

PAST FORWARD

Researching old well logs may boost oil production

• Many of the oil wells in Oklahoma never were fully exploited.

BY ROD WALTON
World Staff Writer

Well-thumbed, yellowed pieces of Oklahoma's oil and gas drilling past can play a huge part in pumping up the industry's high-tech future.

Well logs, handwritten by geologists as the drill bit churned nearly a century ago, are valuable tools that need to be preserved, officials say.

An Energy Libraries Online campaign hopes to raise enough money so that all of these paper records from early 20th-century well sites can be scanned and available via computer.

Newer wells already have a wealth of digital information, but many producers believe the old holes still trap plenty of oil.

"We've only produced about 19 percent of the oil in place in Oklahoma," said Tim Brown, executive director of Energy Libraries Online. "We think we can get another 20-plus percent."

Most producers don't believe the industry will explore and drill many new sites around the state. The new plays, in effect, often will be old plays that will yield their reservoirs thanks to better technology or because the original drillers left too early.

The Energy Libraries Online project, started by the Oklahoma City Geological Society and Oklahoma Well Logs Library, hopes to scan millions of documents such as strip logs, electric logs and other production data jotted down on paper in the 1920s to the '50s.



Brian Shults of GET Imaging unfolds a driller's log before running it through a scanner as part of Energy Libraries Online's project to create a digital library of Oklahoma's old oil and natural gas records. Courtesy

The campaign so far has generated about \$700,000 from industry donors. Supporters need at least \$6 million to pay for the scanning of up to 6 million documents, including the first phase of 126,000 in strip logs alone belonging to the OGS.

"Most of this stuff has never been digitalized," Tulsa geologist Harrison

Townes said. "I fear most of that data will disappear."

Indeed, many of these logs — recounting what kind of rock, other minerals and, hopefully, oil and gas came up out of the ground — have either been handled quickly by early wildcatters or forgotten. And time is not kind to paper.

Current producers, how-

ever, believe that time is on their side if they can have permanent access to these records. Technologies such as horizontal drilling and other modern methods may find the oil that was missed or neglected the first time around.

New Dominion LLC, a Tulsa-based production company, routinely mines those logs from old wells.

"Analyzing the data today takes up a considerable amount of time and effort for our staff," company Chairman David Chernicky said. "If ELO's database on these various types of logs, core analysis and production information were available, it would be an incredible aid not only to my company, but to the industry, generally."

OGS petroleum geologist Dan Boyd estimates that about 68 billion barrels worth of oil still rest beneath the state's soil and rock. Status-quo methods and data can pull up a maximum of 16 billion more barrels, he said.

"I think we can do a lot better than that," Boyd said. "When you look at a field and don't even know what it has produced, how do you know if you can get more from it?"

Domestic oil is good news economically around the state, since Oklahoma's public coffers benefit from the 7 percent gross production tax, Townes noted. Getting just a portion up will help alleviate, if only slightly, the need for foreign sources.

"We ought to be able to get 50 percent of oil in a field out of it," Townes said. "If it's only 15 to 30 percent, that still doubles what we've got before."

Oklahoma Corporation Commission records show that wells across the state have produced more than 14.8 billion barrels of oil since 1900, New Dominion spokesman Jack Money said. The OGS, however, estimates that another 68 billion barrels of oil remains underground.

The well logs may also be valuable for what they don't show, such as information about dry holes, officials said.

Some of the paper records were donated by the families of departed oil and gas producers, while other logs were left behind when companies either moved out of state or disbanded.

"They were in a hurry to produce back then," Brown said. "People can go back."

The ELO's Brown has more information on the project at (405) 227-0612.

Rod Walton 581-8457
rod.walton@tulsaworld.com

For \$89 a year, socks are in the mail

• This company offers a product and service to keep men from looking like heels.

BY RYAN NAKASHIMA
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Every week or so I undertake a rigorous mental challenge: matching my socks.

The toughest ones are the black ones, because they're not all alike. Some fade bluish, others don't. Some have dimples, others ribbing. Elastics stretch and break different-

ly, and I am regularly bamboozled by multiple fabrics and lengths. Sometimes I find loners and socks with holes — and I don't even bother to throw them out.

So when sock subscription service Blacksocks.com came calling, I answered, intrigued. After 10 years in Europe, where it sold its millionth calf sock in September, the company began marketing in the U.S. a couple of months ago. Founder Samy Liechti's promise: "Men never have to worry about misplacing or matching socks again."

Really? Blacksocks.com says it will deliver three pairs of identical socks every four months for an annual "sockscription" of \$89. Longer socks and cashmere silk socks cost more, and there are trial pairs and starter kits for the uninitiated. They come in three sizes: calf socks (medium), knee socks (long) and ankle-high ones (shortys).

There's only one color: black. And one delivery frequency: three times a year.

Could this simplicity relieve me of a tedious chore?

The concept makes sense. If all your socks are exactly the same, matching them won't be a problem.



"Men never have to worry about misplacing or matching socks again," says Blacksocks.com founder Samy Liechti. Blacksocks.com/AP

But with Blacksocks.com charging about \$10 a pair, I could save money with a do-it-myself solution: Buying dozens of identical socks at

once at the local mall, even accounting for the cost of gas.

Liechti's rebuttal is that many people can also buy cheap watches

but they spend thousands of dollars for quality. He's Swiss, so I concede the point.

He boasts about Blacksocks' yarn-testing methods in northern Italy, says Blacksocks are cheaper than other brand-name socks, and notes that delivery is included in the price.

Without years of wear, it's hard to fully test this system.

Blacksocks has 50,000 active customers, and 100,000 former customers. "Often they have too many socks and they decide to quit the brand," Liechti acknowledged.

Two sample pairs I received made me laugh.

One pair, the knee-highs, were the longest socks I've seen since Michael Cooper played for the Los Angeles Lakers. They almost should be called hose. They were sleek and cool, but supportive.

The short ones — the ankle-highs — remain in the box. Who would wear these? People who wear socks with sandals? Even Liechti believes that fashion statement "is awful."

"I strongly believe there are moments in life where it's better where you don't wear socks," he said.

Yet there are ample situations when new socks can save you a lot of grief. Just look at what happened to former World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz. He was photographed taking off his shoes at a Turkish mosque in 2007.

Both his gray socks had holes that revealed his big toes. Pictures are all over the Web.

Wolfowitz is now a Blacksocks customer, thanks to an observant friend, Liechti said. Wolfowitz sent the company a personal letter of thanks.

It's just such a thing that tickles the founder.

"We market one of the most boring products available," Liechti said. "We cannot really talk about socks and take it serious for 10 years."

BIZ QUICKS

U.S. financial markets close for Memorial Day

U.S. financial markets were closed Monday in observance of Memorial Day.

Trading was scheduled to resume Tuesday, and Wednesday's Business section will contain the regular financial data listings.

Monday's closings included Oklahoma agricultural markets, including the weekly cattle auction at the Tulsa Stockyards.

This week's report on Oklahoma oil and gas drilling activity will appear in the Thursday Business section instead of Tuesday.

Wall Street investors barely managed to keep alive the stock market's springtime rally last week.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.10 percent for the week; the Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 0.47 percent; and the Nasdaq composite index rose 0.71 percent.

Thus, the market added to the 2½-month surge that has lifted stocks more than 30 percent from 12-year lows in early March.

Leake Car Auction set June 12-14 at Expo Square

A 1936 Lincoln Boat Tail Speedster once owned by Howard Hughes will be the highlight at the 37th annual Leake Car Auction, scheduled June 12-14 inside the QuikTrip Center at Expo Square.

Approximately 750 vehicles are anticipated for the two-ring auction, organizers said.

The auction will begin at noon Friday, and at 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. Doors open at 9 a.m. daily.

Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

The event is billed as the largest collector car auction in the Midwest.

More information, including a brochure, is available at tulsaworld.com/leakecar.

— FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS