

# DRILLING AHEAD

## 'Quality' encapsulates IADC/SPE

**Mike Killalea, Editor & Publisher**

2,146 – THAT'S the attendance number for the 2007 SPE/IADC Drilling Conference held in Amsterdam during February announced by conference chairman **Sjoerd Brouwer**, global wells activity leader for **Shell Exploration & Production**. The number represents an all-time record for the 24-year-old event. That's all the more impressive because attendance for the Amsterdam venue has generally stood in the shadow of its bigger US brother. (The IADC/SPE Drilling Conference has since 1991 alternated between the US in even-numbered years and Amsterdam in odd-numbered years.)

### RECORDS SWEET AND SOUR

The previous record of 1,905 occurred in 1998 in Dallas, followed closely in 2000 with the 1,856 registrants who journeyed to New Orleans. In stark contrast, the 1999 Amsterdam conference, squeezed between the then-titans of '98 and '00, drew a pallid 982. But even that was more than 50% above attendance at the nadir of our business – a dismal 649 in 1987 (New Orleans). That low turnout stepped in syncopated time to the downbeat rhythm of \$10 oil we danced to in those days.

### IN A WORD...

The essence of many events can be encapsulated in a single word. For the 2007 SPE/IADC Drilling Conference, the word I heard repeatedly, from speakers, registrants and exhibitors alike was "quality." The quality of the attendees and technical and plenary sessions was unanimously judged as superb. This conference, perhaps more than any other, brings together the right people, key thinkers and decision-makers in the drilling and completion industry.

### HARDLY GREYBEARDS

Not all were greybeards, either. According to a survey made during the second day's plenary, only about a sixth (16%) were planning to retire in the next 5 years or less. 28% figured their rocking chairs were 5-10 years off. But more than a fifth (21%) had 10-15 years to work, and nearly a third (32%) were in it for 15 or more years.

What the industry – and the world – will look like in 15 years is beyond me. Funny you should ask, though, because that's the topic of a plenary schedule for the 2008 IADC/SPE Drilling Conference, 4-6 March

in Orlando. Formally, the panel will discuss our "Roadmap to the Future: People and Processes."

### AND ON TO 2008...

Chaired by **Rodney Eads**, executive vice president and chief operating officer of **Pride International**, the conference theme implies reviewing today's needs to prepare for tomorrow: "Sustainable Strategies for Today's Realities." Mr Eads will be supported by two very able and knowledgeable committees – Advisory, responsible for the theme and plenaries; and Program, in charge of the technical sessions.

I've been engaged in this conference in one way or another for more than 15 years, so forgive me for cheerleading. I've had the pleasure of working with chairmen and committee members for whom I've gained the deepest respect. I've forged some great friendships, and I know that others have done likewise as a result of their participation.

In my mind, "quality" is the hallmark not just of the 2007 SPE/IADC Drilling Conference but of the entire series and the men and women who put it together.

### TRIVIA

Being the lazy writer that I am, I have some room left over at the end of the column. I invite you to entertain yourself by chewing on a few bits of trivia about the drilling conference, to wit:

- 1. The title of the conference is never precisely the same year to year. What changes? I gave hints in the column above. (No, it's not the actual year itself.)*
- 2. How many cities has the drilling conference been held in, not counting Orlando in '08? Name them.*
- 3. What were the names of the two IADC and SPE conferences that merged to create the drilling conference?*

If you get all three answers right and are the lucky winner from a drawing of all correct responses, I'll send you a nifty IADC flashlight, or something with equally zero commercial value, but cool to own.

See you in Orlando!

*Have a comment? You can reach Mike Killalea at [mike.killalea@iadc.org](mailto:mike.killalea@iadc.org).* ☔