

Governing Energy

Road Map

Volume 1 Number 7—May 2, 2012

The past two years for the deepwater drilling sector have been full of uncertainties and concerns about the way forward. From this author's perspective, it appears that the industry and the federal government have worked closely to develop a new path, although not always in harmony to be sure.

History shows us that following major events, society can expect dramatic changes to unfold and often quickly. Acts of God, military actions, and large scale industrial accidents can initiate the imperative for changes in human behavior.

After the record Houston, Texas traffic jams caused by Hurricane Rita evacuations in September 2005, Interstate Highway 10 as well as other primary evacuation routes were changed to facilitate same direction travel on all lanes.ⁱ Likewise, following attacks on the military's High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle or "Humvee," armor was added to what was previously a light weight utility vehicle.ⁱⁱ

It would not be an overstatement to suggest that the deepwater drilling industry was in shellshock following the April 20, 2010 blowout in the Gulf of Mexico. Ramifications of that event are still transforming the global sector and will for some time to come.

A number of industry as well as internal company taskforces have studied a multitude of issues and provided recommendations. Both the industry as well as regulatory bodies are adjusting internal standard operating procedures and establishing new behavioral norms.

One clear example is the American Petroleum Institute (API) recently published chart; SAFE Drilling Operations.ⁱⁱⁱ This snapshot of the drilling road map provides all constituents, lay, academic, government and industry with a clear, simple, and compelling perspective of a very complex environment.

The first phase of the new industry paradigm is now set and no doubt will continue to evolve. The feds have established new rules and the industry has developed new thinking and new standards. Now is the time for the full implementation of internal systems to meet these requirements and generally accepted practices.

Has your firm codified its Road Map to the future?

About the Author

Dr. [Scott M. Shemwell](#) has over 30 years technical and executive management experience primarily in the energy sector. He is the author of two books and has written extensively about the field of operations management. Shemwell is also the CEO of Knowledge Ops, Inc; a firm that focuses on providing its customers with solutions enabling operations excellence and regulatory compliance management.

End Notes

ⁱ http://www.txdot.gov/about_us/2005_2001.htm

ⁱⁱ <http://defense-update.com/features/du-3-04/up-armored-humvee.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.api.org/~media/Files/News/2012/12-April/OffShoreSafety-Graphic-20120411.ashx>