‘Money no object’ if faster, better wells the result

By Mike Killalea, editor & publisher

“MONEY IS NO OBJECT” -- for technology to deliver wells efficiently, say operators hungry for practical, ground-breaking tools for well construction. “If it’s something that will deliver wells and deliver them fast, (funding and development) will happen,” declared an operator to whom, clearly, new and effective technology is near and dear to the heart.

Field trials for new tools have been a struggle to achieve, service firms say. But with today’s pressure to produce, word is that some operators will lend well to testing new equipment. “If you want to try something in a few wells, come on,” said Morris Keene, director-drilling engineering for Occidental Oil & Gas Central Drilling Group (Oxy), and Chairman of the Drilling Engineering Association (DEA). The caveat is that Oxy must be assured that whatever goes beneath the rotary table “has a high probability of coming back whole.”

DEA, in particular, is encouraging service companies to trot out lingering, yet promising, R&D projects for operator funding or field tests. DEA is at pains to point out that completion projects are cordially included. DEA’s remit is the entire spectrum of well construction.

The next meeting of DEA is the morning of 18 September at Chevron’s Briar Park facility in Houston. Registration and directions are on www.dea-global.org.

First, let’s define the technical silver bullets of interest. We posted this question to the real experts -- readers of DRILLING CONTRACTOR, of course. Survey says that extended-reach and horizontal drilling and completion techniques will be the most influential technologies over the next 20 years. In this snapshot opinion poll, slightly more than four out of 10 readers (41%) singled out these technologies.

Managed pressure drilling (MPD) won the Silver in the survey. (Sorry: Still suffer a lingering Beijing hangover.) 16.3% of respondents thought MPD would prove most influential over the next two decades. Tied for third are drilling with liner/casing and real-time downhole data (10.6% each). Fourth was also a tie -- 6.5% each for HPHT technologies and expandables. Finally, about 1 in 20 readers (4.9%) thought fluid technologies would prove the key. We must not have omitted much of moment, since only 3.3% of respondents selected our ubiquitous friend “other.”

The truth is that breakthrough technologies in any and all areas above could help deliver wells quicker, more safely and with higher productivity. Operators want help, are willing to pay and have test wells.

The message? Call now: Operators are standing by!

You can reach Mike Killalea at mike.killalea@iadc.org.