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SPE Annual Conference Draws More Than 9,800 E&P Professionals To Denver

RICHARDSON, Texas, USA (24 September 2008)—The Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) 2008 Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition (ATCE) was held this week in Denver, Colorado, and brought together more than 9,800 oil and gas E&P professionals from around the world.

Under the conference theme of "Connecting Members, Exchanging Knowledge," ATCE 2008 featured technical sessions with more than 370 papers on innovative technologies, case studies, and best practices.

More than 450 exhibiting companies featured the latest products and services in the E&P industry. The exhibition was the largest in ATCE history.

"ATCE 2008 was a great success," said William (Bill) Cobb, 2008 SPE president. "It is an exciting time for the oil and gas industry, as well as for SPE members. People in our industry are craving technology, and they realize that they need new and better technology now more than ever before."

Panelists in Monday morning's Opening General Session, "Unconventional Wisdom," discussed how unconventional resources have a future in the world's energy mix, but that future will depend upon the price of a more conventional energy source, oil. As the price of oil goes up, the more the industry turns to new, innovative technologies to address the technical, economic, and environmental challenges of producing tight gas sands and oil shales.

Also on Monday at the Chairman's Luncheon, Andrew Gould, chairman and CEO of Schlumberger, pointed toward a future model of global research and the integration of promising technologies from other industries into petroleum technology applications. Gould mentioned nanotechnology, aerospace composite materials, biomedical high-resolution sensors, and automotive microcontrollers and processors as being potential overlapping technologies for the E&P industry.

In Tuesday's well-attended panel session, "Improved Oil Recovery: Looking Into the Past To Brighten the Future," leading industry experts discussed how, with the current price of oil, improved oil recovery (IOR) processes—both old and new—are making headlines. Topics included waterflood conformance, thermal recovery, chemical floods, miscible gas/CO₂ recovery, offshore IOR processes, and advanced techniques in IOR.

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This year's young professionals session focused on uncertainty and risk analysis. In the session, young professionals split into work groups and created a development plan based on a predetermined data set. The session concluded with the work groups defending their plan in front of a mock board of directors.

New for 2008, SPE offered encore distinguished lecturer presentations from two industry experts—one who discussed petroleum reserve estimates and the other who discussed well integrity management systems.

Other special panel sessions included “Women in the Industry” and “Petroleum Engineering Education.”

On the final day, SPE and the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project presented a teachers workshop to facilitate energy education in grades K-12. The workshop provided 100 Denver-area teachers with lessons and activities that they can immediately start using in their classrooms. This workshop is one component of SPE's energy education program, Energy4me. Energy4me is a public outreach program and web resource (energy4me.org) designed to help students and adults become more educated consumers of energy.

ATCE's time-honored events included the Annual Reception and Banquet, which honored distinguished SPE members, and the President's Luncheon, which offered the “State of the Society” address from 2008 SPE President William (Bill) Cobb, who passed the presidential gavel to 2009 SPE President Leo Roodhart.

The 2009 SPE Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition will be held 4-7 October in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. For more information, please visit www.spe.org/atce.

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About SPE

The Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) is a not-for-profit professional association whose members are engaged in energy resources development and production. SPE serves 79,000-plus members from more than 115 countries worldwide. SPE is a key resource for technical knowledge related to the oil and gas exploration and production industry and provides services through its publications, conferences, workshops, forums, and website at www.spe.org.