

IADC: A paradox of diversity

Mike Killalea, Editor & Publisher

AT THE HEART of IADC is the fundamental paradox of diversity. IADC represents drilling contractors in every conceivable segment of the business. Its membership rolls list the world's largest multinational drilling companies right alongside the smallest and most regionally focused contractor. IADC drillers operate on land, they work offshore, both on the world's continental shelves and in deepwater frontiers. And the global scope of IADC's membership has exploded with the privatization of formerly state-owned drilling concerns.

Besides drilling contractors, the Association also comprises oil and gas producers, both majors, independents, and state-owned and formerly state-owned oil companies around the world. Again, world privatization has made its mark on IADC's affairs. Add to this the numerous manufacturers, technical service firms and a plethora of others with an interest in the global drilling business who are active in the Association.

Yet instead of shattering the Association, this conundrum has instead strengthened IADC and enabled it to make a significant improvement in the global drilling industry. To a weaker organization, or one less imbued with purpose, this diversity might prove an unstable fault line that could crack the entire structure. But at IADC, somehow through farsighted leadership and member participation at all levels in its affairs, this Association continues to lead the affairs of the drilling industry in government and regulatory affairs, HSE, well control, training and more.

THE WORLD OF WELLCAP

One of the centerpiece IADC initiatives over the last 4 years has been the Well Control Accreditation Program (WellCAP). This benchmark of industry-developed fundamental and supervisory-level curriculum for drilling well control training was launched in 1995 after some 2 years of development. In 1997, the program was expanded to include analogous curricula for well control in workover and completion operations.

Today, 34 training institutions worldwide have been approved under WellCAP. Another 7 schools are pending approval. WellCAP-approved courses are being taught at 107 locations in 7

languages—English, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, French and Bahasa Indonesian. Among the pending applications are courses taught in Russian and Polish. 2,804 WellCAP certificates were issued in 1998.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Now, welcome the next generation. The program is set to expand to cover virtually all areas of drilling well-control training covered by the mandate of the US Minerals Management Service—underbalanced operations, well servicing, wireline operations, coiled tubing and snubbing.

The expansion was driven largely by MMS's announcement that the agency plans to cease certifying well-control training programs. The agency now wants to step back into a less-prescriptive role. The new rules would shift responsibility for well-control training to the offshore leaseholder. MMS, meanwhile, would shift to a new mode—that of assessing training programs, through audits, employee interviews, and written and hands-on tests.

"If MMS no longer approves schools, we would like WellCAP to step in and fill that void," said **Bob Burnett** of Global Marine, Chairman of the Well Control Committee.

This would be a logical step, especially with the planned expansion of the program. Notes **Steve Kropla**, IADC Director-Accreditation and Certification Programs, "WellCAP now closely parallels the MMS program for drilling and workover/completion. The additional curricula will close the loop."

MMS may well give its blessing to such third-party accreditation, though the original proposed ruling did not allow for any such arrangements. However, the agency's thinking may be changing on that point. At the 1999 IADC Well Control Conference of the Americas, 25-26 Aug in Houston, MMS Chief-Engineering and Operations Division **Bud Danenberger** said the agency was looking seriously at a third-party certification system. He said there was a good chance MMS would issue rules authorizing third parties to conduct accreditation and certification. However, Mr Danenberger said, that would be the subject of a separate rulemaking, since

the issue was not raised in the original proposal.

MMS sees WellCAP as a prime example of industry taking proactive steps. Remarked Mr Danenberger, "We very much appreciated WellCAP stepping out a couple of years ago."

The only remaining area covered by MMS certification is production well control. IADC has no plans to expand WellCAP into this area, however. "Production activities are too far beyond the scope of IADC's mandate," Mr Kropla said. "We want to focus on what we do best."

The curricula for well servicing, coiled tubing/snubbing and wireline operations were drawn up largely by **Richard DeBuys** of Well Control School; **Alex Sas-Jaworsky**, SAS Industries; and **E J Bergeron**, Hydraulic Well Control. Several other drilling pros with contractor, service and operator firms also helped. **Willem van Adrichem**, Schlumberger, coordinated assistance from that company.

Development of the underbalanced curricula also represents a milestone. This work was primarily the product of **Rick Stone**, Signa Engineering, and **Glen Wanzer**, University of Oklahoma.

UB COMMITTEE

The UB curricula represents the latest step in IADC's commitment to this important emerging technology. The WellCAP curricula was spawned from the IADC Underbalanced Operations Committee. It was a proactive effort to fill an important void in well-control training.

The UB Ops Committee is one of IADC's busiest. Recently, for instance, the committee completed work on the IADC Underbalanced Operations Tour Report. This landmark data-collection form is now available from **IADC Publications**.

Reflecting the collective work of members of IADC's Underbalanced Operations Committee, the document summarizes all the data needed to monitor these challenging well programs.

"The Committee designed the form to complement the traditional IADC Daily Drilling Report, the DDR," remarked **Ken Fischer**, IADC Vice President-Member Services. "Alternatively, the form can be used in well intervention and reentry programs even when the DDR is not in use. Special thanks to the Task Group that developed the form,

chaired by **Dag Oluf Nessa**, Deutag UK."

SERVING DRILLING SERVICES

The Underbalanced Operations Committee is the first in the new IADC Drilling Services Division. This new group is aimed at increasing the presence of IADC Associate and Producer members in the Association and enhancing their contributions to the entire industry. IADC is working to develop other special-interest groups within the division, notably for coiled tubing and deepwater technology.

THE UBIQUITOUS DERRICK

Whether a contractor operates on land, offshore, in the Arctic or the desert, all rotary drilling rigs share certain characteristics. The most prominent of these common features has got to be the derrick. Consequently, what affects the derrick or mast affects all drilling contractors, irrespective of operational niche.

A case in point is the plan to revise API Specification 4F, which covers the design, manufacture and use of drilling derricks and masts. The current Spec 4

dates to 1995 and has been the design basis for practically every existing derrick. Recently, though, API concluded that Spec 4F's design philosophy is inconsistent with other engineering practices used in other API specs. API also intends to address regional criteria, return periods for design environmental conditions, consequences of failure, wind calculation, complex buckling, earthquake criteria.

The IADC Jackup Committee has been carrying the Spec 4F ball in these early stages of the rewrite. However, changes in derrick ratings will also affect land rigs, platform rigs, and drillships and semisubmersibles. In addition, the Spec 4F tangent had distracted the Jackup Committee from its main goal—site assessment for jackup rigs.

Consequently, at the suggestion of **Santa Fe International** President/CEO **C Stedman Garber Jr**, IADC recently formed a Drilling and Well Servicing Structures Committee.

"At this early stage in the derrick analysis process, IADC should take a leadership role now and stay the course," observed Mr Garber, "We at Santa Fe

consider this issue to be one of the most important technical issues with which this industry is now faced, especially because it not only affects the ratings of our derricks, but it also may have a significant impact on the variable load, substructure capacity, and stability criteria for our MODUs. It will take involvement at the highest levels in our member companies if we are to influence the outcome to our benefit."

Mr Garber also suggested the group conduct analyses to demonstrate the effects on operational ratings of various types of drilling rigs. Then, senior drilling executives should discuss the results with senior oil-company personnel. IADC should also ensure solid representation on relevant API and ISO committees and work groups, he said.

Several companies have committed to participating, including **Global Marine**; **Helmerich & Payne International Drilling Co**; **KCA Drilling**; **Nabors Industries**; **Noble Drilling**; **Oil Drilling & Exploration**; **Parker Drilling**; **Pride International**; **Rowan Companies**; and **Santa Fe International**. ■