IADC's training and accreditation program expands

IADC'S TRAINING AND accreditation programs continue to expand to cover the latest in technology being developed by the industry. These include enhancing the WellCAP® program, developing guidelines for surface BOP drilling, and developing a number of new accreditation programs for ballast control/stability and other types of training.

WELLCAP "PLUS"

WellCAP "Plus" the is name currently used to refer to a new advanced level of WellCAP that is now under development. The advanced level will be designed to provide more focus on specialized areas than is currently available with WellCAP. It is envisioned to be utilized particularly by operators, contractor operated schools and, to a lesser extent, commercial schools, to focus on regional issues or events or developments of an important nature in the industry such as deepwater, hydrates, etc.

Steve Kropla

"The advanced level of WellCAP Plus will enable students to spend more time focusing on specific items rather than the core curriculum of the standard well control course," said **Steve Kropla**, Director-Accreditation & Certification Programs for IADC.

A typical WellCAP course is taken every two years, and many who are more experienced and have been in the industry for some time may not find the experience as challenging as they might like.

"They sometimes feel they don't receive much benefit because it's the same information they have been presented many times before," Mr Kropla said.

"This will give them an opportunity to step to a higher level and receive more in depth knowledge on a group of certain topics than they would otherwise get in the standard WellCAP course."

Details of who would qualify and how someone would qualify for WellCAP Plus is still being determined. Among the ideas is a fairly stringent prequalification exam passed with a score of at least 80%.

"We think the primary audience will probably be operators and also very experienced drilling superintendents and toolpushers," Mr Kropla said.

"These are people that have been in the industry for some time and are pretty knowledgeable in general well control but would like to be able to focus on more specific knowledge."

There has been some discussion of staggering WellCAP Plus with the standard WellCAP course. The reason is to not diminish the value of the standard WellCAP by implying the bar is being raised so all of the operators will want to do WellCAP Plus and not the standard WellCAP.

In fact, the standard WellCAP course is kept up to date with technology. Changes were made to the subsea package that went into effect early last year.

The latest changes were the addition of deepwater topics to the subsea section. People who have taken an introductory course might take a different course since IADC also revised its introductory level WellCAP.

WellCAP "Plus", or whatever it might be called in final form, will likely reach the pilot project stage in mid-2004. The official rollout is anticipated to be made at well control conferences in the U.S. and the Middle East late next year.

The task force working on the project includes **Transocean**, **Diamond Offshore**, **GlobalSantaFe**, **Noble Corporation**, **ChevronTexaco**, **BP**, **Newfield Exploration**, **Shell**, **Aberdeen Drilling Schools**, **Randy Smith Training Solutions** and the **University of Louisiana**.

SURFACE BOP GUIDELINES

IADC is also developing a set best practice guidelines for utilizing surface BOPs from floating rigs. This project, similar to the Deepwater Well Control Guidelines originally launched in 1998 and revised in 2000, grew out of the surface BOP workshop held in November 2002. The task group is cochaired by Shell and Transocean and includes a large number of contractors and operators as well as service companies.

There will be three main sections to the guidelines: well construction, drilling vessel and equipment, and health, safety and environment. The task group is currently about a third of the way through the project, and has made extremely good progress on the drilling vessel and equipment section.

The goal is to have the guidelines completed and ready for review by the executive committee and the board of directors for final approval at the spring meeting in Dallas in 2004.

One key decision that was made is that the initial edition of the guidelines will focus strictly on exploration drilling. The guidelines may eventually encompass development drilling utilizing surface BOPs from floating rigs.

ACCREDITATION ACTIVITIES

A ballast control and stability accreditation program will be done jointly with the London-based Nautical, which has close ties with the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The goal is that the standard developed by IADC and the Nautical Institute become the standard that would be presented to and accepted by IMO.

There are a variety of different standards of ballast control training around the world. IADC is trying to consolidate them into one standard so when a contractor moves a rig from area to area, there will be one standard that is already met, eliminating the need to be recertified or accredited.

In keeping with the IMO format, instruction at various levels would be documented in a logbook designed for this purpose.

"We did a survey earlier this year in conjunction with the Nautical Institute," Mr Kropla said, "and we identified the population of training providers worldwide, the positions they train and to what standards they train."

Meetings will be held with the Nautical Institute and IADC members, including Transocean and Diamond Offshore, who are assisting IADC with the project.

IADC is also investigating the accreditation of internal competence assurance systems open to contractors and service companies.

IADC has received a lot of interest from service companies, most of which are already developing some type of internal competency programs, which may take different approaches, including some that use tools provided by IADC such as Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).

However, those are not always applicable, especially for service companies, because they don't have the same type of job positions.

IADC would define the framework of what makes up a viable competency assurance program and then implement an auditing program to see that the companies have done these things and that they are actually following through with them in their organization.

IADC is also looking at a "generic" drilling industry training accreditation program. Under this scheme, training programs and materials that don't fit neatly into other accreditation programs could be reviewed and approved by IADC.

"We have had inquiries from commercial training organizations and from national oil companies," Mr. Kropla said.

"Many of them have developed high-quality training programs and materials, and are interested in obtaining an industry-recognized 'seal of approval.'"

Training providers would submit course materials to IADC and allow instruction to be closely examined by industry subject matter experts.

The goal would be to ensure that similar courses conducted by other accredited schools meet the same standards, and instruction is harmonized with well-developed learning objectives.

Another aim would be to ensure that instruction focuses on transfer of practical knowledge without being over-commercialized by a particular vendor or provider.

WELL CONTROL ROUND TABLE

One of the things that IADC will have completed by the Annual Meeting is the first Middle East well control round table, an informal meeting designed to follow on some of the issues that were brought up at the Middle East well control conference in 2002.

The round table, held September 15 in Abu Dhabi, will provide more input and involvement to IADC members in the Middle East as far as well control issues go. Sponsored by a number of WellCAP accredited schools operating in the Middle East, the event focused on training, operational issues, advanced well control (WellCAP "Plus"), and other relevant topics.