Online Data Access Speeds Decision Making For Better Results

It’s the time of year when many regional, as well as national, oil and gas organizations begin holding their annual conventions. I always get a little excited about fall because it represents a sort of annual reunion of friends and colleagues from around the oil field. I also enjoy how these annual events serve as great time to learn about what has been going on in the industry, what sorts of new technologies have been developed during the previous year, and what new products are being introduced that could change the industry forever.

One of the many events I get to participate in this year is the Eastern Kansas Oil & Gas Association’s annual meeting. As part of the meeting, for the past several years the Petroleum Technology Transfer Council has conducted its “Eastern Kansas Oil Field Essentials” workshop. This annual tradition helps regional operators learn more about the innovations and best practices occurring in the region, and features real-world case studies from the area.

As I began preparing for this year’s event, I came across a paper put together for the 1989 Society of Petroleum Engineers Annual Technology Conference and Exhibition, held in San Antonio. The paper titled simply, “Production Technology (SPE 19724)” is an aggregation of 10 smaller papers.

The authors state in the opening lines, “The production technology section is designed to allow the discussion of and dissemination of information about technical innovations and solutions in production engineering that are of immediate practical use, but do not warrant a full-scale paper.” They then proceed to cover a range of short, but very well composed topics aimed at solutions applicable at that time.

One solution in this paper in particular caught my eye. It was called, “A Pumper Laptop/PC Based System for Automation of Production Accounting and Reporting,” by K.W Baldwin from Arthur Andersen & Co., D. Fagerstone and G. Dixon from Mesa Limited Partnership, and J. Brockman from Vericomp Inc.

In their section, the authors illustrated the issues associated with collecting and using data from operated wells. They wrote, “Collecting data on operated wells always has been a cumbersome manual task. Although this task has become vital, it continues to be performed in the same way. Field personnel collect the data daily, foremen review it, and staff personnel input it into a computer. An integrated system that marries laptop, micro and mainframe technology can help companies realize true gains in efficiency.”

Collecting and analyzing data well by well is as important today as it was almost 30 years ago. For some operators, the recommendations outlined in this paper still are applicable, and are being used today, although the physical technology has improved.

One key challenge for operators today is having instant access to data to help make individual well decisions and adjustments more efficiently. Some operators have begun outfitting their pumpers with laptops with Internet access so they can input data into online spreadsheets that can be accessed by folks in the main office. Because everyone is accessing the same spreadsheet, this strategy can be an inexpensive but effective solution for accessing data.

There is, of course, no shortage of for-pay solutions that also assist in streamlining this process. Products such as WELL-KEEPER, FieldDIRECT and Greasebook all offer well monitoring services and instant access to information and data.

PetroBase, out of Wichita, KS., and its product, PetroBase Pro, combine multiple data types in one application, regardless of source. This can include accounting detail, production values, and operation histories of wells. According to PetroBase, commonly analyzed data include wellbore diagrams, lifting costs, lease profitability, production plots, down reports, rendition generation, regulatory reporting, failure analysis, chemical cost comparisons, and decline curve analysis.

Asked about the use of data in the field, PetroBase creator Kyle Stephenson says, “For us it’s about helping operators do more with less. With all the data under one roof, we are helping our clients find new efficiencies and save money.”

Whatever one’s approach to tracking and monitoring wells, collecting and analyzing good data can make the difference between a good well and a great one. The efficiency gained from exploring online access to production and monitoring information can help save money and speed decision-making from the home office, which can impact the productive life of each well.

Anyone who would like to hear from actual operators using these solutions should join us at EKOGA’s annual meeting for the Eastern Kansas Oil Field Essentials workshop, which includes an operator discussion on digital oil field tools.

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