

Drilling GOM explores storm prep, mooring, HPHT, operator drivers, market outlook

IADC DRILLING GULF of Mexico 2005 Conference & Exhibition is the industry's only event focused exclusively on drilling and completion issues in the Gulf of Mexico. The conference is sponsored by **Noble Corporation** and endorsed by the **American Association of Drilling Contractors (AADE)**. Event sponsors at press time included **Halliburton Energy Services**, **Hughes Christensen**, and **Hydril**. The event will convene 30 Nov-

1 Dec at the Omni Houston Hotel Westside (intersection Eldridge and Katy Freeway).

Attendees will learn about industry's preparations for severe weather, deepwater rig mooring issues, the future plans of two operators new to the Gulf, a rig outlook and the latest technology in riser and emergency disconnect procedures. And that's only the first day!

The Gulf of Mexico oil and gas industry was still recovering from Hurricane Katrina when it faced Hurricane Rita just a few weeks later. Despite the heavy concentration of exploration, development and production in the paths of both hurricanes, not one hurricane-related human casualty was reported. While more than 150 rigs were in the hurricanes' paths, only a handful of MODUs were blown off station. Also, despite procedures to shut in 1.5 MM b/d of oil, essentially 100% of the Gulf production, not a single barrel of oil was reported spilled or leaked. A representative from the **Minerals Management Service (MMS)** will discuss the industry's severe weather preparedness.

A panel presentation will discuss lessons learned and learning about Gulf of Mexico mooring in the wake of Katrina and Rita, and 2004's Hurricane Ivan.

Other presentations during the conference will focus on deepwater drilling as operators face daunting challenges and issues in station keeping, emergency disconnect and more while drilling in 10,000 ft of water. **Chip Keener, Transocean Inc**, will examine these issues and others, again with an eye toward preparations for severe weather. He will also explore why one of the three ultra-deepwater Enterprise Class drillships consistently outperforms the other two vessels.

Riser technology is one of the most critical aspects of deepwater and espe-



Rowan Companies' jackup Scooter Yeargain is working for ExxonMobil in the Gulf of Mexico.

The banner features the IADC 65th Anniversary logo (1940-2005) on the left and the American Association of Drilling Engineers logo on the right. The central text reads "2005 IADC DRILLING GULF OF MEXICO" in large, stylized letters, with "Omni Houston Hotel Westside, Houston, Texas • 30 November - 1 December 2005" below it. The word "CONFERENCE SPONSOR" is centered above the "NOBLE" logo, which is a globe with the word "NOBLE" in yellow. Below "NOBLE" is "EVENT SPONSORS" above the "HALLIBURTON" logo in red. The "HYDRIL" logo is on the right, and the "BAKER HUGHES" logo with "Hughes Christensen" is on the left.

cially ultra-deepwater drilling operations. Fast and safe emergency disconnect situations in deepwater is a continuing concern among contractors. Several new approaches to this issue will be featured in presentations about the latest riser technology as it relates to emergency disconnect situations and ensuring riser integrity.

Contractors and operators working in the Gulf are always on the look out for reliable market information and prognostications. A representative from **ODS-Petrodata** will tell the audience what they want to know with his outlook for the Gulf of Mexico drilling fleet.

During the second day, representatives from **Shell** and **Chevron** will discuss the promise of deep gas from the geologic perspective as well as examine the resulting drilling challenges.

Engineers from several service companies will feature presentations on high pressure high temperature (HPHT) wells and equipment, including drilling wells with anticipated pressures in excess of 15,000 psi. Among the related topics are discussions on updating the API design validation methods for HPHT equipment; meeting the challenges of HPHT completions; and design and qualification challenges for mudline well control equipment intended for HPHT service.

Other topics to be presented during the second day include utilizing expandable tubular technology to drill efficient wells, implementing a cost effective dual gradient drilling system, drilling fluid and deep gas well challenges, and shear ram capabilities.

Be sure to visit the conference exhibitors during coffee breaks and after the conference. Exhibitors include **Access Oil Tools**; **Action Spe-**

cialties; **Alexander/Ryan Marine & Safety Company**; **Cudd Well Control**; **Derrick Equipment**; **Enviro-Pak Compactors/Tech Oil**; **IADC Publications**; **KMC Oiltools Inc**; **LeTourneau Ellis Williams Co (LEWCO)**; **ODS-Petrodata**; **Process Safety & Reliability Group (PSRG)**; **Results in Learning Inc**; **T S Moly-Lubricants Inc**; **Tuboscope NOV**; **Vortex Ventures**; **Wayne Enterprises**; and **Well Control School**.

Special thanks go to the conference planning committee that included **Dave Clark**, **Baker Hughes Drilling Fluids**; **David Douglas**, **Pride International**; **Mike Nesmith**, **Noble Corporation**; **Mike Wright**, **Global-SantaFe Corporation**; **Gary Collins**, **ConocoPhillips**; **Anthony Gallegos**, **Atwood Oceanics**; **Mike Roth**, **Transocean Inc**; **Dave Walton**, **ENSCO International**; and **Mike Killealea** and **Alan Spackman**, **IADC**. ■