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Songa needs more time to finish Tellus

When the Tai an kou heavy lift vessel arrived in the Gulf of Mexico in June to pick up the Tellus jack-up rig for its trip north to Alaska's Cook Inlet, its captain was in for a surprise. The kind of surprise somebody's got to pay for.

The Tellus, an independent-leg cantilever jack-up, was at a shipyard in Port Arthur, Texas, undergoing an extensive retrofit and refurbishment by its owner, Songa Offshore, before being deployed to upper Cook Inlet to drill three wells for Escopeta Oil. It was supposed to be ready in late May or early June for the trip north.

So when representatives of Moduspec USA went to check on the status of the jack-up to commission it for its trip north, they told Escopeta the refurbishment was running four to five months behind schedule because of difficulties in getting workers and equipment and supplies.

But buyers (in this case lessees) — even unpleasantly surprised ones — can't be fussy in today's jack-up market; especially those who locked in their day rate several months ago.

So, Escopeta President Danny Davis renegotiated his contract with Tai an kou's owner, Coscol (HK) Investment & Development Co. of Hong Kong.

The vessel, he said, will be back in December to pick up the Tellus for the journey to Alaska.

But the news wasn't all bad. The new schedule works for Escopeta and its partner Centurion Gold Holdings.

"The timing works because it takes about 60 days to get up there, and leaving in, say, mid-to-late December puts us there at the end of February. If everything works out we could be drilling the first or second week of March," Davis said.

"That gives us just enough time to drill our three wells before the end of the season," he said.

The primary objective of its visual inspection, Moduspec said in its report to Escopeta, was “to assess the status of the rig, its equipment, and all of the rig systems with respect to their operational readiness and capability to work safely and efficiently.” (See adjacent photos from Moduspec’s report.)

Several sections of the hull were being replaced at the time of the inspection, so Moduspec was not allowed to inspect the underside of the vessel, but the report did note that “several barges and scaffolding were being used to facilitate the work.”

“Based upon the existing condition of the rig and the activities that were observed on the day of the inspection, it is Moduspec’s professional opinion that if all activities progress efficiently and without interruption, the rig may be ready to drill in approximately 90 days from the date of this report. However, this assumes that all of the newly installed equipment is functioning properly as a system. This estimated 90-day period does not include the period of time normally reserved for System Integration Tests (SITs),” Moduspec said in its report.

Davis said based on the fact there is still major reconstruction work to be done on the derrick and rig floor, he decided to go with a December load date for the Tellus.

—Kay Cashman

Petroleum News - Phone: 1-907 522-9469 - Fax: 1-907 522-9583
circulation@PetroleumNews.com — <http://www.petroleumnews.com> —
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