

EDITORIALS

From the Chairman

'I'VE GOT GREAT NEWS!'

A POPULAR TV COMMERCIAL features a lawyer paying a visit to his client in jail before a pending parole hearing. "I've got great news!" the lawyer exclaims. "You mean I'm going to get my parole," the prisoner responds full of hope. "No," beams the barrister, "I just saved a load of money on my car insurance."

So although my time as Chairman of the IADC may have been rewarding, unfortunately our industry still faces challenges here in the U.S.



Lawrence R. Dickerson, Chairman

Still, my opportunity to serve as Chairman has renewed my hope and pride in the work we do. I've traveled from the North Slope to Brazil, and from Amsterdam to Australia, with multiple stops along the way. It's given me a wonderful chance to see old friends and to make new ones. The energy and diversity of the men and women who make up the IADC truly brought home to me the strengths of our global industry. I came away with a rejuvenated faith in our ability to easily accomplish the improbable and, with time, to achieve the impossible.

And I am particularly excited by the possibilities that the new year could bring. Soon, we may finally have a producer friendly Energy Policy, complete with tax incentives, royalty relief, increased access and a streamlined permitting process. Elsewhere, deepwater technology efforts are focusing on light-weight aluminum risers and new blowout prevention methods. And we are tapping today's amazing virtual technology to help insure personnel safety through rig anti-collision systems that sense workers in relation to equipment and prevent accidents.

On the demand side of the equation, product prices remain high and global crude oil consumption is over 75 million barrels per day and rising toward 100 million barrels at a rapid pace. Yet the rate of production from existing fields is declining at a time when proven undeveloped reserves lie fallow. That natural gas is in short supply in the U.S. over time is without question. Still we seem willing to count on energy imports that take away business and jobs from the U.S.

If you ask me, there is a wealth of hope and opportunity in the work we are doing and the challenges that lie ahead. And that IS great news. ■

From the President

SAVE THE REDNECK!

NO, NOT THOSE BEER-GUZZLING, pick-up truck ruffians rumored to roam the US Gulf Coast. I'm referring to the Redneck Diver, a European sea bird that migrates from northern Scandinavia, across the North Sea, flying high above the smokestacks and wind farms of the English coast to Continental Europe for their annual bird-holiday.

Extensive studies of migratory fowl flyways have been made. A great deal has been done to protect these high fliers from offshore drilling rigs that may lay along their waterway routes. In one country, a rig was required to have a "birdwatcher" on board, keeping a keen eye out for any errant fowl that might be on an airborne collision course with a derrick. "Hit the strobe light, Henrich, there's a Redneck Diver coming in fast and low!"



Lee Hunt, President

A few things are known about the Redneck Diver. One, they fly at high altitudes and rarely descend to the airspace occupied by the superstructures of offshore drilling rigs. Nor, for that matter, to the heights of those "Cuisinarts of the Coast", the giant offshore wind turbines stretching over miles of sea lanes. I don't know of any exact statistics (since this is not something advocates of alternative, renewable energy sources would care to admit) but its likely that far more sea-traversing fowl have been sliced, diced and chopped by the 250 foot turbine blades of the wind farms than have been maimed from headlong collisions with drilling derricks.

Anyway, getting to the bottom line of this little tale: a mobile offshore drilling rig is scheduled to begin working in Holland's Zuider Zee next year. One requirement for permitting this exploration is that the rig superstructure and derrick must be painted a bluish-gray color to blend in with the horizon skyline, thus preventing "visual pollution" from the deserted coastal shore. If, perchance, a weary Redneck Diver should flag behind the flock and drop to a lower cruising altitude, it's going to be a mite more difficult to spot this lone sentinel of upstream exploration if it's painted the same color as the sky. Maybe bright orange is a better color scheme for the birds, but blue-gray is a must for a romantic horizon. If Henrich the birdwatcher is alert, however, he can hit the flashing strobe and cause the Redneck Diver to veer away, avoiding colliding with a drilling rig. Let's hope the bird doesn't divert to a path through the nearby two mile stretch of giant offshore windmills, where there are no birdwatchers or warning lights.

Whack!

Save the Rednecks! Put birdwatchers on the windmills. Due to reduced exploration activity in the region, there's a lot of laid off oil workers who need jobs. Seems like a good way to help two endangered species. ■