

CONTRACTOR NEWS

Rowan takes delivery of new jackup

Rowan Companies took delivery of its newest jackup rig, the Bob Palmer, in mid-August. It will drill its first well, a 25,000 ft test, in the Gulf of Mexico in September.

The rig is a Super Gorilla XL, an enhanced version of the Super Gorilla Class jackup. With 713 ft of leg, 139 ft more than Gorillas V, Vi and VII.

The Bob Palmer also has 30% larger spud cans enabling operation in the Gulf of Mexico in up to 550 ft of water in benign environments and up to 400 ft water depths in harsh environments such as the North Sea and Eastern Canada.

Rowan financed \$187 million of the rig's design and construction costs through an 18-year bank loan guaranteed by the US Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) under its Title XI program. ■



Parker Drilling updates asset sales

Parker Drilling said that while it had not met its self-imposed goal for asset sales, it continues to expect to reach agreements to sell a significant package of assets, including 16 land rigs in Latin America and seven jackups and four platform rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. The company was in discussions with a third party and had hoped to sign a definitive agreement for the sale of the assets on August 1. However, Parker said, a request for a material change in terms by the third party was rejected by Parker and resulted in withdrawal of the offer by the third party.

"While we are disappointed that the termination of these negotiations will delay our asset sales goals, we anticipate concluding transactions that will achieve a number of our goals," said Robert L Parker, Jr, President and CEO. "The company remains committed to reducing its debt levels by approxi-

mately \$200 million from asset sales and cash flow."

The company said that in connection with the ultimate sale of an asset package, it intends to access the capital markets to raise additional funds that will enable it to restructure its debt maturity schedule for both 2004 and 2006.

The company also intends to secure a new bank credit facility that will replace the existing facility that expires in October 2003.

The company said it will continue expanding its presence in certain international markets including the CIS, Middle East and Far East. Those efforts will be in addition to its continued involvement in the Gulf of Mexico through its barge rig operation, Quail Tools and related opportunities. ■

Transocean awarded drilling contracts

Transocean was awarded contracts for three of its international jackups, a drillship and a semisubmersible. The jackups Trident XII, Ron Tappmeyer and Randolph Yost are each contracted for three years with ONGC in India. The contracts are expected to commence in October 2003 following completion of each rig's current drilling program and mobilization to India. Revenues are expected to total approximately \$203 million, exclusive of mobilization fees that are to be paid by ONGC. The Trident XII was working off Vietnam, Ron Tappmeyer was drilling off Indonesia and Randolph Yost was working off Equatorial Guinea.

The deepwater drillship Discoverer Seven Seas will also work for ONGC under a three-year charter to begin during the first quarter 2004. The rig is presently in a Brazilian shipyard. Total revenues will be approximately \$137 million plus revenues from comprehensive services including well planning, operation support and logistics management.

The semisubmersible Transocean Richardson received a two-year contract from Canadian Natural Resources for drilling offshore the Ivory Coast. This contract also is expected to commence in October 2003 following mobilization from the US Gulf of Mexico, where it was previously idle. Total contract value is approximately \$62 million, exclusive of mobilization ■

Noble exercises purchase option

Noble Corporation exercised its option to purchase the Trident 19 jackup rig from a subsidiary of Schlumberger for an exercise price of \$25.2 million. Noble previously paid an option fee of \$10.8 million to Schlumberger. The rig, renamed Noble Gene House, is presently in the UAE and will be included in Noble's Middle East region fleet

"This purchase is part of a consistent strategy of opportunistic acquisitions that fits the company's long term strategic goals," said James C Day, Noble's Chairman and CEO. "We are confident the unit will be under contract by late third quarter of 2003." ■