

Drilling conference focuses on people, technology

THIS YEAR'S PREMIER co-sponsored conference on drilling technology will focus on People and Technology: The Future Sans Frontiers. The SPE/IADC Drilling Conference is scheduled for 19-21 February at the RAI Conference Center, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The conference will include 18 technical sessions featuring more than 100 papers. A plenary session is featured in the morning of each conference day. Each plenary session promises a formidable range of speakers addressing thought-provoking topics critical to everyone involved in the drilling industry.

In addition to the technical programs, two short courses on *Modern Well Design* and *Extended Reach Drilling* will be held on 18 February.

Before the first plenary session, 2003 SPE President **Andrew Young** and 2003 IADC Chairman **Lawrence R Dickerson** will present the SPE Drilling Engineering Award to **Rick Stone**, Chairman and CEO of Signa Engineering Corp in Houston.

The SPE Engineering Award was established to recognize technical contributions or outstanding achievements in drilling engineering technology. The award is part of SPE's comprehensive honors and awards program.

In addition to being a member of SPE, Mr Stone is also a member of AADE Drilling Engineering Association, a charter member of the Horizontal Drilling Engineers Association and a founding member of the Board of Advisors – Seair Equipment. During 1993 and 1994, Mr Stone was an SPE Distinguished Lecturer for Horizontal Underbalanced Drilling.

Mr Stone's publications include being a co-author of Underbalanced Drilling Manual as well as numerous presentations on underbalanced and horizontal drilling and equipment at international conferences and forums.

Abstracts of the technical papers appear on the following pages. Plenary session topics include Vision 2020 – The Future Sans Frontiers; From Idea to Reality; and The “e” in Technology.

INDUSTRY'S CRYSTAL BALL

The industry faces challenges during the next two decades, some of them ongoing and others that it has not had to confront previously.

We are heading for a severe personnel shortage commonly referred to as “The Big Crew Change”. Will e-learning and technology help the industry to create “20-year hands” in only a couple of years?

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World oil production is projected to peak in the next four years and decline thereafter. World population and energy demand will continue to grow during that time.

Are we heading for a world energy crisis? What should the drilling industry plan for?

The industry continues its consolidation in the West while experiencing tremendous growth in the East. How will the two evolve globally?

There is more emphasis today on natural gas as a global energy source. What new technological challenges and opportunities will that bring? Finally, is deepwater the last frontier?

The first plenary session, *Vision 2020 – The Future Sans Frontiers*, includes a well-balanced panel featuring executives and planner from operators, service companies and drilling contractors who will discuss the challenges facing the industry during the next 20 years.

Those attending this plenary session should leave with a better understanding and clearer vision of what awaits the industry.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The industry must rapidly access new technology to meet increasing business challenges. Is the industry sufficiently innovative, progressive and effective in harnessing the wealth of ideas that are created in and outside the industry?

Plenary session 2, *From Idea to Reality*, will examine and debate topics such as the challenges and rewards for entrepreneurs and large organization in bringing innovations to market; systems and cultures that help or hinder progress; and external and behavioral issues that can determine success or failure.

The panel, which will include representatives from operators, service companies and technical innovators, will explore diverse perspectives, giving the audience a balanced and deeper understanding of the issues at stake.

The session aims to offer key insights that will help everyone advance appropriate technology to the benefit of the entire industry.

“E” TECHNOLOGY

Electronic aids are becoming increasingly significant in the oil and gas industry. Information technology, smart tools, computing power, advanced measurement devices and other advances are affecting significant change in well operation, field management, facilities design and mechanical fabrication.

Panelists in the third plenary session, *The “e” in Technology*, will offer four perspectives – oil and gas operator, service contractor, equipment designer and academic – and will explore the concepts of “e” technology unrestricted by perceptions of current industry boundaries and paradigms.

The session will also review changes already achieved by “e” technology in our industry and discuss improvements to relevant processes.

The panelists will also discuss new challenges and unpredicted consequences produce by “e” technology. The audience will leave with a clearer view of the continuing impact of “e” technology and how we can apply the lessons already learned. ■