energy target is real, whether a nuclear plant, offshore drilling or production facility, pipeline, tanker or something else. Your association has risen to the challenge. IADC is an active participant on an industry task group led by API to design a system to share threat and security information. In addition, we are also participating in the Gulf Safety Committee, a group that includes the US Coast Guard. At press time, committee met on January 17, primarily to discuss offshore security and established an Offshore Security subcommittee.

It is through the efforts and perseverance of dedicated volunteers and highly skilled staff that IADC’s advocacy efforts and initiatives have won the small battles that create real savings for drilling contractors and pave the way for advances in our industry’s efficiency.

From the President

GONE FISHING

2002 STARTED WITH a bang! On 1 January the New Orleans Times Picayune and the Mobile (Alabama) Register each ran a story declaring “Gulf Rigs Islands of Contamination”. The author of this distortion alleges that drilling rigs and production platforms are a dangerous source of mercury pollution in the Gulf of Mexico. Noting that the 4,000 platforms in the Gulf are “widely known” as hotspots for commercial and recreational fishermen he concludes that “consumption of fish associated with the rigs may present a unique and potent pathway for toxic mercury contamination in humans”. Even though the author notes that coal-burning power plants “have long been identified as major sources of mercury pollution” and that “federal researchers have…compelling evidence that airborne mercury from smokestacks…works its way into even the most pristine and isolated aquatic environments”, it is the offshore rigs and their fish friendly eco-systems that are the culprits. Despite citing several scientific studies, the journalist (?) relies on an unscientific newspaper-sponsored “fish testing” on 65 Gulf coast residents who “said they ate fish at least once a week.” Most, he says, “were…over the EPA’s safe limit for methyl mercury in the human body.” You can’t help but wonder if any of these folks live near a coal-burning power plant, but that apparently was not part of the unscientific newspaper study!

In responding to this journalistic bombast, the Acting Director of the US Minerals Management Service sent a letter to both newspapers stating flatly that the allegation of mercury pollution from oil and gas drilling in the Gulf “...is simply not true.” The Acting Director concluded by chastening the papers for not first checking with MMS before citing MMS studies, noting that as a result “…the public was provided serious misinformation and needlessly alarmed.” MMS offered to work with the newspapers to “provide your readers the true facts—they deserve no less”. Well said. We don’t know if these particular papers care about going the extra step to get the true facts to their readers by contacting MMS for a follow-up. My guess is probably not.

From the President