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2011 SPE Annual Conference in Denver Featured Latest Technologies for Exploration, Production and the Environment

RICHARDSON, Texas, USA (2 November 2011)—The Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) 2011 Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition (ATCE) was held this week in Denver, Colorado, and brought together approximately 9,400 oil and gas professionals from 57 countries around the world.

ATCE is one of the leading technical conferences in the upstream oil and gas industry, presenting current best practices and emerging technologies to the engineers, scientists, academia, managers and executives in attendance.

Technical presentations covered shale and other unconventional reservoirs, long-term global energy strategy, environmental considerations, remote operations and other important regional and discipline-focused topics.

The exhibition was the second largest in its 87-year history. More than 440 companies, utilizing 104,100 sq ft of exhibit space, featured the latest products and services in the E&P industry.

“SPE’s annual meeting is a special time for SPE members—a time to reflect on the hard work accomplished over the year and to look to the future. With critical issues facing the industry, such as staffing, safety and environmental protection, SPE’s role of providing technology and education to students and professionals will be more important than ever,” said 2011 SPE President Alain Labastie.

Panelists in Monday morning’s Opening General Session provided their views on how to deal with increasing world demand while ensuring the highest safety standards. Experts from exploration, politics, and space travel each shared thoughts on how the industry can improve its performance and public reputation.

Moderator Chad Deaton, chairman and CEO of Baker Hughes, moderated the panel which consisted of:

- Matthias Bichsel, Member of the Executive Committee and Director of Projects and Technology, Royal Dutch Shell plc
- José Formigli, Pre-Salt Executive Manager, Petrobras
- The Honorable Mary Landrieu, United States Senate
- William S. McArthur, Director of Safety and Mission Assurance, NASA Johnson Space Center

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Also on Monday, US House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy provided a keynote address on how Congress must address the growing regulatory burden on industry. He said that government needs to think more about desired outcomes and work backward when crafting legislation.

ATCE 2011 featured many special sessions and topical events of broad interest, as well as focused topics for students, young professionals and technical interest groups.

In a special session on carbon capture, technical directors from the SPE Board and other experts addressed the role of the petroleum industry in the process of CO₂ capture and storage (CCS). The session pointed to the huge logistical challenge of getting enough CCS projects up and running to make a large impact on CO₂ emissions reduction within the next few decades.

Nanotechnology was the focus of Tuesday's R&D Technical Section Topical Luncheon. Experts attested the practical value of nanotechnology, which included test results that proved a nano-agent can travel into a reservoir and be recovered—a step towards creating ultra-small sensors for tracking waterfloods.

Several ATCE events focused on the unique needs of professionals in the Rocky Mountain region, including a session on new technologies for horizontal wells in the liquids-rich Niobrara and Bakken formations.

On Wednesday, SPE and the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project presented a teachers workshop to facilitate energy education in grades K–12. The workshop provided Denver-area teachers with lessons and activities that they can immediately start using in their classrooms. This workshop is a component part of SPE's energy education outreach program, Energy4me.

SPE's Annual Reception and Banquet recognized individuals for their significant contributions to the oil and gas industry, and the President's Luncheon offered the "State of the Society" address from 2011 SPE President Alain Labastie, who passed the presidential gavel to 2012 SPE President Ganesh C. Thakur.

The 2012 conference will be held 8–10 October in San Antonio, Texas, USA. For more information, visit www.spe.org/atce.

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About Society of Petroleum Engineers

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 more than 97,000 members in 118 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, events, training courses and online resources at www.spe.org.