

Crown DBL has fresh outlook on S La land market

COMBINING EXPERIENCE FROM the contract drilling side and the operator side of the industry give the new owners of **Crown DBL** the expertise and fresh outlook necessary to grow into new areas of the business.



Crown DBL President **Andy Simon** and Vice President **Matt Turlak** purchased the assets of **DBL Drilling Services** last October, which included three land rigs operating primarily in Louisiana, although one rig recently began drilling in East Texas. DBL Drilling Services was run by **Aby Lavergne** and **Dave Davis** for 16 years before the sale.

The two new owners, while young, have a combined experience in the oil and gas industry of more than 15 years. Mr Simon began his oil patch career as a roughneck with **Costain Land and Marine** while still a freshman in college and worked his way up to driller and then a project manager.

He also worked as a project manager with **Noble Drilling** in the Gulf of Mexico and international operations and then as project manager for **Cherrington Drilling Corp.** He also has executive sales experience with **Turb-Chem International.**

Mr Turlak joined **Diamond Offshore's** turnkey operations right out of college in 1996, focusing on turnkey drilling, project management and performance optimization worldwide.

He then worked for **ExxonMobil** where he was responsible for planning and drilling development wells in East and South Texas and then with **Devon Energy** working in the deepwater Gulf of Mexico.

They became friends when Mr Turlak became a customer of Mr Simon's. They eventually began talking about owning their own business when the DBL Drilling Services opportunity arose.

"We weren't looking for this particular opportunity," Mr Turlak said. "It basically fell into our laps."

"The company had done a lot of good projects, drilling around 300 wells on turnkey and dayrate," Mr Simon added, "and they were very successful with that."

"It looked like a good deal and an opportunity to take a company that has a very good reputation and build upon it," Mr Simon continued, "and DBL Drilling was a good starting place."

The asset purchase included three land rigs, including a small Wilson 600 unit that is not presently being marketed, and may be for sale.

Also, the two previous owners are continuing to work with the company on a consulting basis.

"The smaller rig came with the purchase," Mr Simon explained. "We are trying to market it for sale to coalbed methane operators and drilling contractors because that is the type of rig they could use."

The two larger rigs are working, one in Louisiana and the other in East Texas.

They have also been looking at the possibility of expanding the fleet by several rigs, whether with individual rig purchases or possibly another small drilling contractor.

"We plan on increasing our inventory of rigs," Mr Simon said, "maybe getting a triple or one more double. We've already looked at several rigs for possible purchase."

MARKET FOCUS

The two owners will focus on specific market segments. The first is the small independent operator with insufficient personnel to drill their own lease acreage.

The second is the larger operator that does have their own personnel to engineer the wells but doesn't have the rigs or rig personnel to drill the wells.

The company's range of services includes turnkey and dayrate services for drilling vertical wells through 12,500



Crown DBL Rig #2 is working for Peoples Energy Production Company in Iberville Parish in Louisiana.

ft, deviated holes through 11,500 ft, disposal wells, re-entries and abandonments.

"We also want to get into the project management side of the business, the more difficult directional wells that take preplanning and well engineering," Mr Simon said.

"We think we could add to the business by providing services like project management and directional wells or side-tracks or re-entries on a turnkey basis," Mr Simon said.

Since the purchase of DBL Drilling, Crown DBL bought several acres of land in Breau Bridge that it will use as a new rig yard, and that also may be expanded with additional acreage.

The company will be installing buildings on the property as well as water wells, fencing, etc. ■