

CONTRACTOR NEWS

Diamond Offshore's Ocean Baroness will be upgraded to fifth generation capabilities

A significant upgrade of **Diamond Offshore Inc's** semisubmersible *Ocean Baroness* will bring the vessel up to fifth-generation semisubmersible standards.

Design engineering work on the vessel has begun and the conversion is scheduled for completion by the fourth quarter 2001.

Keppel FELS Ltd (KFELS), the offshore arm of **Keppel FELS Energy & Infrastructure Ltd** (Keppel FELS), has a contract for the upgrade.

Total cost of the conversion is estimated at \$180 million, of which the shipyard's share is approximately \$60 million.

The deepwater upgrade will be a greatly enhanced version of Diamond Offshore's highly successful Victory-class upgrades.

Larry Dickerson, President and Chief Operating Officer of Diamond Offshore said, "We believe the economics, nature and timing of this latest Victory-class upgrade will provide substantial benefits."

The upgrade repositions another of Diamond Offshore's Victory-class units from the intermediate water-depth range to the deepwater arena, he said.

Initial outfitting will include stability

enhancements and self-contained chain/wire mooring for operation in water depths to 6,000 ft with approximately 6,160 tons operating variable



Ocean Baroness will be upgraded for deepwater drilling. Completion is set for fourth quarter 2000.

deck load, 15,000 psi BOP and riser with a multiplex control system.

Additional features include a high capacity deck crane, significantly enlarged cellar deck area and a 25 ft by 90 ft moon pool.

The vessel is stacked in the Gulf of Mexico, and will arrive in KFELS' Pioneer Yard in December 2000. ■

South Texas Drilling will acquire Pioneer

South Texas Drilling & Exploration Inc, San Antonio, has signed a stock purchase agreement to acquire all the common stock of **Pioneer Drilling Co Inc**, Corpus Christi, Tex. The Pioneer stock will be purchased with \$12 million in cash and stock.

The purchase will include three SCR drilling rigs, a lease on a fourth rig and

other equipment. Two of Pioneer's rigs are rated to 10,000 ft and two are rated to 16,000 ft.

The acquisition will increase South Texas Drilling's fleet from 8 to 12 rigs capable of drilling in the 7,000-16,000-ft range. The company is also adding two new SCR rigs capable of drilling to 18,000 ft. ■

Grey Wolf reactivates rigs

Six more rigs will be returned to service by **Grey Wolf Inc** by year end.

Since the second quarter of 1999, Grey Wolf has reactivated 19 drilling rigs from cold-stacked status to bring the marketed rig fleet to a total of 79.

Work is currently underway to reactivate three more cold-stacked rigs, two of which are already under contract. The company expects to take delivery of three top drives in the third quarter of 2000. ■

KCA Drilling sets several records in North Sea well

KCA Drilling Ltd set several records on **Shell EXPRO's** Brent Alpha installation recently while drilling the 12 1/4-in. section of the BA01 extended reach well.

The 13,370-ft hole section was the longest 12 1/4-in. section drilled by Shell EXPRO. The operation was also notable because the unstable Thulean formation was open for the entire section.

Mud weight was kept below the recommended value for borehole stability during the run. The section time was 15.85 days, giving an average ROP of 33 ft/hr.

A North Sea record for a Smith Geodiamond M71PX bit was set with the single bit run from 5,630 ft to 19,000 ft. A world record for Anadrill's A96XP3460 mud motor was also set—439 circulating hours without failure. ■

Transocean updates its new rig delivery schedule

Transocean Sedco Forex Inc recently updated its delivery dates for its six newbuild rig projects—two ultra-deepwater drillships, two ultra-deepwater semisubmersibles and one jackup.

Delivery dates for the Sedco Express, Cajun Express and Sedco Energy have been extended to the fourth quarter 2000 from the third quarter due to delays in testing and commissioning.

Delivery of the Discoverer Spirit and Discoverer Deep Seas, expected by the late third and late fourth quarters of 2000 respectively, has not changed.

The Trident jackup will be delivered in fourth quarter 2000; that date is also unchanged. ■

Parker/Saipem joint venture will provide 6 rigs for Kazakhstan

Parker Drilling Co has signed a letter of authorization with its joint venture partner, Saipem SPA, to provide six rigs to Karachaganak Petroleum Operation BV.

Parker and Saipem have formed a joint venture company named SaiPar Drilling Co to conduct the work and provide five of the six rigs.

A technical alliance and subcontract have been agreed on with Kazakhoil Drilling to provide the sixth rig.

Operations are scheduled to begin in December; the three-year contract has three one-year options.

The 6 units involved in the work will include three drilling and three workover rigs.

Robert L. Parker Jr., President and CEO of Parker Drilling, said, "This contract is a positive indication that work for international land rigs is improving and a welcomed award for Parker Drilling and our partners."

The work will be developmental drilling for a project of the

Karachaganak Integrated Organization (KIO) in Aksai, Western Kazakhstan.

The project will include workover, re-completion, and new development drilling operations.

Since limited production from the field began in 1984, more than 250 wells have been drilled in the field, including exploration, appraisal, production, and observation wells. ■

Santa Fe Transport has 5 years without a lost time accident

The rig moving arm of Santa Fe International Corp that has been responsible for its own rig moves in the Partitioned Neutral Zone and in Kuwait has completed 5 years without a lost time accident.

A contract signed in 1994 with PNZ-DG (Texaco) for one rig to work in the PNZ specified that Santa Fe would be responsible for its own rig moves.

In 1998, Kuwait Santa Fe Co purchased Kuwait Oil Co's transport equipment.

Santa Fe Transport Co now has 100 employees operating 16 oilfield bed trucks, 20 highway trucks, 18 heavy duty trucks, 21 cranes and other equipment.

To date, Transport has completed a total of 267 rigs moves and 26 camp moves, totaling almost 8,400 km.

In addition, countless loads of casing, diesel, and other support equipment and material were moved during all kinds of weather conditions. ■

Atwood has an injury-free year

The drilling fleet of Atwood Oceanics Inc has completed another year without a lost-time injury.

This is the third time in 5 ½ years that the fleet has completed over a year without lost time.

"We are proud of what our people have accomplished," said John R. Irwin, Atwood CEO. ■

Alexander Drilling data are given

IADC regrets that the listing for Alexander Drilling Inc was inadvertently omitted from the 2000 IADC Membership Directory.

The firm operates four rotary land rigs (0-14,999ft) in Arkansas.

The information that should have been included is as follows:

Alexander Drilling Inc, P O Box 6162, Ft Smith, Arkansas 72906. Phone: 918 436 2491; Fax: 918 436 2493.

Rick Alexander is President, Hugh E Alexander, Jr is CEO, Ron Alexander is Executive Vice President and Steve Walker is Marketing Representative. ■