

Joint Information Center News Release



July 27, 2013

Media Inquiries: (504)736-2595

Response Activities Continue at South Timbalier 220

HOUMA, La. – Unified Command, comprised of the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), U.S. Coast Guard, and Walter Oil & Gas Corporation (Walter), continues oversight and coordination in response efforts to secure the South Timbalier 220 natural gas Well A-3. Safety of personnel and protection of the environment remain the top priorities.

Unified Command continues to analyze and review all options for a safe resolution to the incident. Response teams completed an initial site assessment of the Hercules 265 jack-up rig yesterday to ensure personnel could board safely. Installation of gas detectors and high-capacity water jet fire monitors for contingency purposes is underway.

The Superior Derrick Services' barge, "*Performance*," is en route to the area where it will assist with operations.

BSEE is in the final stages of reviewing Walter's permit application to drill a relief well. The Rowan EXL-3 jack-up rig, contracted by Walter, arrived at South Timbalier 220 and is in the process of positioning to drill a relief well. A relief well is drilled to intercept the target well. Once intercepted, drilling mud followed by cement will be pumped into the well to secure it.

Based on visual observations, a slight sheen continues to be detected on the water's surface and is dissipating quickly. The Coast Guard continues to maintain a 500-meter safety zone around the site. Firefighting and other marine vessels remain onsite with personnel from Walter, Hercules, and other professional engineering contractors, and relevant federal agencies.

BSEE's investigation into the cause of the loss of well control continues in coordination with the Coast Guard.

The Joint Information Center will continue to issue daily updates. Media inquiries and requests for additional information should be directed to 504-736-2595.

BACKGROUND:

Walter experienced a loss of control of Well A-3 at approximately 8:45 a.m. July 23 on an unmanned platform at South Timbalier Block 220 while doing completion work on the sidetrack well to prepare the well for production. The operator reported the safe evacuation of 44 personnel from the Hercules 265 jack-up rig. Coast Guard confirmed that the leaking natural gas ignited at 10:45 p.m. CDT July 23. BSEE confirmed July 25 that the well flow subsided after a natural bridging process suppressed the fire.

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