas could "come in at a lower cost in California than an Alaska LNG project."



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GULF OF MEXICO

Apache lands Shell-owned Gulf of Mexico assets

Apache continued on its acquisition trail with a \$500 million deal to acquire a basket of maturing Shell holdings on the outer continental shelf of the Gulf of Mexico.

In the same year that it paid \$1.3 billion for aging BP assets in the gulf and U.K. North Sea, the Houston-based independent has paid \$200 million to close the purchase and increase its reserves by 125 billion cubic feet of natural gas and 6.6 million barrels of oil from 15 operated and 11 non-operated interests.

Before the deal, Morgan Stanley paid Shell \$300 million to acquire an overriding royalty interest in a portion of the lower-risk reserves to be produced over the next four years.

Daily output from the properties is expected to average 70.4 million cubic feet of gas and 4,600 barrels of oil for the second half of 2003, with two-thirds flowing from five fields that will be wholly owned by Apache.

Apache Chief Executive Officer Steven Farris said the Shell holdings "lay down well" with his company's existing gulf properties, with several being in the same vicinity as the recently acquired BP interests.

He said Apache intends to maximize production and add new reserves at the "capital-constrained" properties.

—GARY PARK, Petroleum News Calgary correspondent

BRITISH COLUMBIA

B.C. stirs up offshore decision-making on drilling

Showing its frustration with foot-dragging and rifts within the Canadian government, British Columbia is trying to drive decisions on its offshore oil and natural gas ambitions.

It has grabbed the initiative by seeking external legal advice on the key issues blocking development — constitutional and intergovernmental affairs, regulation, administration and taxation.

Having set 2005 as its target date for approving seismic surveys, the province is now assembling a team of lawyers to support government officials.

Meanwhile, the Canadian government shows little desire to push ahead with offshore development.

It has been bogged down by a cabinet split between Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal and Environment Minister David Anderson, both of whom represent British Columbia electorates in the Canadian Parliament. The senior government has also said it needs more time for scientific and public consultations as part of a review process.

Meanwhile, a report by the David Suzuki Foundation, an environmental organization, has listed the legal pitfalls to opening up the offshore to resource exploitation.

see OFFSHORE page A11

• NORTH SLOPE, ALASKA

State approves Oooguruk

Pioneer has already met three-well drilling obligation in unit plan

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News Editor-in-Chief

The state of Alaska approved formation of the Oooguruk unit effective July 11.

The 20,394 acre unit includes all of 11 leases and a portion of a 12th lease in Harrison Bay offshore Alaska's North Slope, north and west of and contiguous with the Kuparuk River unit. Unit operator Pioneer Natural Resources Alaska owns 70 percent of the working interest in the unit and Armstrong Alaska owns 30 percent.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil and Gas said it received only one comment on the application, that from Anadarko Petroleum, which holds an adjoining lease. Anadarko told the state it did not oppose formation of the unit, but reserved the right to apply to join the unit in the future.

Three of the tracts in the unit were won in the state's November 1997 lease sale, two by Union Texas Alaska (now part of ConocoPhillips Alaska) and one by John Winter. The primary term of those leases expires Dec. 31, 2004. Armstrong won the



Oooguruk Ice Island with Nabors rig 27E, winter 2003 other nine leases in October 2001. Those leases expire June 31, 2009. Union Texas bid \$3.2 million for its two leases, Winter bid just under \$205,000, and Armstrong bid \$2.5 million, for a total of \$5.84 million in bonus bids. Armstrong assigned Pioneer a 70 percent working interest in their nine leases in late 2002, and in March 2003, leases

see OOGURUK page A11

• CANADA

Upstream sector still on fire

Record well permits issued in Canada in first half; land sales robust

By GARY PARK

Petroleum News Calgary Correspondent

Fueled by high oil and natural gas prices, land sales and well permits continue at a robust pace in Canada, pointing to a boom drilling year.

Regulators authorized a record 12,269 new wells — 8,115 targeting gas prospects — in the first half of 2003, surpassing the 2001 record by 11 percent, while auctions of government land fetched C\$630 million, compared with C\$395 million to the mid-point of 2002, but lagging well behind the 2001 record of C\$957 million.

But drilling activity is "picking up speed, even beyond out expectations," said Don Herring, president of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors.

The association is confident the year's well

It said the 418 rigs currently operating in Western Canada beats its expectations by 12.3 percent, reflecting industry confidence that commodity prices are not about to weaken.

count will reach about 17,500, short of the 2001 benchmark of 17,945.

It said the 418 rigs currently operating in Western Canada beats its expectations by 12.3 percent, reflecting industry confidence that commodity prices are not about to weaken.

Land sales top last year by more than a million acres

Land sales to the end of June this year tallied 5.93 million acres for all of Canada, compared

see UPSTREAM page A12



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● KENAI PENINSULA, ALASKA

Alaska okays Ninilchik expansion

Former Falls Creek unit now part of Marathon Oil's Ninilchik unit; three participating areas also approved

By KRISTEN NELSON

Petroleum News Editor-in-Chief

The state of Alaska has approved expansion of the Marathon Oil-operated Ninilchik unit on the Kenai Peninsula and formation of three participating areas within the unit, subject to the drilling of three wells. The unit consists of primarily offshore state oil and gas leases on the Ninilchik anticline, which approximately parallels the shoreline of the Kenai Peninsula for more than 16 miles from near Clam Gulch to just north of Ninilchik. The unit targets natural gas in various reservoirs of the upper Tyonek formation.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil and Gas, approved an application by Marathon, majority working interest owner in the Ninilchik unit, for expansion of the unit to encompass the Falls Creek unit and creation of three participating areas: Falls Creek, Grassim Oskolkoff and Susan Dionne. In the June 30 findings and decision, the division said that data provided by Marathon "indicate that the upper Tyonek formation within the three participating areas is capable of producing or contributing to the

production of hydrocarbons in paying quantities."

The division said its approval of the participating areas is subject to Marathon drilling the Marathon Falls Creek No. 3 in 2003, the Marathon Ninilchik State No. 1 by 2005 and the Susan Dionne No. 2 by 2005.

Working interest owners in the former Falls Creek unit, which was entirely within the Ninilchik unit, include Marathon (50.4 percent), Unocal (33.6 percent) and ConocoPhillips Alaska (15.9 percent). Marathon (60 percent) and Unocal (40 percent) are the working interest owners in the Grassim Oskolkoff and Susan Dionne participating areas. The Ninilchik unit expansion area is approximately 630 acres. After the expansion the Ninilchik unit will cover approximately 25,797 acres.

The Falls Creek participating area is approximately 989 acres; Grassim Oskolkoff participating area is approximately 1,920 acres; Susan Dionne participating area is approximately 1,761 acres.

Marathon plans a 3-D seismic program for the Ninilchik unit area in late 2003 which will cover the Susan Dionne and Grassim Oskolkoff participating areas and the southern part of the Falls Creek partici-

The division said its approval of the participating areas is subject to Marathon drilling the Marathon Falls Creek No. 3 in 2003, the Marathon Ninilchik State No. 1 by 2005 and the Susan Dionne No. 2 by 2005.

ating area. Production facilities and the Kenai Kachemak pipeline are under construction with first production is expected in the third quarter of this year.

Some questions about extent of Falls Creek

The division said that Paul L. Craig, owner of a 2 percent overriding royalty interest in a lease contiguous with the northern boundary of the proposed Falls Creek participating area, requested that the division carefully review geological and geophysical data defining the boundaries of the proposed Falls Creek participating area, but did not submit any geological, geophysical or engineering data. The division said it reviewed data and interpretations submitted by Marathon and other working interest owners, publicly available data and confi-

see NINILCHIK page A12

continued from page A10

OOOGURUK

acquired by Union Texas and John Winther were assigned to Pioneer with the original leaseholders retaining overriding royalty interests.

Pioneer announced plans to drill up to three wells in the 2002-03 winter season, with the Kuparuk C sands as the primary target. Those sands, the division said, have been encountered in the Kuparuk River unit southeast of Oooguruk. The exploration program looked at a range of intervals, including the Cretaceous Middle Brookian, Cretaceous Torok, Kuparuk A, Kuparuk C and Jurassic Nuiqsut/ Nechelik.

The division said there are eight wells within a few mile radius of the Oooguruk unit which have been certified as capable of producing in paying quantities...

Nuiqsut tested in Colville Delta

Three wells were drilled: the Ivik No. 1 was spud Feb. 24, 2003, followed by the Oooguruk No. 1 and the Natchiq No. 1. On March 31, Pioneer said it had a 1,3000 barrel per day oil discovery from the Jurassic formation, not the primary Kuparuk C target.

The division said there are three oil-bearing Jurassic sands southwest of the Oooguruk unit: the Nechelik, Nuiqsut and

Alpine sandstones. The Alpine sandstone from the Alpine field discovery well, the Bergschrud No. 1, is not present in the northern Colville Delta area.

"The key to unlocking the reserves within the Jurassic sands is producing the low API gravity oil without damaging the formation with drilling fluids," the division said. Nuiqsut sands were tested in several Colville Delta exploration wells: the Texaco Colville Delta No. 1 (1,075 bpd of 25 degree API oil); the Texaco Colville Delta No. 2 (409 bpd of 24-40 degree API oil); the Texaco Colville Delta No. 3 (374 bpd of 27.7 degree API oil); and the ARCO Kalubik No. 1 (410 bpd of 21 degree API oil).

Pioneer finds Jurassic-aged oil

Pioneer drilled all three of its proposed wells this past winter in the Northwest Kuparuk prospect it had identified from 2-D and 3-D seismic data integrated with surrounding well data. The Oooguruk vertical hole was completed March 29 to a depth of 6,900 feet; the Natchiq was completed March 31 to a measured depth of 7,500 feet and a true vertical depth of 6,740 feet; the Ivik was completed April 9 to a measured depth of 6,943 feet and a true vertical depth of 6,942 feet.

Pioneer said it did not find commercial quantities of oil in its main target,

see OOOGURUK page A12

continued from page A10

OFFSHORE

The foundation said:

- It is not clear that the British Columbia government has jurisdiction over the offshore areas that have the highest oil and gas potential.

- Unresolved aboriginal land claims present a formidable barrier to the oil and gas industry, especially with the 7,000-member Haida Nation having filed a court claim to Native title in the Hecate Strait between the Queen Charlotte Islands and the mainland.

- The cost of cleaning up any oil spills would land on the Canadian and British Columbia governments.

The foundation argued that even if it can be shown the province has control

over Hecate Strait and the Queen Charlotte Sound and that resource revenues would flow to the province, the federal government could be stuck with the costs of any damage to the shipping or fishing industry resulting from oil and gas activities.

It also said that the federal-provincial offshore petroleum boards which have regulatory control over Newfoundland and Nova Scotia waters give greater priority to resource development rather than environmental concerns.

The report said the Newfoundland oil industry, which started production in 1997 and has only two operating fields, has already logged close to 100 minor spills, which the fishing sector alleges have been ignored.

—GARY PARK, Petroleum News Calgary correspondent

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OOGURUK

the Kuparuk C sand, but found oil in two Jurassic-aged sands, which the company described as “very similar in geologic age, permeability, and porosity to those in the prolific, onshore Alpine field to the southwest.”

Pioneer fractured the Ivik and got a sustained rate of about 1,300 bpd. Pioneer spokeswoman Susan Spratlen told Petroleum News in April: “The issue is determining the permeability, how much oil there is and what the recovery factor will be.”

The division said there are eight wells within a few mile radius of the Oooguruk unit which have been certified as capable of producing in paying quantities: the Exxon Thetis Island No. 1 to the northeast; the Kalubik No. 1 to the southwest; the Kuukpik No. 3 to the west; and five Colville Delta wells (Texaco Colville No. 1, No. 1A, No. 2 and No. 3; and Amerada Hess Colville 25-13-6) south of the Oooguruk unit. Exxon Thetis Island No. 1 and ARCO Kalubik No. 1 are closest to Oooguruk.

Wells, geologic and engineering studies proposed

When Pioneer applied for the unit, it proposed drilling three wells within five years and conducting geologic and engineering studies to evaluate a fast-track production start-up in 2004-05. The divi-

sion said the three wells Pioneer drilled satisfy the drilling obligation. The company is still working on the geologic and engineering studies.

The three leases that have a primary

Pioneer fractured the Ivik and got a sustained rate of about 1,300 bpd. Pioneer spokeswoman Susan Spratlen told Petroleum News in April: “The issue is determining the permeability, how much oil there is and what the recovery factor will be.”

term ending Dec. 31, 2004, are along the northern edge of the unit and, the division said, “were included in order to capture the upside potential of the prospect and will contract out of the unit” if not included in a participating area by June 1, 2008, or are not included in the next plan of exploration or the first plan of development.

The division also said that Pioneer will “evaluate and consider the reprocessing of the seismic data to improve the understanding of the prospective reservoir characteristics and parameters.” The company plans geologic studies to “identify and refine a possible fast track development scenario for initial production from the unit” and will complete engineering work currently under way. Pioneer is also identifying “possible production synergies” with the adjacent ConocoPhillips Alaska-operated Kuparuk River unit. ●

continued from page A11

NINILCHIK

dential data available to the division, and determined that the Falls Creek reservoir is contained completely inside the proposed participating area. The area to the north, the division said, “is not included because that area is not underlain by hydrocarbons and known or reasonably estimated to be capable of producing or contributing to the production of hydrocarbons in paying quantities.”

However, the division said, “there is some uncertainty as to the aerial extent

of the gas-bearing reservoirs of the upper Tyonek formation within the southwestern part of the proposed Falls Creek” participating area, and the division said it would look closely at results from the planned Falls Creek well, “to determine whether the structure persists and the reservoir is present in the southwest portion of the proposed” participating area. If the Ninilchik anticline plunges “more abruptly on the southwest than Marathon believes” or drilling results indicate sands intervals are not continuous, the Falls Creek participating area boundary may contract. ●

continued from page A1

GASLINE

Beaufort Sea, insisting that the short open-water season of 15 to 85 days poses a “high degree of uncertainty and volatility.”

Regardless of who builds, financing and regulatory reforms are essential to get Arctic gas to southern markets, given the huge investments and long life-cycles of the projects, Kvisle said.

TransCanada has a stake in the two Arctic schemes — with an initial option of 5 percent ownership of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and, by the third quarter, sole ownership of Foothills Pipe Lines, which holds the certificates to build the Canadian portion of the Alaska Highway project.

Kvisle cautioned the summit that there is no quick answer to the question of who will take the risk of building the

\$20 billion Alaska line.

If the North Slope gas owners — ExxonMobil, BP and ConocoPhillips — decide to build their own pipeline there should be careful consideration of the consequences, he said. (see related Enbridge article on page 4).

Regardless of who builds, financing and regulatory reforms are essential to get Arctic gas to southern markets, given the huge investments and long life-cycles of the projects, Kvisle said.

He said TransCanada estimates it needs 35 years to recover its capital costs whenever it adds to its mainline system, adding that so far the company has recovered only two-thirds of the C\$16 billion it has so far invested.

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region is a public-private partnership that includes business leaders along with legislators from Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, Alaska, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Oregon. Its objective is to promote sustainable economic development throughout the region. ●

Want to know more?

If you'd like to read more about Pioneer Natural Resources' Oooguruk unit on Alaska's North Slope go to Petroleum News' web site and search for the following articles, published in Petroleum News in the last year and a half:
Web site: www.PetroleumNews.com/

2003

- June 8 Exploring the upper Jurassic
- June 8 Winstar lease added to Pioneer's Oooguruk unit application
- May 18 North Slope winter work completed
- May 18 Oil Patch Insider
- May 4 Pioneer gives Alaska top billing
- April 13 Pioneer looking at fast-track development for Oooguruk
- April 6 Too early to tell
- March 16 Photo feature: Exploring Northwest Kuparuk, part two
- March 9 Oil Patch Insider
- Feb. 23 Photo feature: Exploring Northwest Kuparuk, part one
- Feb. 16 Pioneer wants 'independent model' to apply to North Slope prospect

2002

- Dec. 22 Oil Patch Insider
- Dec. 15 Pioneer gets AOGCC permits for Beaufort Sea exploration wells
- Dec. 15 From an attic to the Arctic
- Nov. 24 Pioneer expects to spend \$15 million....
- Nov. 24 Pioneer's Thetis Island project receives ACMP....
- Oct. 27 DGC restarts permitting time clock for Armstrong wells
- July 28 Armstrong gets access to some North Slope infrastructure....
- July 28 A winning package: Pioneer acquires 70 percent interest in Armstrong's Kuparuk-Thetis leases
- June 16 Oil Patch Insider.... A new player, independent Armstrong Resources....

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UPSTREAM

with 4.69 million acres for the same period of 2002, with average prices per acre rising 35 percent.

Work bids for the Northwest Territories contributed C\$1.98 million for 272,329 acres, a sharp drop from last year's C\$14.3 million for 116,400 acres.

However, the three major producing provinces in Western Canada all attracted a lively response.

Alberta's treasury swelled by C\$409.5

Regulators authorized a record 12,269 new wells — 8,115 targeting gas prospects — in the first half of 2003, surpassing the 2001 record by 11 percent ...

million for 3.77 million acres, a strong recovery from last year's C\$244 million for 3.48 million acres.

British Columbia sold 706,820 acres for C\$134 million, little changed from

2002's C\$126 million and 715, 6701 acres.

Saskatchewan, bolstered by a flurry of shallow gas drilling, collected C\$86 million from 1.36 million acres, far outpacing last year's C\$24.5 million and 458,098 acres.

More than a quarter of well permits exploratory

Of the well permits awarded by regulators, 26 percent were exploratory, roughly matching the levels of recent years.

In addition to the 8,115 gas wells, 2,984 permits were for oil prospects, with the remaining 1,170 designated as service wells and dry holes.

Coalbed methane well permits showed steady advances in Alberta, with a year-to-date total of 145, while bitumen wells accounted for 697 licenses.

Leading the way among operators were EnCana 3,098 permits, Canadian Natural Resources 875, Husky Energy 666, Apache Canada 563 and Burlington Resources Canada 410. ●

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ROAD

Murkowski said building the road from King Salmon to Chignik would open to exploration potentially rich oil and gas fields along the shores of Bristol Bay.

The cost of the gravel road is estimated to be \$285 million dollars. The governor said the state anticipates paying for the road with \$263 million dollars in bids that is projected to come in with the 2005 oil and gas lease sale. The road would include five major bridges and four maintenance facilities.

"This road concept brings the villages together," the governor said. "It means more opportunities for the villages ... and we think it's the right thing for rural Alaska."

The governor said the state has known about the Bristol Bay basin's oil and gas potential for some time.

"There was substantial exploration — about 25 or 26 wells were drilled over there in the '70s, but opposition by the local people simply put it on the shelf. That opposition has changed."

Murkowski said the road would provide a deepwater port on the peninsula and give access to properties that would be attractive for oil and gas leases.

"We feel there is enough revenue potential from the sale of the leases to more than pay for the road," Murkowski said. "It's the most exciting and significant new event in the oil patch."

Area could rival ANWR

Murkowski said initial exploration would be strictly onshore. The state is planning to sell conventional oil and gas leases in the area in two years, but shallow gas exploration leasing could come as early as next year, according to state Division of Oil and Gas Director Mark Myers (see sidebar on this page).

"We've been looking at it because there was a lot of local interest," Myers said.

The cost of the gravel road is estimated to be \$285 million dollars. The governor said the state anticipates paying for the road with \$263 million dollars in bids that is projected to come in with the 2005 oil and gas lease sale.

"And we started to revisit the geologic potential, and discovered that it's very good in the area. There's known oil shoals and oil seeps, and one well that had encountered oil in the offshore. The state also has a very good land position in the (Bristol Bay) basin, on the shore portion. So we can offer an onshore sale with a sizeable amount of acreage. We have over 3 million acres in the basin of onshore state land and BBNC also has a good land position," Myers said.

He said 2-D seismic data from the 1970s is being re-examined by the state at the request of the Bristol Bay Native Corp. Although the last well was drilled there in 1985, Myers said the area's potential is bound to generate substantial interest from industry.

"We believe, outside of ANWR, it's really one of the truly under-explored onshore areas in North America with high potential left," he said. "We think the oil potential is in the hundreds of millions of barrels and the gas in the multiple trillions of cubic feet range. So a sizeable amount of gas and a significant amount of oil potential. Again, you don't know until you truly drill."

Myers points out that energy needs have changed since the 1980s.

"Certainly, when they were looking at the area in the 1970s and the mid-'80s, they were looking for oil potential exclusively, not gas," he said. "But we think, because of its onshore position near tidewater, and with the need for gas in North America and other areas, it may be well positioned for a liquefied natural gas project."

The state expects to spend next year on geologic evaluations to determine the basin's actual potential. Murkowski said the aim is to spur oil development in the area to relieve the dependence on dwindling salmon runs.

"Jobs are what it's all about," the gov-

"We believe, outside of ANWR, it's really one of the truly under-explored onshore areas in North America with high potential left," Myers said.

ernor said.

A number of obstacles could dampen enthusiasm for a Bristol Bay leasing program. A state best interest finding is not complete. And the state is negotiating with the Bristol Bay Native Corp. on royalties for the oil and gas.

President must make decision to remove OCS ban

One provision of the agreement between the state and Bristol Bay calls for cooperation between the two entities on convincing the federal government to re-open federal offshore oil and gas prospects in the region to exploration. OCS 92 is currently under a development moratorium. The federal Minerals Management Service will not revisit it until 2011. MMS spokeswoman Robin Cacy said if the state of Alaska and Alaska's Congressional delegation petition the Interior Department to remove the moratorium, then Interior would consider it and make a recommendation to the president.

The president would have to rescind the executive order which put the moratorium in place, and Congress would have to remove language from the Interior budget bill that stops funding for new leasing activity in the area under moratorium.

"This is not a departmental decision. This is a presidential decision," Cacy said.

According to Murkowski, there's reason to believe that if the strength of support for Bristol Bay leasing is such "we could administratively lift that moratorium."

Cacy said the MMS's next five-year program does not go into effect until 2007. Even if all the federal conditions were met in lifting the moratorium, Bristol Bay oil and gas will not be available any time soon. ●

Three types of lease offerings in the works

The state of Alaska and the Bristol Bay Native Corporation signed a memorandum of understanding July 10, agreeing to "facilitate oil and gas lease sales on state and BBNC land in the Bristol Bay region."

Tom Hawkins, senior vice president and chief operating officer of Bristol Bay Native Corp., said at a July 11 press conference that the corporation has favored oil and gas drilling onshore since 1992, but local communities have opposed it until recently. The change in other groups made the difference, he said. He attributed that change of attitude to "economic realities, the high cost of energy, the fact that the fishing has been less than superb for the last five or six years."

The Native corporation went to the state to discuss pursuing leasing jointly and the resulting memorandum of understanding, Hawkins said, "provides an orderly process for BBNC and the Department of Natural Resources to work together over the next couple of years to assemble information and understand the ownership of land and make sure that we can offer the most complete package of opportunities to the industry in the lease sale."

The area includes 3.5 million acres of state-controlled mineral estate and 3.1 million acres of Bristol Bay region-controlled mineral estate.

Area has been open to shallow gas leasing

The entire state acreage in the area has been open to shallow gas leasing, and Alaska Gov. Frank Murkowski said the state would like to see some action in 2004 in some of the shallow gas areas, especially where old 2-D seismic exists. If there are shallow gas discoveries, he said, that gas could provide energy for local use.

"The most aggressive seekers of shallow gas in our region are the local electrical co-ops" in Naknek and Dillingham, Hawkins said. They are "the groups, in at least our region, that are enthused about prospecting for shallow gas resources."

The next step, said Alaska Division of Oil and Gas Director Mark Myers, is for the state to offer a portion of the area as an exploration license, which could occur next year. That would be the more northerly portion of the basin which is believed to be gas prone. Gas found in that area would be closer to communities for local fuel use and the state can go out more quickly with a license proposal than it can with a conventional sale, he said.

That would give industry time to shoot and evaluate 3-D seismic before an areawide sale, proposed for 2005. Any new seismic shot in the area, Myers noted, would be eligible for a 40 percent severance tax credit as provided by Senate Bill 185, passed by the Alaska Legislature this year.

"The more southerly area is oil prone and that would be the areawide sale," he said.

The state issued a mineral closing order July 10 in preparation for a proposed Bristol Bay competitive oil and gas lease sale. That order prevents applications for shallow natural gas leases or exploration license proposals within the area to be covered by the proposed competitive oil and gas lease sale. The order must be approved by the Legislature in its next regular session or it expires.

Similarities to Cook Inlet basin

Myers said there are some similarities to the Cook Inlet basin: local coals appear to be generating the gas, but "no one's really sure what the source of the oil is."

"There are a lot of advantages to this area," he said: "known oil and gas, some reservoir rock, good shows, enough geologic data." Myers said companies really haven't looked at the area in 15 to 20 years, and "there isn't going to be a working knowledge left." He said the area has two things going for it: the opportunity to tie up a sizeable land position at tidewater and the fact that there's known oil and gas in the basin.

The governor said the state believes that in the long term, "this area has the potential of being a major portion of Alaska's oil province," while in the short term, "because we have seen oil and gas shows out there ... there may be some shallow gas that could be recovered, relatively inexpensively, and utilized for local use, to lower costs."

—KRISTEN NELSON, Petroleum News editor-in-chief

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Business Spotlight

By PAULA EASLEY



Jeanine St. John, vice president

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Vice President Jeanine St. John joined Lynden nine years ago, following a 14-year stint with BP in transportation and logistics management. She thrives on the constant challenges of working in a huge state with limited roads and infrastructure and can't imagine living and working anywhere else. She and husband Al have two sons - Blake, 19, and Ross, 18. Their leisure-time activities include snowmobiling, fishing and "anything outdoors."



Bradley Brice, consulting petroleum engineer

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With 60-plus experienced technical professionals, Petrotechnical Resources of Alaska, an integrated oil and gas consulting group, provides geophysical, geologic, engineering, HSE and project management services to government and oil and gas clients. Its recently compiled database of public digital well log data is used by major E&P clients and independent companies pursuing Alaska projects.

Bradley Brice is a consulting petroleum engineer for the 6-year-old company. He joined PRA in 2000, bringing 30 years of reservoir/petroleum engineering experience to the group. Bradley is an Alaska certified petroleum engineer; his B.S. in chemical engineering was earned at the University of Missouri at Rolla. He and his wife will choose a week of New York musicals over fishing the Kenai any time. His philosophy? When life gives you a lemon, make lemonade.

FORREST CRANE

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INSIDER

That ruffled feathers in the Canadian government, which controls external relations, but had no prior knowledge of Alberta's intention to join the discussions.

OPEC president said Alberta, as one of the world's top 10 hydrocarbon producing regions, would be welcomed by the cartel.

Federal anger was exacerbated when OPEC leaders suggested Alberta might join the cartel in restraining production to prop up oil prices, but the province carefully backed away from output quotas.

Gradually, that storm abated, but was stirred up again four months ago when Alberta — enraged by the federal government's arbitrary imposition of the

Kyoto Protocol and by Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal's anti-American comments — said it was exploring an observer role at OPEC.

Energy Minister Murray Smith said it would be "important and beneficial for Alberta and Canadians to know as much as they can about their competition," while also seeking greater recognition for its oil sands potential.

Smith had no immediate response to OPEC's apparent willingness to roll out the welcome mat.

OPEC president visits Alaska, Texas, New York

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries President Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah's swing through North America reportedly also took him to meetings in Alaska, Texas and New York City.

Anyone in those locals willing to share what was discussed?

Former Phillips executive still missing

Still missing after almost one year is oil company executive David Rockey, who vanished along Highway 75 between Bartlesville and Tulsa, Okla. in August.

Rockey left home Aug. 26 to deliver his resume to a company in Skiatook, Okla. He was last seen heading south on Highway 75 by a friend.

Rockey never arrived at his destination and has not been seen since.

His car, cell phone and briefcase were found the next day at the Tulsa Airport. No car rental records or airline tickets matching his name or description were found. Rockey's last industry position was as Phillips Petroleum's manager of Worldwide E&P Support in Bartlesville.



DAVID ROCKEY

He worked for the company, now ConocoPhillips, for 28 years.

Rockey is 6'2" tall, weighs 195 pounds, wears glasses, and has brown eyes and brown-grey hair. A flyer with his photo is available on line at www.wtgs.org.

Anyone having any information concerning his whereabouts should contact Investigator Steve Birmingham of the Bartlesville Police Department, (918) 338-4017.

Oil Patch Insider is compiled by Paula Easley, Kay Cashman and Steve Sutherlin with news coming from a variety of sources, including news tips and press releases from readers. Petroleum News writers in Anchorage, Calgary, Vancouver, Fairbanks, Houston and Washington, D.C. also supply news leads and briefs. If you have a news tip or press release for Oil Patch Insider, please email publisher@PetroleumNews.com, phone (907) 245-2297, or fax (907) 522-9583.

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EARNINGS

Pioneer, Evergreen, Chesapeake could show increases

For the 2003 second quarter, the group was expected to average 84 cents per share versus \$1.07 per share in the prior quarter and 47 cents per share in the year-ago period. Earnings estimates for this year's third quarter were expected to average about 85 cents per share.

Earnings projections for the 2003 third quarter are flat to second-quarter estimates, reflecting uncertainty over factors that can dramatically influence U.S. natural gas prices, including weather.

Barring reporting surprises, Pioneer, Chesapeake and Evergreen were the only companies in the group expected to post earnings gains for the 2003 second quarters versus the previous quarter.

Pioneer, which has been steadily adding production from discoveries in the Gulf of Mexico, could see a second-quarter profit of 72 cents per share compared to 58 cents per share in this year's first quarter. The company posted just 13 cents



Pioneer, which has been steadily adding production from the Gulf of Mexico such as the Falcon platform pictured above, could see a second-quarter profit of 72 cents per share compared to 58 cents per share in this year's first quarter.

per share in the 2002 second quarter.

Evergreen, which is expected to boost natural gas production this year by 15 percent over last year to 126,000 million cubic feet per day, is expected to report second-quarter earnings of 95 cents per share compared to 90 cents per share in the previous quarter and 17 cents per share in the year-ago period.

On the strength of both property acquisitions and success with the drill bit, Chesapeake should weigh in with second-quarter earnings of about 26 cents per

share, compared to 23 cents per share in the prior quarter and 13 cents per share for the 2002 second quarter.

Declines range from sharp to modest

Other leading independents, particularly those leveraged to natural gas, were expected to experience the sharpest earnings declines, including the largest U.S.-based independent, Devon. The company should report a second-quarter profit of around \$1.53 per share compared to \$2.46 per share, a 38 percent decline.

Similarly, Noble Energy's profit could fall by 39 percent from 71 cents per share in the first quarter to 43 cents per share in the second quarter, according to Thompson/First Call consensus estimates. Kerr-McGee could be looking at a 33 percent drop in profit from \$1.20 per share in the first quarter to 80 cents per share in the second quarter, while EOG's profit was expected to decline 34 percent to 82 cents per share from \$1.25 per share.

Newfield, a major natural gas producer on the Gulf of Mexico's continental shelf, could see a 27 percent decline in earnings from \$1.20 per share in the first quarter to 88 cents per share in the second quarter.

U.S. Rockies producers Forest and Tom Brown could experience earnings declines of 23 and 29 percent, respectively. Forest's profit was expected to drop to around 56 cents per share in the second quarter from 73 cents per share in the first quarter, while Tom Brown's profit could slide to 36 cents per share from 51 cents per share.

Meanwhile, Unocal and Anadarko likely will see more modest earnings declines of 22 and 16 percent, respectively. Unocal's profit was expected to fall to 68 cents per share in the second quarter from 87 cents per share in the first quarter, while Anadarko's profit was expected to slide to \$1.22 per share from \$1.45 per share.

Largely because of its aggressive hedging strategy, big natural gas producer XTO also is looking at a modest 5 percent slide in earnings from 39 cents per share in the first quarter to 37 cents per share in the second quarter. ●

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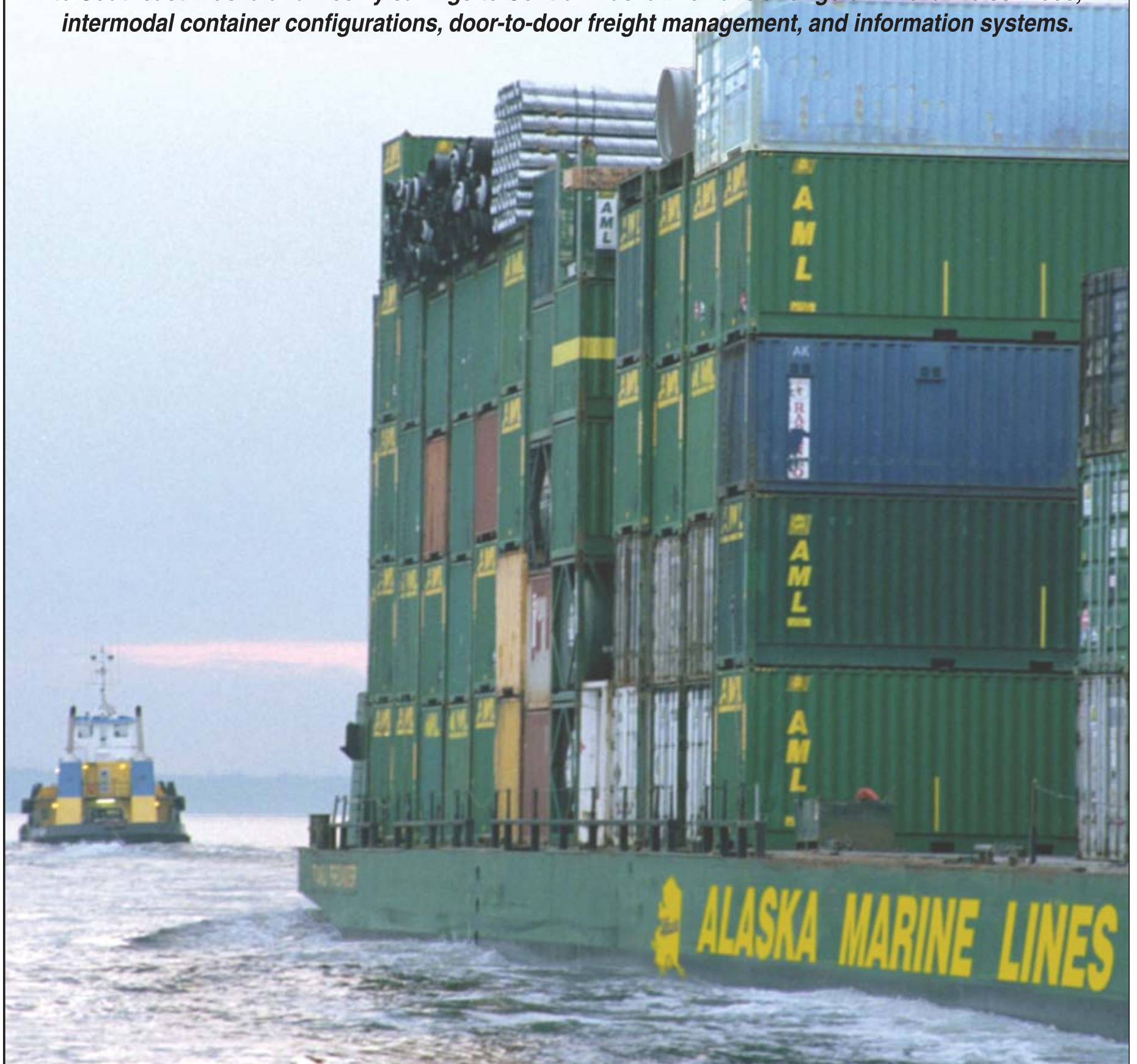
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Volume 8, No. 29

July 2003

Providing information about companies that serve Alaska and Canada's oil and gas industry

UpFront

Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. is doing preliminary engineering for a project that could reduce operating costs for the trans-Alaska oil pipeline by modernizing its pump stations and automating their operation. Pump Station 1 photos on pages 1, 4, 7 are from Alyeska.

Photo courtesy Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

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Pump Station 1 at Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's North Slope. The original pump station design was driven by what was needed when the pipeline was built, and by the fact that there were 2 million barrels of oil a day to move, versus the 1 million barrels being moved today. (See stories on Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.'s strategic reconfiguration in the July 6 and July 13 editions of Petroleum News.)

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JUDY PATRICK

The control room in Pump Station 1, trans-Alaska oil pipeline, Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. One of the issues Alyeska is addressing in its possible strategic reconfiguration of the trans-Alaska pipeline is how to deal with changing volumes of crude oil – i.e. how it would accommodate the change if forecasts of flow rates suddenly went up. (See stories on Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.'s strategic reconfiguration in the July 6 and July 13 editions of Petroleum News.)

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Workers with American Marine Services group perform maintenance duties on a Cook Inlet platform. Along with regular company profiles, this month's Petroleum Directory features additional photos of the companies profiled.

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Alaska Anvil: As stable as steel

Employee-owned engineering firm delivers quality comprehensive service from concept to startup

By **SUSAN BRAUND**

Petroleum Directory Contributing Writer

White-hot molten metal on cold steel — with the care of an old-world craftsman, the blacksmith hammers out tools and implements against a heavy, hardened steel anvil.

Just as the anvil provides support and stability for the blacksmith's work, Alaska Anvil provides a stable platform for clients' projects to take form. And, just as the artisan guides his creation from molten metal to a formed piece of steel or iron, Alaska Anvil painstakingly shepherds projects — from conception to startup.

"It takes a full complement of disciplines ... we have all the disciplines necessary to deliver complete design/engineering packages," says Alaska Anvil President and General Manager Frank Weiss.

The employee-owned comprehensive services engineering firm, spawned from Washington-based Anvil Corp., has been operating in Alaska since 1984. The company has a long history of successful engineering projects for oil and gas, local, state and federal governments and the mining industry in Alaska, Canada and the Western United States.



Frank Weiss, Alaska Anvil president and general manager



Cook Inlet production facility

Quality & ISO certification

Quality is the Alaska Anvil watchword. Employees are committed to producing consistent work that the company stands behind and quality controls and checks are built into engineering and design reviews and processes. In fact, the company has been working rigorously on its ISO 9001:2000 certifications to improve company efficiency and quality.

ISO stands for the International Organization for Standardization, a worldwide organization whose goal is to promote the development of standardization to facilitate the international exchange of goods and services. ISO sets operational and quality control standards for businesses in over 125 countries around the world.



Gas-driven turbine generator, built to meet future Kuparuk River unit needs

The rigorous process of certification requires a close review and usually, revisions to quality manual, procedures, work instructions and forms. The resulting improvements can help a company reduce its operational costs, reductions that may be passed along to customers.

"You'll see consistency across the company," says Weiss, "You get one Anvil — geographic boundaries disappear and our consistency becomes apparent. Regardless of location, we deliver the same product and consistency."

Repeat business and satisfied customers

The corporation enjoys long-term relationships with employees and clients and goes out of its way to keep them. At Alaska Anvil, clients are heard — to enhance communications and ensure quality, each project is assigned a client sponsor who has full authority to make front-line decisions.

L.K. Levorsen, company chair and founder, comments: "Our work, not our words, speaks for us. When

"You get one Anvil — geographic boundaries disappear and our consistency becomes apparent. Regardless of location, we deliver the same product and consistency."

— Frank Weiss, Alaska Anvil President and General Manager

a project meets the client's expectations, is completed on time and at a reasonable cost, clients reward us with ongoing work, along with building recognition and reputation in the industry."

"We really appreciate what Alaska Anvil does for us ... what a fine engineering firm," says Jim Boltz, chief operating officer of Petro Star Inc. "They do a tremendous amount of engineering and piping design work for us at both our refineries in North Pole and Valdez. They are cost competitive and extremely responsive to our needs. We've been a customer for over 10 years."

Project management: an evolution

Although Anvil was originally founded to provide engineering services to the oil and gas industries, project work has evolved to serve all facets of heavy industry and commerce, according to company materials. "This evolution will shape Anvil's success in the next century as we extend our quality service tradition to our ever-broadening client base."

Typical projects range from small operations and maintenance support projects to grassroots design of new operation units and oil and gas production facilities on Alaska's North Slope. The problem-solving project team environment generates ideas that can save clients money. "Project management is an emerging discipline," explains Weiss. "Our project management team consists of experienced project engineers trained to bring your projects in on time, within budget and with proper scope. They bring a unique skill set to the table, with a wide range of technical expertise and project experience necessary for survival."

Safety Awards

The company has had only three recordable, medical-only incidents and one lost time incident since 1984. In 2001 Alaska Anvil received the Alaska Governor's Safety Award: "Alaska Anvil's management has always believed in the importance of safety and has taken great steps to insure safety's presence in all aspects of its day-to-day work."

Cost cutting

"At Alaska Anvil, we welcome a challenge, and

Alaska Anvil Projects

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- Cook Inlet Osprey platform: Conversion from a drilling to a production platform — the only platform in Cook Inlet that lifts oil to produce it above bubble point (gas doesn't come out of solution).

- Facilities Infrastructure for Marathon gas fields in Kenai.

- Crude Fractionation Improvement, Cherry Point Refinery: Completed many modifications to the original 100,000 barrel per day crude unit over the last 25 years, doubling the throughput. Anvil provided full engineering and project management services and received an Award of Excellence from Northwest Construction magazine.

- \$65 million gas turbine-driven generator installation to meet future demand of Kuparuk River unit.

- Redoubt Shoal Development: "in all disciplines of engineering, Alaska Anvil provided the grassroots production facility and modifications to convert from a drilling-only platform to a drilling/production platform," says Ron Otero, one of the project team leaders.

- Kustatan Power Distribution: 15 megawatt generator and district station, powers three sites, essentially a small generation grid like a small utility.

"Our design team produces proven, innovative and cost effective ideas and plans," explains Weiss. "The whole package — concept design through final design, with drawings that can be issued for construction or as a construction bid package."

cost-cutting is a big one. Our clients rely on us for innovative and cost-effective solutions; it's Anvil's role to provide engineering and design services to accomplish these things, like new ways to do old, familiar things," comments Jim Zelnik, program manager for Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

"Unlike the significant development periods of the past, the opportunities today are smaller and more marginal. We do what we need to do to maintain profitable investment, so we are constantly working on cutting costs while retaining quality," says Weiss. "We put together well-defined and concise engineering and design packages to reduce construction costs and we are looking for innovative ways to bring viscous oil online." ●

Editor's note: Susan Braund owns Firestar Media Services in Anchorage, Alaska.

COURTESY ALASKA ANVIL

COURTESY ALASKA ANVIL



At left, fabricating the modules for the Alpine field at ASRC Energy Services' Nikiski facility. Above, Houston Contracting Co. laying the water injection pipeline L3 crossing for the GCWI project at Prudhoe Bay

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ASRC ENERGY SERVICES

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ASRC Energy Services has the resources and expertise to deliver comprehensive oilfield, other energy related services

By ALAN BAILEY

Petroleum Directory Contributing Writer

It's been just a few months since Natchiq Inc., the oil services subsidiary of Arctic Slope Regional Corp., reorganized itself as ASRC Energy Services Inc. The reorganization is giving the company a clearer identity as part of ASRC and is enabling some streamlining of the company's operations.

"We're two months into it now, so we've pretty much established our identity," Jack Laasch, executive vice president for strategic development and external affairs for ASRC Energy Services, told *Petroleum News* in June.

ASRC Energy Services represents about 40 percent of Arctic Slope Regional Corp.'s billion dollar a year operation and is one of the largest oilfield and energy service companies in Alaska. The company now consists of three distinct business units: Operations and Maintenance; Pipeline, Power and Communications; and Engineering and Technology. Together, these three units provide a complete range of energy-related services.

"From formation to pump station, that's our slogan," Laasch said. "We've basically got everything covered from initial exploration to delivery ... we can provide all the front-end planning for field development all the way through to the construction of facilities. And we get into the operations and maintenance ... after it's up and running."

Field development and drilling support

The Engineering and Technology business unit supports exploration and oil field development by providing technical expertise in geology and geophysics, drilling engineering and operations.

The company has achieved an enviable record of drilling services for all of the major players in the Alaska oil and gas industry. These services include well planning, well stimulation consulting and well testing.

Geology and geophysics services range from frontier exploration to field studies involving expert interpretation and evaluation of well logs and seismic surveys.

"That's actually one of the newest expansions of our core competencies, so we're really excited about that," Laasch said.

ASRC Energy Services subsidiary, Tri Ocean Natchiq Engineering out of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, designs oil and gas facilities and provides project management services. Tri Ocean Natchiq offers engineering services all the way from conceptual design to construction and startup.

"They did the design of the Alpine modules and they've also done quite a bit of design for Sakhalin Island, in addition to a long list of other projects" Laasch said.

Omega Natchiq, ASRC Energy Services' subsidiary in Louisiana, also provides a wide range of engineering and construction services, including the design of oil facility control systems and the fabrication of oil platform topside facilities.

Operations and Maintenance

The Operations and Maintenance business unit of ASRC Energy Services complements the engineering and technology unit by constructing, operating and maintaining oilfield facilities.

"Operations and Maintenance provides oil and gas services here in Alaska and in Sakhalin Island," Laasch said. "They also provide industrial construction; operations and

maintenance; module fabrication, assembly and project management."

The company's fabrication facilities in Anchorage and Nikiski, on the Kenai Peninsula, produce a variety of industrial structures.

"In our Anchorage facility the operations and maintenance business unit fabricates structural steel and piping components, in addition to assembling truckable modules — they're modules up to 100 tons that can be transported down the highway," Laasch said.

Access to a deepwater dock at the Nikiski facility enables that facility to fabricate larger modules requiring sea lift transportation.

ASRC Energy Services' long list of fabrication and construction projects includes work for many of the Alaska oil fields.

"Operations and Maintenance's largest (project) so far is the Alpine project," Laasch said. "... we constructed a large portion of it in both Anchorage and Nikiski, and then performed installation on the North Slope."

The company also fabricated structural steel and piping components for the Northstar field.

"We've also done a lot of construction work at Kuparuk and Endicott on the North Slope, in addition to the platforms in Cook Inlet," Laasch said. In addition to constructing facilities, the Operations and Maintenance business unit provides extensive maintenance services for several of the oilfields on the North Slope and in Cook Inlet.

Pipeline, Power and Communications

ASRC Energy Services' Pipeline, Power and Communications business unit focuses on the construction and maintenance of pipelines and power distribution systems, and on the installation of fiber optic networks.

The pipeline component of the business, Houston Contracting Co., is one of the oldest union pipeline companies in the United States, Laasch said. Houston Contracting has amassed an extensive experience of building Arctic pipelines. The company pioneered the use of Arctic directional drilling in the Colville River crossing for the Alpine

pipeline, for example.

In another pioneering project, the company laid the Northstar pipeline — the first subsea pipeline ever laid under the Arctic ice.

"That hadn't been done before — there is no other pipeline buried underneath the ice," Laasch said. "The pipeline was welded on the ice and installed into an excavated trench in the ocean floor through a slot cut in the ice"

Houston Contracting Co. is also involved in constructing facilities for the National Missile Defense System at Fort Greeley in Delta Junction, Alaska.

Houston Contracting Co. Western States division in Olympia, Wash., provides pipeline maintenance and construction services in the Lower 48.

Global Power and Communications, another part of the Pipeline Power and Communications business unit, specializes in constructing high-voltage power lines, commercial electrical installation and the installation of fiber optic communications lines. This ASRC Energy Services subsidiary has recently completed the electricity intertie between Fairbanks and Nenana. Fiber optic installations have included a major network on the North Slope and several fiber optic networks in Fairbanks and Anchorage.

As in the Operations and Maintenance business unit, maintenance services go hand in hand with the construction services. Houston Contracting Co. has achieved 20 years of experience in maintaining pipelines and facilities. Houston/NANA LLC, a joint venture between Houston Contracting Services and NANA Development Corporation, provides maintenance services for Alyeska Pipeline Service Company.

"They provide maintenance and warehousing for the 800 mile (trans-Alaska) pipeline and the Valdez Marine Terminal and maintain a fleet of over 2000 pieces of heavy equipment and vehicles" Laasch said.

Positioned for the future

With ASRC Energy Services' teams of experts ready to assist customers with almost all aspects of energy production, Laasch thinks that the company has positioned itself especially well for Alaska's evolving oil industry. The oil companies operating in Alaska increasingly value the flexibility of contracting specialist services of the type that ASRC Energy Services can offer, Laasch said.

"The independents definitely don't have the same infrastructure that the majors have, so there's going to be more of an opportunity for contractors to provide services," Laasch said.

And a mature oil province such as Alaska requires specialist expertise and local knowledge.

"As a field declines you need people who can bring expertise in to make wells last longer, making a field last longer in a declining situation," Laasch said. "We've got a very capable workforce — a lot of people have been with us for a long time. In all of our operations, we've hired the highest caliber of people."

So, Laasch sees a bright future for his company.

"We're optimistic about the future... It's just that it won't be the same scenario as it was during the development of Prudhoe Bay," he said. ●

Editor's note: Alan Bailey owns Badger Productions in Anchorage, Alaska.



Maintaining an oilfield facility

COURTESY OF ASRC ENERGY SERVICES

Safety is paramount for American Marine Services Group

Company provides certified underwater inspection, offshore pipeline and platform repair, and remediation services in both marine and land environments

By ALAN BAILEY

Petroleum Directory Contributing Writer

For hazardous activities such as diving in the murky waters of Cook Inlet, or repairing a damaged fuel line, experience and training become vital to success.

However, teamwork and attention to safety also underpin American Marine Services Group's specialist inspection, repair, and remediation services.

The American Marine Services Group consists of three interrelated companies: American Marine Corp., Pacific Environmental Corp. and the American Hyperbaric Center. Pacific Environmental Corp. is also known as Penco. The group operates, out of offices in Los Angeles, Calif., Honolulu, Hawaii, and Anchorage, Alaska.

American Marine Corp.

American Marine Corp. provides marine construction, underwater inspection and repair services, Steve Stuart, the company's senior project manager, told Petroleum News.

"We specialize in bridge and dock construction, as well as offshore platform maintenance, underwater inspection and pipeline construction," Stuart said.

In Alaska, American Marine Corp.'s team of divers has achieved an outstanding reputation for work done on varied assignments, such as underwater bridge repairs in Arctic rivers and inspecting welds on subsea pipelines.

Diving in the Cook Inlet

The Cook Inlet, where the company does more than 80 percent of its Alaska diving, presents one of the world's most challenging environments for divers. The silt in the inlet severely limits underwater visibility, while the 30-foot tides cause life-threatening currents.

"Work performed by our divers in the Cook Inlet is typically performed by feel, because the silt reduces the visibility to near zero,"

Stuart said.

Performing an inspection in the Cook Inlet typically starts with the so-called visual testing method. This method presents some real challenges in the turbid waters of the inlet. For example, filming with video or shooting still photographs requires a specialized camera housing and techniques. A topside technician in the diving support vessel watches the video images and guides the diver on where to go and what to focus on.

Experience and training

Performing safe and productive diving in an extreme environment such as the Cook Inlet requires years of experience and training.

"For the average new diver, breaking into the Cook Inlet market typically takes two or three years, which includes working in support positions before being considered as a full-time platform diver," Stuart said. "... our top four or five divers have over 25 years' experience."

The recent addition of a diving tank at American Marine Corp.'s Anchorage facility will augment the company's training capabilities for its divers.

"We've just implemented our new wet diving facility ... where we will train and test our divers in various underwater welding procedures, non-destructive testing techniques and safety procedures, in accordance with Operator Qualifications Program 49 CFR 192-195," Stuart said. "Additionally, our clients can participate in developing procedures in a controlled environment before they are implemented in the field. Another advantage of this concept is that critical diver life support equipment can be tested for safety."



An American Marine Corp. diver welding an underwater dock structure

PENCO

Pacific Environmental, also known as PENCO, was formed in Hawaii in 1985 as part of The American Marine Services Group. The corporation began by providing emergency marine oil spill response and related environmental services.

"Since then PENCO has grown to a full-service environmental response, prevention and remediation contractor, with projects throughout the Pacific basin," said Rick Wilson, PENCO's marine operations and spill response manager.

In Alaska, PENCO maintains a core team of highly cross-trained personnel including hazmat spill technicians, divers and boat operators. The company maintains a vast warehouse of spill response equipment and tools, including pumps, compressors and containment boom, that can be mobilized and packaged for shipment to remote locations throughout the state.

PENCO pulls from these resources all the marine personnel and equipment to lighter off, repair and re-float grounded or sunken vessels. As a result, the client benefits from a one-stop shop for services when it comes to a marine salvage situation. PENCO has contracts with several spill response co-ops including Alaska Clean Seas in Prudhoe Bay, Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response Inc. in Cook Inlet, Alaska Chadux Corp., and Navy SUP-SALV, to supply management and labor in the event of an oil or other hazardous materials spill. Whether on water or land, a team will be ready at a moment's notice.

Spill prevention

"While PENCO has the response capabilities for a spill we also have a team of personnel trained in the prevention of oil spills," Wilson said.

In the Port of Anchorage, PENCO is contracted to dock watch duties while tanker vessels are loading and discharging cargo at the two fuel docks at the port.

Bulk fuel storage facilities require meticulous maintenance and record keeping for compliance. PENCO has API 570 and API 653 inspectors on staff offering a full line of project management and quality control for tank construction, installation, elevation, relocation, cleaning and repair to facilities throughout the Pacific basin. PENCO has worked as a prime and subcontractor on a wide variety of projects that include installation and demolition of tanks and pipelines throughout the state.

American Hyperbaric Center

The American Hyperbaric Center operates two hyperbaric chambers at its facility in Anchorage and one chamber at its Wasilla facility. The center also trains operators for the hyperbaric chambers that American Marine Corp. uses on-site during diving operations.

A hyperbaric chamber consists of a cigar-shaped device that looks a bit like a miniature submarine with large portholes and surrounded by tubes. A skilled operator can subject a patient lying inside the chamber to pressurized air or oxygen. Although hyperbaric chambers first came into use for recompressing divers who had ascended from a dive too quickly, the chambers have found a multitude of uses for medical treatment — American Hyperbaric Center established its facilities primarily for health care services.

"About 10 years ago we started getting into wound care. There was nowhere for some of these people to go for help," said Jim Thompson, supervisor of hyperbarics for American Hyperbaric Center.

The right cure

Hyperbaric therapy forces the body to absorb much more oxygen than normal — the oxygen content in a patient's tissue can increase anywhere from 300 percent to 1,500 percent, Thompson said. The oxygen then helps the body fight infections or heal wounds.

This therapy has achieved spectacular success in treating conditions such as diabetic ulcers and severe wounds or burns. In the case of diabetes patients, the therapy has completely healed ulcers that would otherwise have resulted in the amputation of a limb.

Thompson said that hyperbaric therapy has proved to be the only effective treatment for people infected by flesh eating bacteria.

"A lot of those people would lose their lives if it wasn't for the chamber," Thompson said.

The hyperbaric chamber also provides effective treatment for carbon monoxide poisoning and smoke inhalation. Operating a hyperbaric chamber or determining the appropriate treatment protocol for a patient requires extensive training.

"It takes many hours of certification, training and hands on experiences in the classroom before you can work with the rest of the crew or patients," Thompson said.

American Hyperbaric Center has a crew of 20 certified hyperbaric operators, five hyperbaric supervisors and six hyperbaric technologist and technicians.



Jim Thompson, supervisor of hyperbarics for American Hyperbaric Center, attends to a patient in a hyperbaric chamber

Skill, teamwork and safety

Whether they're diving in the Cook Inlet, responding to an oil spill or operating a hyperbaric chamber, American Marine Service Group's multi-skilled staff all share a common understanding of the importance of training, experience and teamwork. Dealing with hazardous situations and materials requires a team effort and presents too many dangers for a casual approach.

Safety is the group's top priority.

"The most important part of our operations is to be able to bring everybody back home safely with no injuries," Stuart said, "and no matter what it takes to achieve that, that's our goal here." ●

Editor's note: Alan Bailey owns Badger Productions in Anchorage, Alaska.

AMERICAN MARINE SERVICES GROUP



Transferring personnel to the American Marine Corp. diving support vessel Shamrock

AMERICAN MARINE SERVICES GROUP

Span-Alaska Consolidators Inc: Wysiwyg freightmasters

With depth of expertise and new technology transportation provider has served Alaska for 25 years

By **SUSAN BRAUND**

Petroleum Directory Contributing Writer

The cyber expression, wysiwyg, aptly describes freight masters Span-Alaska Consolidators Inc.: what you see is what you get.

"We have no secrets," says Kathy Lorec, vice president of sales. "We offer good service, treat customers fairly at a fair price, do what we say we are going to do and follow through on promises. Above all, we're honest!"

Span-Alaska is one of the largest transportation companies serving Alaska today, with a fleet of more than 150 trailers and containers, 30 power units, and access to equipment owned by the ocean carriers.

Alaska focus

"As a full service transportation provider serving Alaska for 25 years, Span-Alaska offers point-to-point service between Alaska and the rest of North America," says company President Mike Landry. "Unlike many of our competitors, we only operate in and out of Alaska, making us far more motivated to do a good job for our customers. Carriers who serve the western states or the entire country don't have to be as focused on the Alaska customers as we do because Alaska is a small percentage of their business. It is 100 percent of our business. So, who is going to feel the greater need to excel? We will continue to invest in the future of Alaska with new trucks, new computer technology and the most experienced employees in the industry ready to meet your needs now and in the future."



Span-Alaska is a family-owned business, operated by siblings (left to right) Paul Landry, Tom Landry, Mike Landry, Jackie Norton and Teresa Brooks.

Since, in Alaska, everything has to come from somewhere else, people are dependent on freight transporters. "Because we're a transparent service, we are somewhat taken for granted," says Lorec, "but it's actually an involved industry that takes a lot of coordination on the part of a number of companies to keep grocery stores full and our population thriving. In-depth knowledge of the Alaska market is essential. When you don't know exactly what you are doing, you can end up paying two or three times more!"

The company uses its depth of expertise to find ways to reduce costs and move freight faster, so businesses can sell more product, instead of paying for it while it's in transit. Customers can request daily shipment status via a special software program that indicates shipper, count, weight, probable carrier, estimated departure and arrival dates.

Less-than-truckload freight

Span-Alaska is the largest consolidator of less-than-truckload freight, LTL, in the state. "Our niche is very definitely LTL cargo," says Landry. "We made a decision many years ago that we would spend most of our resources attracting LTL cargo. The margins are better and it is more reliable, less cyclical. From silk plants to building and drilling materials, with LTL we might have two to 40 customers' items in one truckload, saving all of those customers money."

VF Grace Inc. of Anchorage gives Span-Alaska positive marks: "As a company that has used several freight forwarders/consolidators over the years, we find that the strengths of Span-Alaska include: creative rating and routing, low rate of claims, knowledge of the Alaska Marketplace, helpful staff and excellent customer service.



Common carriers being unloaded at Kent, Wash., dock.

Span-Alaska has proven to be most capable and very responsive to our specific service requirements."

Family-owned, family-fortified

"Lots of competition has come and gone over the years, but we're still strong, still standing, and still family-owned," comments Lorec.

Since the retirement of company founders Ray and Zoanne Landry in 1990, their five children have run the company — peacefully — disproving the old business warning never to do business with family!

"The company is celebrating our 25th anniversary this year. I think the anniversary is more meaningful to us as a company than it is to our customers. It really means a lot to my parents. I remember when they told the family that Dad was going to quit his job and start a new company. We were all a little surprised and maybe a little concerned — five kids, two of them in college, and no income is a little scary," reminisces Mike. "But everything worked out beyond their wildest expectations. The company is three or four times larger since their retirement, but none of it would have been possible without the courage and

determination they had to make this work."

All five of Ray and Zoanne's children have been working for Span-Alaska since 1982 or before. "I haven't met anyone who can believe that five siblings — Teresa Brooks, Tom Landry, Jackie Norton, Mike Landry, and Paul Landry — can get along and work side by side for that long and grow a business. It really has been pretty enjoyable and very beneficial to the operation of the company," reports Mike. "I have four partners that I can trust implicitly and that have a very good work ethic. It makes managing the company far easier than it would be otherwise."

Sandy Erber, strategic account director for Horizon Lines (formerly Sea Land Service Inc.) reports a strong, 18-year working relationship with Span-Alaska. "They're refreshing to deal with, and one reason is that their company carried over the values from their father — strong values and high integrity. All five of the Landrys absorbed them ... five siblings! It's unheard of!"

Corporate philosophy

The company's corporate goal is: "to be recognized by our customers as the number one service-oriented freight

forwarder to Alaska, and achieve a reasonable return, by adhering to our principles on integrity, honesty and quality improvement, and recognition of people as our key resource."

No cutting corners to cut costs at Span-Alaska. "We refuse to discount our service level," stresses Mike. "We wouldn't know how to. So we won't always be the lowest price carrier on every product and we don't try to be. We do, however, try to provide the best value to our customers. The way we make that happen gets back to our employees. We like to hire smart people, tell them what we expect, and then let them go out and do their job. Nine times out of ten they will exceed our expectations. We do very little micro-managing here."

Customers as partners

Customers report back that the thing that sets Span-Alaska apart from its competitors is customer service. "We are blessed with a wonderful group of employees that care about what they are doing, and we are into long-term relationships. Many of our customers refuse to refer to us as vendors preferring to call us partners," says Landry. "When we can get our customers to stop thinking about logistics, and focus on what it is they have to sell, then we have done our job!"

Nurturing long-term relationships mean recognizing

specific customer needs and requirements, like special equipment to accommodate certain products.

"We are pleased with the level of service we receive from Span-Alaska. Span is a major player in the shipping business in Alaska. Their expertise in shipping keeps our product moving safely and competitively. They have invested in the proper equipment to move flooring in the Alaska marketplace. We can count on our deliveries on time and their rates keep us competitive in a

competitive marketplace," reports A la Round Flooring Distributors.

Claims

The company's damage factor is significantly less than the national average, but when claims occur they are dispatched quickly. "We have a system in place to handle emergencies. We research the problem, make recommendations and suggestions and do our best to resolve the issues. If a mistake has occurred, we can track who has touched your freight at every step," says Lorec. "We are good at not repeating the same mistakes!" ●

Editor's note: Susan Braund owns Firestar MediaServices in Anchorage, Alaska.

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Phone: (907) 562-5420
Fax: (907) 562-5426
Email: alaska@amsghq.com
Web site: www.amsghq.com
American Marine Corp. provides full service marine construction and diving services throughout Alaska and the Pacific Basin.

Offshore Divers
5630 Silverado Way, A-9
Anchorage, AK 99518
Contact: Don Ingraham, Owner/Mgr.
Contact: Leif Simcox, Owner/Operations Mgr.
Phone: (907) 563-9060
Fax: (907) 563-9061
Email: don@offshoredivers.com
Web site: 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.

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Anchorage, AK 99518
Contact: Tom Ulrich, reg. mgr. American Marine svc. group
Phone: (907) 562-5420
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Email: alaska@amsghq.com
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Zy-Tech Global Industries
10600 Corporate Dr.
Houston, TX 77477
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Fax: (281) 565-3171
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Fax: (907) 265-1502

Evergreen Resources Alaska
P.O. Box 871845
1075 Check St., Ste. 202
Wasilla, AK 99687
Contact: John Tanigawa, Alaska project mgr.
Phone: (907) 357-8130
Cell: (907) 841-0000
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Phone: (907) 561-5311
Fax: (907) 564-6489
Web Site: www.marathon.com

Unocal Alaska
909 W. 9th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99501
Contact: Roxanne Sinz
Phone: (907) 263-7623
Fax: (907) 263-7693
Email: rsinz@unocal.com
Over 100 years ago Unocal came to Alaska to sell petroleum in the territory. By 1939, the company had geological teams in Southcentral Alaska who helped discover the Swanson River oil field in 1957 and then the first gas field a year later. Today Unocal is the largest operator in Cook Inlet, operating 10 of the 16 platforms, 6 of 11 producing gas fields and several onshore facilities.

XTO Energy
810 Houston St., Ste. 2000
Fort Worth, TX 76102
Contact: Vaughn O. Vennerberg, II
Phone: (817) 870-2800
Fax: (817) 870-0379
Other Office: XTO Energy, 52260 Shell Road, Kenai, AK 99611, Doug Marshall, Production Superintendent
XTO Energy, established in 1986, is engaged in the acquisition and development of quality, long-lived producing oil and gas properties and exploration for oil and gas.

company snapshots

AMERICAN MARINE SERVICES GROUP



An American Marine Services diver works on a seawall.



ASRC ENERGY SERVICES

A team from ASRC Energy Services' power and communications business unit laying fiber optic cable

SPAN-ALASKA



Span-Alaska employee Greg Veitch receives a load of light bulbs.



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