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MONDAY

Russian delegation tours county

By RICHARD METCALF
Of The News-Sun Staff

The visitors could've passed for workers from the oilfields of western Pennsylvania, equipped with video recorders and curiosity, except for the fact everything had to be said twice.

Bouncing back and forth were Russian, sounding almost like poetry, and English, spoken as often as not with the native West Texas twang of the Permian Basin.

The sun burned off the morning mist Sunday as the group of 21 Russians from West Siberia headed north on N.M. 18 from Hobbs to Lovington. Their questions ran the gamut from history of the oil industry in Hobbs, through the distance between rigs, to the popularity of soccer.

"Where are the cowboys?" Someone asked when they glimpsed through the fog at cattle grazing. The owner of Ziadri Inc. of Hobbs, Kenneth McPeters, replied, "In church."

First stop on the tour of Lea County's oil patch was a drilling rig just outside Lovington in an oilfield known as "Bad Dog." The Russians were representatives from the production side of a 10-year-old oil and natural gas company called Satorminskneft.

The itinerary took them through the Buckeye area of the county, where virtually the only signs of activity are cattle and pump jacks. There, the visitors took a look at flood projects operated by Phillips Petroleum Co. and Texaco Inc.

The Russians are from a city

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Richard Metcalf/News-Sun Photo
Russians express keen interest in one of the tank batteries at Phillips Petroleum Co.'s East Vacuum Unit at Buckeye.

How sweet it is

Pentagon acting

initially to end

Coastal...

Age

Voices challenge for normal life

Erwin's own new aid implanted. The operation cost more than heart bypass surgery, but the new device has 22 channels; some pick up high-pitched sounds, some low. Erwin tunes the device with the box he carries around, according to the type of sound - or voice he wishes to hear.

"Environmental noises are very distinct," he says.

Voices for him are still auditory blurs, however, so he has become an adept lip-reader. Erwin has never had occasion to learn sign language because, he says, "The people I deal with are all hearing."

His employees have always been understanding, he says: "We communicate really good. If it gets really serious, we get out a pen and pencil."

For the past nine years, he has had the help of another hearing aid as well - Buddy, his little black Pomeranian.

"If anybody comes to my house and rings the doorbell, he'll come and get me," he said.

Erwin says he wants his story to be inspirational to others. If there is one point he wants to make clear, it is that deafness need not be much of an obstruction. "I still go fishing, I still go hunting, I still go dancing (he can feel the beat) and I have never let it stop me from doing anything that I was used to doing before."

A contemplative expression washes over his face as Erwin searches for the words to explain that determination, then suddenly they come spilling out: "Most people have the patience to go ahead and accept these things because they know that this is not going to change the individual. It's going to change your everyday life to a certain extent, but it's not going to change the way you feel inside."

Russian delegation tours Lea County's oil patch

Continued from Page 1

about 32,000 people, Muravlenko, in the transition area where forest turns to tundra. One of the group's two translators, Aleksei Sukharev, said the temperature gets down to 60 degrees below zero - on the Centigrade scale.

"It's nine months of winter, three months of summer," he said, translating comments from other passengers in the van on loan from the city of Hobbs. "It's very difficult in winter because of the cold. A lot of mosquitoes in the summer, it's very difficult."

Muravlenko itself was described as a "company town," in the old sense, of two-story wood houses and four-story brick buildings. When the men in the van were asked if they were married, all but one indicated yes.

"Do you have any girls for him?" Sukharev asked. "He will take her back to Siberia."

The bachelor grinned as the others laughed.

The visitors spent just over an hour at the drilling rig, which had been dropped only two days earlier by Ziadril. The diesel-powered engines roared as the visitors circulated. One of them, geologist Nikolay Oleinik, was extremely curious.

"The gentleman was interested in the dimensions of the pipe, the depth of the formations we drill, the depth we set our casing at - in general, the parameters of what we're doing," commented the tool pusher or rig manager, Jim Bullock of Hobbs.

There was a language barrier, especially given the specialized terminology of the oilfield. Bullock noted, for example, there was no direct translation for the word, "derrick." He added, "When we came across with the right word, they seemed to understand."

McPeters said, "They were interested in all different ways. A lot of questions. It was really refreshing to have so many asked."

After leaving Ziadril's rig, Sukharev said, "Drilling rigs are very much the same. The only difference is everything is enclosed because of the weather conditions. It's covered."

Site preparation is a major first step in the Siberian oil patch. The terrain is swampy when the weather breaks, so the rigs are built up on pads or platforms. In addition, five to 30 wells will be drilled at the same location, extending out at angles from the pad.

Crossing the Llano Estacado toward Buckeye, the Russians were asked if the landscape back home was dotted with pump jacks. Sukharev translated, "The company has 2,400 wells, 70 percent have pump jacks. They even use pump jacks of American production. Some."

After a brown bag lunch provided by the Lea County Industrial Development Corp. at Texaco's offices at

Buckeye, the visitors crowded around a 4-by-4 Ford pickup truck parked out front. Its owner, Texaco production supervisor Bobby McCurry, popped the hood and started the engine at their request.

Lunch was followed by a visit to Phillips Petroleum's combination water and carbon dioxide gas flood unit. The water and gas are forced down injection wells to the underground pool where the oil is located. The water and gas drive the oil to production wells, where it is brought to the surface.

The next stop was Texaco's nearby waterflood project, where only water is injected to recover the oil. Texaco's staff focused on the computer monitoring system used to keep track of various field operations. The state-of-the-art made an impression.

After leaving Texaco's office, the Russians talked with animation. When asked about computerization, Sukharev translated, "They do have computers, but the difference is there is not as much data; interfaces are worse and the computers are not connected in a network."

A instructor in petroleum technology at New Mexico Junior College, Lowell B. Deckert of Hobbs, spent the entire day with the touring group. In addition to being struck by their curiosity, Deckert said, "one of the things they've talked about several times is how clean and neat everything is. I heard it several times."

The Russians made it back to Texaco's area headquarters in Hobbs just in time to watch Michael Jackson's halftime show during the Super Bowl. If they were impressed by the performance, they did an excellent job of containing their excitement.

The Russian's tour of Lea County's oil and gas facilities continues today with visits to, among other places, Cobra Tank Manufacturing Inc. and Watson Truck & Supply Co. A banquet will be held this evening at Hobbs Country Club.

The group will leave tomorrow for Houston.

Setting top proposals this week

Tuesday, the long bill will get its first reading in the House and Senate. The bill will get its first reading in the House and Senate in Room 305.

The bill was introduced by Rep. Underwood, D-Albuquerque.

The bill was introduced during the in-year's session by a bill by Underwood and Bullock.

The bill is more frequent and campaign reports.

- Requiring political action committees to register and fully disclose membership and contributions.
- Closing a loophole on disclosure of anonymous contributions, and on small fund-raiser events.
- Specifying narrow legal uses for leftover campaign funds.
- Banning any fund-raising during the legislative session. Both houses already have agreed to do this by joint legislative rule for the 1993 session.
- Disclosing major occupation or type of business for all major campaign contributors of \$250 or more.
- Prohibiting fund-raising solicitations by any official or employee of a regulatory office such as the state Corporation Commission.
- Prohibiting pass-through contributions.
- Increasing penalties for violations from \$10 per day to \$50 per day to a maximum fine of \$5,000.
- Adopting an education, voluntary compliance and binding arbitration enforcement program that will allow for citizen complaints.

Seeking guidelines on abortions

dependents and women in the military."

She cited a case last year in which NARAL helped a Navy wife in Virginia obtain an abortion after she was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. Her doctors prescribed radiation and chemotherapy but wouldn't administer it because she was pregnant, Michelman said.

But they were barred from performing an abortion in a military hospital, and the outside clinic they sent her to refused to do one because of her medical condition.

"Here's a woman whose life and health were in danger and they could not get an abortion," Michelman said. "This is unbelievable."

Douglas Johnson, legislative

director of the National Right to Life Committee, an anti-abortion organization, said Clinton's order "forces military hospitals to serve as abortion mills and there will be loss of life."

He said there was some confusion about the "relevant (Defense Department) policies and procedures" referred to in the order.

"The services in the '70s only allowed third-trimester abortions in fairly well-defined circumstances," he said, and it was not clear whether that policy would be reinstated.

Johnson also cited past conscience clauses that said doctors and nurses did not have to perform abortions if they did not want to.

"We hope that those will be maintained," he said.

Super Bowl loss a downer for Buffalo

Buffalo Bills' Super Bowl loss was a downer for many fans.

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Sports Garden bar groaned and yelled frantically as Jim Kelly was knocked out of the game with an injury.

There still was optimism when quarterback Frank Reich hit Don Beebe with a touchdown pass in the last play of the third quarter, but the feeling was soon deflated.

"They didn't do it. I can't stand to watch anymore," said Mark Kopenski, who traveled about 60

miles from Jamestown to go to the convention center party.

Plans for a victory party downtown were scrapped, and Bills spokesman Denny Lynch said there will be no welcome-home celebration either, even though one was held after the last two Super Bowl losses.

"They lose three in a row, they shouldn't have a party," said Kevin Klass, who drove 500 miles from Portland, Maine, to watch the game in Buffalo. "They don't deserve it."

How to celebrate Super win

Dallas' first Super Bowl victory since 1978.

"It's a little more busy than a normal Sunday night, but nothing out of the ordinary," said Dallas police Sgt. Perry Gresham.

Vendors also were quick to capitalize on the euphoria.

Gary Mash was the first person on the scene selling T-shirts proclaiming the Cowboys world champions. A crowd quickly formed as he hawked 20 dozen of the black shirts at \$10 apiece.

"It was a gamble, but we printed them in advance," he said.

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BODYGUARD "T" 9:30 ONLY

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1609 JOE HARVLY BLVD.

TOM BERENGER
SNIPER "T"
(5:30) 7:30 9:30

VAN DAMME
NOWHERE TO RUN
(5:30) 7:30 9:30 "T"

MEL GIBSON
FOREVER YOUNG
(5:30) 7:30 9:30 "T"

COMING SOON!
THE VANISHING
GROUNDHOG DAY