

# Well Control Conference of the Americas 24-26 Oct

**THE IADC WELL** Control Conference of the Americas is set for 24-26 October in Albuquerque, and it promises to bring the latest in well control equipment and trends as well as information on the latest training initiatives from drilling contractors and operators alike, including a session on WellCAP Plus program from IADC. The conference is sponsored by **GlobalSantaFe** and **ChevronTexaco**.

Among the topics at the conference is a panel discussion on overcoming barriers to well control incident-free operations that includes representatives from operators and drilling contractors. It is moderated by **Dwayne McClelland**, Manager, Well Control Team for ChevronTexaco Overseas Petroleum.

Mr McClelland notes that the industry has reached a plateau in well control related incidents, which experienced a decline beginning in 1975 when the first mandated training began. "There was a steady decline since 1975 when the industry started to train," he explained, "but since the early 1990s, the level of well control incidents plateaued and we haven't been able to continue that previous downward trend."

Mr McClelland said IADC's WellCAP Plus just might be the step change in training initiatives the industry needs to get the trend downward again toward total incident-free operations.

"If you look at the statistics of well control incidents, what you will find time and time again is that it is not really a technology issue or a procedural issue, it's a human error issue," Mr McClelland said. "It's the man-machine interface and man is the weak link."

"That's why training and emphasis on WellCAP Plus is going to be important because that is a step in the right direction to try to reduce that human error component."

A possible challenge has to do with the results of WellCAP Plus. "If we are successful in decreasing the trend in blowouts and well control incidents, we have to be careful we don't become complacent and reduce our emphasis on training," he explained.

"You need to sustain quality training to

ensure that the curve doesn't start up the other direction," he concluded.

**Bob Burnett**, Training Manager for GlobalSantaFe, said one of the industry's challenges is with the quality of training instructors but he agrees with Mr McClelland that IADC and industry is facing that challenge with a new curriculum via WellCAP Plus. He also said that well control conferences and round table meetings are beneficial to instructors and he encourages them to try to attend the conferences and meetings.

"The round table meetings and well control conferences are open to any well control instructors and we encourage them to attend in order to keep pace with the latest industry trends and technologies," Mr Burnett said.

"Well control is something that has plagued our industry for many years," he said. "With new ways of drilling, deep

water, HPHT wells and underbalanced wells, it just makes it tougher to detect when a well is flowing.

"We need to make sure our people stay up with the latest trends and technology," Mr Burnett said.

Perhaps the greatest challenge is related to replacing the experience that is going to be retiring out of the industry during the next 5-15 years, according to Mr McClelland. "In another 10-15 years as we retire, you are going to have to backfill a huge amount of experience very quickly," he said, "and that is going to be a major challenge from a well control standpoint."

"It takes about 10 years to mature a person to where he is really at the top of his game in terms of experience in the field and in well control," he continued.

More information is available at [www.iadc.org](http://www.iadc.org). ■

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**24 - 26 October, 2004**  
**Albuquerque, New Mexico**