

TRAINERS CORNER

H&P builds advanced-technology training curriculum for advanced-technology FlexRig employees

By Linda Hsieh, associate editor

WHEN HELMERICH & PAYNE International Drilling Co. (H&P) embarked on a newbuild project in 2005 to construct 73 FlexRigs, it faced a daunting challenge — how to staff those 73 rigs with personnel trained to operate an advanced-technology machine.

In response to that challenge, H&P set up a 25,000-sq-ft Personnel Development Center (PDC) in Houston. Capable of graduating 1 rig crew per week, the center has trained more than 800 employees since November 2005, said **Ross Ledbetter**, H&P manager resources development. The training program, which lasts 12 days for crew members and 14 for management, blends traditional classroom instruction with hands-on equipment operation.

"The whole focus is to develop a foundation for superior drilling performance," Mr Ledbetter said. "From the first day the customer receives the rig, both the rig and the personnel need to perform, whether in safety, reliability or efficiency."

The training curriculum covers 4 main skills development areas — people skills (including H&P's Rig Management Skills "A Leader is Always On" leadership training and a team-building session), HSE, technical (including equipment operation and maintenance) and administrative. The 4 instructors, or technical skills trainers, were each selected from a different area of expertise: **Dennis Andrepon**, formerly a manager in the offshore division; **Gino Lazzarini**, formerly a mechanic in the international division; **Roger Israel**, an HSE specialist from the domestic land division; and **Dave Mallette**, an instructional systems specialist.

One goal of H&P's training course is to continuously learn from the operating FlexRigs. "All of our support infrastructures are tied into our training sessions," Mr Ledbetter said. "Everyday all of our rigs call in and participate in a learning session. The PDC trainers get that information from the field and use it



ABOVE: The H&P Personnel Development Center graduates 1 rig crew per week. **LEFT:** From left are administrative assistants Bernadette Gonzales and April Postel, and PDC technical skills trainers Roger Israel, Dennis Andrepon, Gino Lazzarini and Dave Mallette.

to update the curriculum. This way, the rig crews never get stagnant training; they get real-time training. It's a holistic approach to training."

Other features of the H&P PDC include:

- **H&P HSE culture establishment:** Students go through 3 days of HSE training.
- **Team focus.** Students go through training with their rig team and learn as a team.
- **Pre- and post-testing** measure what students know before training and what they've retained by the end of the course. Testing is also used to certify equipment operators on specific pieces of equipment, such as forklift and ariel work platforms.

All of the PDC training content is being developed with the future in mind. The

content is being prepared for computer-based training (CBT) at the rigsite and web-delivered content. This means the training that's started at the PDC can be continued at the rigsite. "It's the next phase of training. Update training doesn't mean bringing everybody back to a classroom. It's being able to reinforce lessons learned by using advanced training methods," Mr Ledbetter said.

Without a doubt, H&P is seeing higher employee retention levels than with traditional training, Mr Ledbetter pointed out. "This training program is getting more information to the students as well as allowing them to put that information to use when they get out to the rig. When they get to work on a FlexRig, they're working on systems they've actually been trained on. The training's helping them to understand their job functions in the field and preparing them to do their jobs."