



## CONTRACTOR NEWS

### Noble Drilling acquires Maurer Engineering

Noble Drilling Corp announced in late February that it had acquired **Maurer Engineering Inc**, a privately-held engineering firm based in Houston.

Maurer Engineering, founded by **William C Maurer** and **William J McDonald**, has designed a number of innovative drilling products and drilling-related software programs.

Maurer Engineering will be integrated with Noble's drilling technology subsidiary, **Noble Engineering & Development Ltd**, which focuses on

developing drilling products and solutions to enhance drilling efficiency.

"Maurer is a well recognized engineering firm in the oil and gas sector," said **James C Day**, Noble Chairman and CEO. "As drilling costs have risen, our clients have sought technologies and services to improve performance. Maurer has developed very creative solutions to improve overall well site efficiencies."

Noble will retain all of the employees of Maurer Engineering. ■

### Capstar drills natural gas well in Ohio city

**Capstar Drilling Inc** drilled a municipal natural gas well for the city of Lyndhurst, Ohio last year in a very urban setting (see photo at right). **Mike Roghair**, General Manager of Capstar Drilling Inc in Odessa, Tex said the rig "had a sidewalk all the way around." The rig's mud pit was located in a city park.

Capstar also has an office in Wooster, Ohio and operates 10 land rigs in Texas and Ohio. ■



### ENSCO buys into jackup, puts semi to work

**ENSCO International Inc** announced it has entered into a joint venture with **Keppel FELS Ltd** through which ENSCO will acquire a 25% ownership interest in a new harsh environment jackup under construction for \$30 million in cash and management and procurement services.

ENSCO will have an option to purchase the remaining 75% interest in the rig until 2 years after delivery. Following delivery, ENSCO will manage the rig for the benefit of the joint venture.

The rig, an enhanced KFELS MOD V design under construction in Singapore, will be named the ENSCO 102. It can work in water depths to 350 ft in the

North Sea and in water depths over 400 ft in milder environments.

Cost of the rig is about \$130 million and delivery is set for early 2002.

ENSCO also announced late last year that its new semisubmersible, the ENSCO 7500, has completed sea trials and begun a 3-year contract with **Burlington Resources Inc**.

The rig is a dynamically positioned semisubmersible rig capable of drilling in 8,000 ft of water with a variable deck load capacity of about 8,000 tons.

It is intended for work in the Gulf of Mexico, offshore Brazil, West Africa or Asia. ■

### Patterson and UTI merge

**Patterson Energy Inc**, Snyder, Tex and **UTI Energy Corp**, Houston, announced in early February that they had agreed to merge in a stock transaction valued at about \$1.3 billion.

Both companies have expanded rapidly in recent years as industry consolidation reduced the number of drilling contracting firms.

Each company owned about 150 rigs before the merger. The combined company will be the second largest owner of land drilling rigs in the US.

A Patterson spokesman said recently its utilization rate was about 91%. ■

### Chiles orders new jackup

Late last year, **Chiles Offshore Inc** placed an order to build an ultra-premium jackup rig of the KFELS Mod V "B" design at the **Amfels** shipyard in Brownsville, Tex.

The new rig is estimated to cost about \$110 million, exclusive of interest and other capitalized costs. It will be financed through equity raised in the Company's initial public offering of common stock and debt financing raised under a **US Maritime Administration** (Marad) guarantee.

The commitment letter from Marad which allows financing for the new rig also allows Chiles to raise additional funds if it exercises its option to order a second ultra-premium jackup from Amfels in the next 12 months. ■

### Rowan land rig modified

Modifications to **Rowan Companies Inc** Rig 12 last year in Rowan's Houston terminal yard were made by the yard's rig hands.

Rowan reports that the operation was managed by Rowan's **Bill Henson** and completed on time with no incidents.

In the modification, several loads were consolidated, reducing the total number of loads to 36. The equipment configuration was also modified to reduce the overall footprint and improve access to equipment for maintenance and repair.

Rig 12 mobilized to Louisiana and drilled one well for **Samson Resources** with a total of 1 hr downtime. ■