he news regarding just about anything to do with the economy is still somber. Even oil – once believed to be an invincible commodity – holds a strong position in the market on a strictly relative basis. But that hasn’t dampened interest in this year’s Offshore Technology Conference (OTC), slated to take place May 4 through 7 at Reliant Park in Houston. In its 40th year in 2009, this show offers four days’ worth of exhibits, discussions and forums as well as more than 2,500 exhibitors on-site across more than 557,000 square feet.

“The strong interest in exhibiting at OTC shows that companies see the value of having a presence at the world’s largest offshore event to present their technology to an international audience and to introduce new products,” OTC 2009 Chairman Don Vardeman said in a statement. “We also expect to have very good attendance in 2009 because, in one place, offshore professionals can see the latest advances in offshore technology and learn about the real-world solutions to technical problems that they can take home and apply immediately.”

While much of the talk at this year’s OTC much likely will focus on how to stay afloat during the economic downturn, there will be moments of optimism and celebration, as well. For instance, Peter G. Noble, chief naval architect for ConocoPhillips, will be given the OTC Distinguished Achievement Award for his contribution to marine vehicle and floating offshore systems design and engineering. A first at OTC this year is the presentation of the national SAFE awards by the U.S. Minerals Management Service. According to OTC, these awards recognize outstanding safety and pollution prevention performance by the offshore oil and gas industry.

Eagle Oil Tools President Paul Findlay tells Exploration + Processing’s Kathryn Jones that even in a down economy, there are still deals to be made. The equipment supply, repair and upgrading company – which is featured in this issue’s OTC preview section – is focused on its maintenance capabilities as potential clients choose repair old equipment instead of replacing it.

“Because rigs have been in harsh environments for 20-plus years, they need some TLC,” Findlay says. "Now, it’s a brand-new system with at least another 10-year life to it."

Quality Companies LLC tells E+P’s Libby John that despite the ongoing recession, the Lafayette, La.-based offshore fabricator is looking to grow. The company sees its industrial and international divisions expanding by catering to alternative sources of energy while oil and gas remain down.

“We are still young and we enjoy what we do,” President Nathan Granger notes. “We will continue to have intelligent, steady growth.”

Info box

What: Offshore Technology Conference
When: May 4-7, 2009
Where: Reliant Park, Houston
More information: www.otcnet.org
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada-based Top-Co LP designs and manufactures float and mechanical casing cementing equipment. The company supplies products to more than 65 countries and recently opened four distribution centers in Mexico, a sales platform in Baku, Azerbaijan - to serve the prolific oil and gas Caspian Sea area - and sales and distribution platforms in Moscow and Houston.

While most companies are scaling back because of the economic downturn, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada-based Top-Co LP – a firm that designs and manufactures float and mechanical casing cementing equipment – is growing through acquisitions, increasing its international presence and designing and introducing new products.

In March 2008, the company acquired Weatherford, Texas-based LeFleur Petroleum Services Inc., a firm recognized for the design and production of a proprietary line of casing cementing tools. This acquisition gave Top-Co access to 10 patented products, such as integrated cementing heads, autofill valves and non-rotating plugs, as well as proximity to the world’s largest concentration of drilling rigs.

“We are utilizing LaFleur’s leading-edge technologies in upgrading several of our products,” Top-Co President and CEO Gerald McLaughlan explains. “LaFleur’s core engineering talent has years of experience in our specialized niche market and has been mobilized to develop a high flow float valve, a differentiated product that will soon be introduced to the oil and gas market. The acquisition also provides Top-Co with an established U.S. manufacturing platform to service the large Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Mexico markets.”

LeFleur’s founder, Karl LaFleur, now serves as Top-Co’s chief engineer. “Karl leads the technical team, including R&D, and is mentoring and training our young group of engineers [in] real time technology transfer,” he says.

International growth and diversification was one of McLaughlan’s goals when his group acquired ownership of Top-
Co in 2006. The company supplies products to more than 65 countries and recently opened four distribution centers in Mexico, a sales platform in Baku, Azerbaijan – to serve the prolific oil and gas Caspian Sea area – and sales and distribution platforms in Moscow and Houston. The company has operated with a distribution facility in Dubai, UAE for many years.

“The reason behind offshore expansion is to pursue emerging and expanding drilling opportunities in the Eastern Hemisphere and Latin America, [which are] markets offering long term stable drilling programs,” he explains.

In May 2009, the company will introduce a composite centralizer used in horizontal and deviated wells. “Composites are more rigid and durable than conventional steel centralizers and are the product of choice for these challenging applications,” McLaughlan says.

Top-Notch Testing
In March, Top-Co completed and commissioned a $2 million state-of-the-art computer-controlled flow loop testing facility at its Edmonton headquarters. McLaughlan describes this test equipment as “revolutionary and leading edge.”

“It simulates actual dynamic drilling conditions and will enable the company to thoroughly test new products before releasing them to the market,” he explains.

“As we design and produce new tools, they are extensively tested in an environment very similar to operating conditions found on a drilling rig,” McLaughlan explains. “We can also conduct failure analysis and test competitor’s products to scientifically compare performance.”

“Testing also confirms that Top-Co’s products are in compliance with API (American Petroleum Institute) specifications, the quality benchmark recognized by the industry,” he continues. “Only products that perform to these standards and validated through rigorous testing are introduced to customers.”

The company historically relied on third-party out-of-country testing, he says. “Outsourcing did not enable access to the same variable operating conditions or comprehensive and reliable data acquisition now available,” he says.

“OUTSOURCING DID NOT ENABLE ACCESS TO THE SAME VARIABLE OPERATING CONDITIONS OR RELIABLE DATA ACQUISITION.”
For example, a Top-Co test cycle frequently takes 24 hours or more, similar to actual casing cementing times. During the test, tools are subjected to many variables including volume of fluid flow, back pressures and high temperatures. Tool performance is electronically monitored, and all data is logged and presented on comprehensive test reports.

**Worldwide Expansion**

Top-Co is implementing strategies to achieve aggressive offshore growth. It is looking at opening a sales and distribution center in North Africa and the feasibility of establishing a manufacturing plant in the Persian Gulf is being explored, McLaughlan says.

Over the past year, the company entered into global supply agreements with Schlumberger, Baker Hughes and Smith International – three multinational oil and gas service companies providing potential distribution of Top-Co products to more than 90 countries. “These global alliances have the potential to generate significant accretive growth for Top-Co,” he says.

International growth is key to mitigating negative repercussions from the prevailing slow and highly volatile natural gas based markets of North America, he explains. In 2006, 70 percent of the company’s business was from clients operating in Canada; today, 70 percent is derived from export sales.

It also allows the company to meet its mission, which is to be internationally recognized for its equipment and on-time customer solutions. “Top-Co will differentiate itself from competitors and expand global market share through consistently delivering quality products,” it says.

McLaughlan says the opportunity for future growth in the Eastern Hemisphere and Latin America is more reliable than North America. “The international drilling market has demonstrated much less volatility over time compared to North America,” he notes. “Drilling targets more stable oil plays and is primarily driven by large multinational E&P’s and national oil companies, and generally involves larger fields than those found in the U.S. or Canada.”

While McLaughlan expects the North American market to begin a protracted turnaround in mid-2010, Top-Co’s strategic focus over the foreseeable future will be the ongoing development of more high opportunity stable offshore markets.
EPIC Divers & Marine, an oil and gas service provider in the Gulf of Mexico, has grown to more than 400 employees since its inception in 1991. Today, the company also operates with four diving vessels and three saturation vessels, with a diving depth of 1,000 feet. Its most important asset, however, is its people. Taking better care of its work force ultimately helps the company compete in the industry, it says.

As the country worries about the economic woes, this is not something new to EPIC Divers & Marine, retired founder and CEO Julie Rodriguez says. “EPIC has stood the test of time and [learned] lessons that can only be learned over time,” she says. Originally, EPIC Divers, an oil and gas service provider in the Gulf of Mexico, which was founded in 1972 by Lawrence J. “Pie” Rivet, had suffered through years of industry downturns and setbacks. It was the education of survival in the downturn of the industry in the 1980s that gave Rodriguez the confidence to purchase the company in 1991. That education has proven to be the successful footprint of EPIC today.

Since 1991, EPIC has grown to more than 400 employees, four diving vessels, and three saturation vessels, diving to depths to 1,000 feet and maintaining a safety program recognized by the industry. It is this growth and the safety success of the company that attracted TETRA Technologies, a Houston-based company, to purchase the assets of EPIC in 2006. Combined, it is evident that EPIC and TETRA can sustain the test of time. Hard assets such as vessels, barges and saturation systems are the tools to aid the real assets into getting the jobs done safely and efficiently. The real assets are its people. They are at the heart of the core value that has been instilled at EPIC, the company says.

Through much economic uncertainty, the constant lesson learned is: take care of your people,” Rodriguez notes. “The investment in your people at these times will prove beneficial when the economic uncertainty wanes. The 1980s were not the only hard times fallen upon the company; it was again in the mid-1990s and early 21st century. This so-called roller-coaster

EPIC Divers & Marine LLC
■ www.epiccompanies.com
■ HQ: Harvey, La
■ Employees: 400+
■ Julie Rodriguez, former CEO: “Physically I may be gone from EPIC, however, my heart still is at EPIC and its future successes.”

In For the Long Haul

EPIC Divers & Marine’s former CEO Julie Rodriguez says she foresees a strong future for the company she helped build. Despite challenges, the firm remains competitive because of its people.
ride is something EPIC has adapted to and learned to overcome. The 2009 economy may be challenging. However, EPIC’s ability to maintain its people and the policies that have made this company sustainable over the last 36 years will be the key to success. This is a simple basis founded on simple lessons.

"The oil and gas industry is ever so important to our local economy and the nation," she continues. "It is our job to maintain and ensure the integrity of the oil and gas infrastructure so it is safe, efficient and environmentally sound. Only years of survival experience and fortitude can prove beneficial to the end-users, our people, our clients, our vendors and consumers of energy products."

**Distinguishing Factor**

What sets EPIC apart from its competition, Rodriguez explains, is its proven ability to withstand the test of time and the challenges that are prevalent in the industry and the nation. "This is a hazardous industry, and with the ever-changing economic climate, it is a constant challenge to maintain a safe place to work," she says. "This lesson was learned the hard way in 1994, when a young diver – Pat Walker – was killed at the job site. Some lessons should not have to be learned the hard way, but in this case it was the defining moment at EPIC."

This lesson was the catalyst that led to the creation of EPIC Dive 5 Safety and Quality Program in 1995, Rodriguez explains, which is a safety program focused on underwater operations with the proper checks and balances to ensure safe execution of the work, and employing "the right people to believe in it and live by it," she notes. "This success can only be achieved over years of focus and dedication creating a culture of safety in the workplace – a culture that can only be achieved over time, consistent with the established management team to carry on the EPIC legacy of maintaining your real assets."

**Fast Forward Rentals** has been providing quality equipment to the oil and gas industry for the past decade. Fast Forward’s newest addition, the HydroFlex SEA SUN sub-sea lighting systems are capable of illuminating 4,000 square feet underwater. When combined with our diver helmet mounted video systems, this combination has proven to be an invaluable tool greatly improving safety and productivity for projects such as well remediation, salvage and construction.
“From our offshore construction superintendents and construction crews to our onshore construction and fabrication facilities, the company has set the standard for construction and fabrication services in the oil and gas industry,” Lafayette, La.-based Quality Companies LLC says. It provides onshore fabrication services such as spool piping, production modules, manifolds, deck extensions, and riser guards and clamps.

Quality Companies LLC implements a family oriented atmosphere and focuses on safety – two reasons why the company has grown significantly from when its first firm – Quality Construction and Production (QCP) – was founded in 2001. In fact, QCP was ranked in Entrepreneur magazine’s Hot 500 as one of the fastest-growing companies in 2007. “We had 70 employees, and to date, we have close to 800 employees,” co-founder and partner Nathan Granger says. “We work hard and we play hard.”

The Lafayette, La.-based company provides onshore fabrication services such as spool piping, production modules, manifolds, deck extensions, and riser guards and clamps. Its offshore services include hook-ups, facilities maintenance and upgrades, compressor installations and field welding. It also offers contract labor such as operators, technical support personnel, crane operators, welders, fitters, shipbuilders, roustabouts, mechanics, cooks and galley hands.

The company says it strives to provide the best offshore construction superintendents in the industry; superior onshore fabrication services, a safe working environment; quality and safety-focused contract labor; and to complete projects on schedule and budget.

“[QCP] offers the finest in construction and fabrication services on the Gulf Coast,” the company says. “From our offshore construction superintendents and construction crews to our onshore construction and fabrication facilities, the company has set the standard for construction and fabrication services in the oil and gas industry.”

**Setting the Standard**

In operation for only eight years, Quality Companies LLC says it has already been recognized for its safety and growth achievements. — By Libby John

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**COMPANY PROFILE**

Quality Companies LLC ■ www.qcpllc.com ■ HQ: Lafayette, La. ■ Employees: 800 ■ Service: Onshore and offshore fabrication and construction services ■ Nathan Granger, president: “No one employee has greater value.”
In 2007, Granger and his partner Troy Collins acquired the contract operations and Pro-Active Compliance divisions of Production Management Industries LLC from Superior Energy Services and formed Quality Production Management (QPM).

“In just a relatively short period of time, QPM has become a profitable entity experiencing growth not only in the Gulf of Mexico, but on land as well, gaining a substantial natural gas plant operations in North Dakota,” the company says. “QPM has also added a camera surveillance division in a joint venture with WOW Technologies of Lafayette, La.”

Recently, Quality Companies opened an industrial/international division, which provides piping, plant upgrades and maintenance, engineering support, shipbuilding and repair services.

Safe Environment

Quality Companies was able to achieve significant growth because it focuses on communicating effectively with its employees. “We keep an open-door policy,” Granger says. “No one employee has greater value – from myself as president to our lowest entry-level employee.”

It also strives to have a safe work environment and follow the guidelines outlined in the Quality Companies HSE Management System. “The Quality Companies is a performance-driven company whose prime importance is the health and safety of our employees, prevention of incidents and protection of the environment,” the company says. “It is our belief that accidents that injure persons, damage the environment or equipment cause needless human suffering, inconvenience and expense.”

“We value our employees and safety before the bottom line, and we won’t do anything to end our efforts in that,” Granger explains. “Our commitment to safety and the environment and our employees [separate us from competitors]. They are our greatest assets.”

USI Insurance Services LLC

Congratulations to Quality Construction and Production LLC on winning the MMS S.A.F.E. award. Quality Construction and Production LLC is a leader in field of services to the oil and gas industries in the Gulf of Mexico. USI Insurance Services is proud to be a “trusted” partner with Quality Construction and Production LLC. Providing superior and innovative insurance protection.
In fact, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) awarded Quality Companies the Lafayette District MMS S.A.F.E. award in March – its second year of operation. MMS inspected 318 of its platform safety components, and noted that its incident of noncompliance-to-component ratio was 0.028 – significantly below the average of 0.054. “It’s an outstanding accomplishment, especially for a new company,” Granger says. “It shows what we strive for.”

Expanding Operations

Quality Companies is also looking to expand its plant operations, Granger notes. “We actually operate large processing plants in North Dakota, and we’re looking at expanding into several other states across the country,” he says. The company is looking at projects in Colorado, Alaska and Pennsylvania, he adds.

The company is able to grow because the market changes occurring due to the slow economy are beneficial to the company, he explains. For example, most companies prefer to operate their facilities using contract labor, especially in tough economic times. Contract labor gives the customer the flexibility to add and delete personnel as needed making the workforce more fluid, he explains.

Overall, the economic conditions have not had a negative impact on the company. “We’re not a company with a lot of overhead,” he says. “We can really compete with our rate structure compared with our clients. We’re able to offer innovative and new ways of operations since we don’t have a large company overhead. “We are always looking for ways to increase shareholder value and tighten operations,” he adds.

‘Intelligent, Steady Growth’

Quality Companies is looking to expand its industrial and international divisions by looking at performing projects that involve alternative sources of energy, such as nuclear, wind, and clean coal, both domestically and abroad. “With all the talk in [Washington] D.C. about the increase in that field, there is a need to be a part of it,” Granger explains. The company also will continue to focus on growth, both organically and through acquisitions. “We are still young and we enjoy what we do,” he notes. “We will continue to have intelligent, steady growth.”

"WE'RE ABLE TO OFFER INNOVATIVE AND NEW WAYS OF OPERATIONS SINCE WE DON'T HAVE A LARGE COMPANY OVERHEAD."
Experience is Key

Delmar Systems does everything it can to retain its people because their experience is the reason for its success. The company also offers training for entry-level employees. — By Brian Salgado

With its experience, expertise and willingness to work with owners of large projects, Delmar Systems Inc. is ready to expand its market for anchor-handling tools and equipment and mooring services on the international stage. Vice President of Operations Matt Smith says worldwide expansion is just one of the ways Delmar Systems is looking to remain profitable in these tough times.

“We’re just trying to hold onto [employees] by looking at international work,” Smith says. “We retain our people because they are the key to the success of the company.”

Delmar Systems was founded in 1968, and today, is among the world leaders in mooring services for the offshore oil and gas industry. Its capabilities include suction anchor, conventional catenary, preset, insert and extension wire mooring. Also, the company says it performed the first installation of the Gulf of Mexico’s pre-installed taut leg mooring system on a mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU) in 1998.

Delmar Systems also boasts the development of a suction anchor system that requires only one anchor-handling vessel and a patented, “disconnect-able” subsea connector for permanent and temporary installations.

Latest Developments

Smith says Delmar Systems also boasts one of the largest inventories of rental equipment for moorings, including the company’s latest product – the OMNI-Max gravity-installed anchor. According to the company, this product is capable of being loaded from any direction 360 degrees around the axis of the
anchor. Delmar Systems says under extreme loading and uplift angle conditions – such as those encountered during extreme weather conditions – the anchor will penetrate deeper into the soil to gain the necessary capacity.

“In the event the mooring system comes apart, this anchor has the same holding capacity,” Smith says. “If the line is breaking, the arm rotates on the anchor, adapts and handles the load.”

Versatility is Key
Because of its versatility, Smith says OMNI-Max anchors are more efficient to install than traditional suction pile anchors. They are not as big and bulky as suction pile anchors, and their size makes them appropriate for more applications, as well.

“This also opens us up to an available market of vessels to install these anchors,” Smith says. “You can get more of them on the deck of the boat and they don’t take up as much room. But they have similar or higher load capacity in deep water.”

Delmar Systems installed an OMNI-Max anchor in the Gulf of Mexico that withstood the conditions brought on during the hurricane season. Even though the rig was only anchored by eight lines vs. the traditional 12 required for suction pile anchors, Smith says OMNI-Max anchor kept the rig in place despite losing seven of the eight lines to the storms.

“That rig did not leave the location, although seven lines broke, whereas rigs with 12 lines left,” he adds. “It allows you to buy time because you do not have to worry about the rig going to drift.”

Still Hiring
Delmar Systems has an extensive training program for entry-level candidates interested in a career as an offshore rigger. The company provides two weeks of classroom training at its facility in Broussard, La., which involves lessons in first aid and fieldwork simulators.

Once a skill set has been developed to a level of proficiency on the land-based simulators, new employees are trained in the standard requirements for the offshore work force, including water survival, Smith says.

“I feel like this is one of the few things left in the job market where you can hire a guy that knows absolutely nothing and is completely green and develop him to be an offshore superintendent within a matter of a few years,” Smith says. “Then, he has a career that allows him to work the rest of his working life that is very challenging, rewarding and he can determine his own destiny.”

Latest Developments
Delmar Systems takes pride in providing a safe workplace for its employees. The company says it uses pre-job procedures, post-job reports and active personnel screening to resolve safety risks before they are encountered.

“Delmar is the world leader in providing the safest, most efficient mooring operations possible and has built a 40-year history of safe work performance,” the company says.

Web Exclusive: Visit exploration-processing.com to see an online photo gallery of Delmar Systems’ operations.
Dynamic in Many Ways

Dynamic Fuel Systems Inc. finds success applying Jetstar – its proprietary fuel-saving injection system – to several new markets, including the mining sector. —By Brooke Infusino

Dynamic Fuel Systems Inc. is living up to its name by creating dynamic fuel savings and reduced emissions solutions for the heavy haul transportation sectors. Now, Dynamic has positioned itself to bring its solutions to other commercial applications, thanks to a significant investment in research and development.

Although Dynamic Fuel Systems was incorporated in 2001, the firm has quickly and successfully brought its trademarked Jetstar hydrogen fuel-injection system to market, President and CEO Jerry Solensky says.

Exploration + Processing recently interviewed Solensky about the company’s efforts to bring its Jetstar technology to the marketplace, its plans to enter additional markets, and how research and development are ensuring the company’s success.

Exploration + Processing: Can you describe the impetus behind the development of the Jetstar injection system?

Jerry Solensky: Initially, the development of Jetstar was strictly to assist in reducing greenhouse gases and particulate matter input by road transportation. During the development period, it was discovered that while accomplishing the emissions reduction, many operators were noticing a substantial improvement in fuel efficiency. This completely turned our marketing approach around to the approximate 10 percent fuel savings along with the emission reductions.

E+P: What types of benefits does the technology offer?

JS: The technology – when used in conjunction with a fossil-fueled engine of any horsepower rating – shows a substantial reduction of particulate matter, NOx and an increase in fuel effi-
ciency. This offsets the cost and adds to the bottom line and performance, all while extending the normal service interval for the engine. By identifying the party using the Jetstar technology, it creates a public awareness to the fact that a good citizen (individual or corporate) has made a substantial effort above and beyond to significantly reduce their carbon footprint.

Furthermore, we have been able to perfect a flexible platform that will be able to support most applications to combustion engine applications. Our initial introduction of the Jetstar was targeted for the Class 6-8 Diesel trucking industry. With the advent of an extended platform we are now able to adopt the technology to varied applications.

E+P: Is the mining industry a significant area for growth?
JS: In the mining market, diesel powered stationary generators are used to generate electricity in some of the (most) remote locations. Regulations are being introduced by the EPA and the costs of operating larger diesel engines in remote areas are much higher due to the transfer of the fuel to the mine site. This transfer is usually done by truck and with frequency due to the higher rate of fuel consumption on larger 2,000- to 3,500-horsepower engines. We have been applying the technology to the mining market applications as of this spring.

E+P: How has the market reacted to Jetstar?
JS: The reaction has been varied. In the beginning, some people, even with third-party validation, still believed that the Jetstar was just “another technology with claims of fuel-efficiency improvement and emissions reductions that just won’t work.” The difference with Jetstar is that it does work. It works because our technology allows us to set the machine up for proper efficiency.

Engine manufacturers have been under the EPA gun to meet emission standards since 2003, with the bar moving again in 2005, 2007 and 2010. All of their efforts have been focused on their own technologies, but due to time constraints, they have not had the opportunity to check out anything they have not developed.

E+P: How has Dynamic Fuel adjusted to the economy?
JS: If you look at the commitment by the Canadian government and President Obama and his administration toward supporting green technologies for the health and future of all, the downturn may not be as big in our industry as it is in others. We will continue to improve our relationships with government agencies at the federal, state and provincial levels to obtain certifications, promote co-development on OEM-supplied vehicles, and obtain funding for continued development of our product and platforms.

E+P: How much emphasis does Dynamic Fuel place on R&D?
JS: Research and development is extremely important. Engine manufacturers are not standing still, and our technology must comply and work with theirs. We have had a tremendous amount of cooperation from our client base, who have moved to different vehicles with newer technologies on the engines and have worked with us to adapt our technology to the changes. [We] believe teamwork and technology go hand-in-hand.
Eyes on the Prize

Eagle Oil Tools provides equipment and technical support for mechanical handling, and maintains a sharp focus on the international oil drilling market. —By Kathryn Jones

Even though his company, Eagle Oil Tools LLC, is only a year old, President Paul Findlay has been working the international oil circuit for about 25 years. The Aberdeen, Scotland, native got his start as a hands-on service engineer on the North Sea before joining Maritime Hydraulics in Norway. He grew in the ranks and was promoted to direct the technical department of the firm’s U.K. operations, which gave him the opportunity to expand his experience globally.

In the 1990s, Findlay was approached by a competitor – Global Marine Energy, formerly MOS Offshore – and became its area manager for Europe. He later became CEO of the group company, encompassing the operations of Houston-based Patriot Mechanical Handling, and from 2005 to 2007, Findlay increased the company’s revenues from circa $20 million to circa $250 million. When the shareholders opted to exit, the company was put on the market and purchased by a Chinese company that was listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. Findlay chose to leave the company, and started Eagle Oil Tools in 2008.

Lightweight Alternative
Houston-based Eagle Oil Tools offers equipment and technical support services for the international drilling and exploration market, both onshore and offshore, as well as for traditional and nontraditional drilling applications. Its products and services are based around the mechanical handling aspect of the industry. “In the last 20 to 30 years, there has been tremendous development in mechanical handling solutions,” Findlay says. “This technology has allowed for more efficient operations in terms of...
safety, and also in terms of development of products so that you can handle the larger tubulars and much heavier components more effectively."

However, most of the items available for purchase are bulky and extremely expensive, he says, which does not fare well in today’s economic downturn. "We have quite an intellectual property of lightweight pipe handling systems," Findlay says. "If you compare what's available on the market to what we have, theirs is heavy, difficult to maintain, complicated to operate, very difficult to install and available at a much higher cost. We've moved into an area where feedback from the market has been to make the equipment lightweight, simpler, cost effective, much easier to install and easier to operate."

**Retrofits and Upgrades**

Eagle Oil Tools' timing couldn't be any more perfect, Findlay says. "Despite oil prices going back to over $50, the budget and forecast of drilling contractors have been scrutinized," he says. "That doesn't mean there is less opportunity; you just have to be more cost effective in how you do it. Because of the global downturn, drilling contractors are slashing capital equipment budgets, but they still need safety and efficiency of handling. We are offering them a pipe handling system for approximately 50 percent of what they needed to budget for last year, and that's good news to them."

"Most of these rigs are somewhere around 20 years old," he continues. "Over the last three to four years, the main focus of the drilling industry has been to replace or add to this fleet of rigs by building new rigs in what we call, 'the new build boom.' There was a huge influx in building new-build activity when oil prices were over $100 and clients had plenty of money. Since the global economy crashed, that new-build activity hasn’t quite stopped. Contracts are still in place in most cases and, after all, it takes three years to build a rig. But, placement for orders of new rigs has almost stopped. New-build activity has come to an end effectively, so where does the market go next?"

The answer is retrofits, upgrades and rig enhancement projects, according to Findlay. "Because rigs have been in harsh environments for 20-plus years, they need some TLC," he states. This is good timing for Eagle to market its capability to retrofit a rig with a new lightweight pipe handling system and other associated services. "We have the engineering capability and equipment knowledge where we can take a 1970s pipe handling system and upgrade it to a millennium-style design for a fraction of the cost it would take to replace the whole thing," Findlay says.

**What's Ahead**

The company is based on the Gulf Coast, which is a more mature, renowned market that is still quite active. Findlay also has his sights set on emerging markets, such as Brazil, Vietnam, the Philippines, China and India. He says the company will open offices in Brazil and Singapore this summer.
Assessments at Sea

Houston-based MatthewsDaniel’s specialization in marine surveying is key in the offshore oil and gas industry, and with 22 offices worldwide, customers are assured quick service.

Its ability to take its surveying and oil and gas services to the sea is what sets Houston’s MatthewsDaniel apart, the company says. “Marine operations are an integral part of [our] worldwide service to the offshore oil and gas and marine industry,” the company says. “[We] have an established team of experts to provide marine surveying, approval and certification, engineering, and marine consultancy services for the entire energy and marine communities.”

Because mobile offshore drilling units – including platforms, modules, spars and floating production systems – constantly have to be moved from location to location, great risks are possible. “The MatthewsDaniel team of experts advises on all aspects of such heavy-lift transports,” the company states.

“Our naval architects research and analyze such variables as sea-keeping characteristics of transport vessels and heavy-lift cargo, environmental maxima, critical motions, stability and seafastenings, as well as the complexities of all types of platform installations,” the company continues. “We also provide routing information and weather monitoring of unusual ocean voyages and tows.”

The MatthewsDaniel team includes marine surveyors, in-house engineers and software experts. The company also maintains liaisons with petroleum, structural and chemical engineers, geotechnical engineers, meteorologists, oceanographers, metallurgists and other specialists, it says.

The company says its offshore services include:

- Loading, securing and tow-approval surveys;
- Dry tow and heavy-lift transports;
- Condition and valuation surveys of platforms, rigs, vessels and facilities;
- Damage surveys of platforms, rigs and vessels.

MatthewsDaniel
www.matdan.com
Headquarters: Houston
Service: Insurance services and surveying for the oil and gas industry
MatthewsDaniel: “[We have] the resources to tailor a response team constructed from ... expertise.”
Engineering and naval architectural services;  
Rig-move attendance;  
Rig location approvals and site assessments;  
Condition and valuation surveys of platforms, rigs, vessels and facilities; and  
Damage surveys of platforms, rigs and vessels.

“In addition, MatthewsDaniel has developed a set of procedures and guidelines that assist the drilling contractor and operator at the most critical phases of moving independent leg jack-up drilling units onto their locations—siting on location,” the company says. “It identifies methods for risk reduction prior to and during siting of the units and is recognized worldwide as a significant contributor to risk reduction.”

Diverse Industries
In addition to marine and oil industries, MatthewsDaniel is active in the utilities, mining, engineering and environmental industries. “From our origins in the oil and gas industry, our expertise has expanded to other industry sectors and now encompasses a number of complementary areas,” the company explains.

Staying up on regulations makes MatthewsDaniel successful in loss adjusting, it says. “Changes in issues facing insurers are a driving force in the development of our services,” the company states. “For example, we have invested in our environmental team in response to the growing concern over global pollution issues.

“Our loss adjusting expertise is built on a strong foundation of technical skills and market knowledge. Loss adjusting, the MatthewsDaniel way, demands the highest standards in every aspect of a claim.”

The company also provides risk assessment for insurance purposes to various industries. A valuation from the company enables all those involved in an insurance contract to consider accurate values at risk and coverage limits, it says.

“Valuations also provide the assured, broker and underwriters with an up-to-date schedule of assets, along with a commentary on the asset condition and potential for risk improvement,” MatthewsDaniel says.

“From our evaluation of the survey results and application of major loss scenarios, we are able to determine estimated maximum loss and/or maximum probable loss,” it continues. “Each report is tailored to our client’s requirement drawing on our wide range of in-house expertise.”

Its loss adjusting, surveying and appraisal services are available around the clock and around the world, MatthewsDaniel says, in 22 offices. With a staff of exceptional employees, clients can expect great service, it says.

“Around the world, MatthewsDaniel takes care to employ the best people,” the company states. “Combining the right staff with the benefits of an established network of offices enables us to offer a truly international service and communicate effectively with our clients. A team approach is the key to our success.”

MatthewsDaniel was established in 1962 in Houston to provide loss adjusting, surveying and appraisal services to the energy industry and its insurers. Today our operations span the world and our scope of services has increased considerably.

- ROUND THE WORLD, ROUND THE CLOCK
- 22 OFFICES WORLDWIDE
- LOSS ADJUSTING
- MARINE CONSULTING SERVICES
- RISK ASSESSMENT AND VALUATION