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SUBSEA 7 AND SEEBYTE PREPARE TO LAUNCH AIV

Subsea 7 has announced that, as part of its ongoing investment in assets and technology, and following a two year trial in conjunction with SeeByte, that the two companies will collaborate further to bring the first commercially available Autonomous Inspection Vehicle (AIV) to market.

Designed by Subsea 7, the vehicle incorporates key SeeByte technologies and will be in-service during 2011.

"The AIV represents a significant technological advance in the area of subsea remote inspection and intervention. Autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs) have been in service for some years, capable of tracking and surveying pipelines," Neil Milne, Subsea 7's vice president of Life-of-Field/i-Tech, said.

"With the arrival of the AIV, subsea structures such as manifolds, wellheads and risers will be able to be inspected by this tetherless technology, significantly increasing flexibility and efficiencies throughout the life-of-field cycle."

Professor David Lane of SeeByte, said the advanced autonomy systems that underpin the AIV's capabilities are the outgrowth of many years of research, development and technology de-risking by SeeByte for security, renewable energy, offshore and transport applications.

"The AIV is yet another example of a SeeByte enabled remote machine that is improving productivity and reducing risk for its operator. We are delighted to be working with Subsea 7 to realise this game changing capability in the offshore oil and gas arena."

IMCA PUBLISHES NEW NOTES ON BELL DIVING SAFETY

Diving contractors' specific concerns about the bell diving supervisor not always being in control of the main blow-down, should any of the bell occupants lose consciousness, or become incapacitated, has resulted in the publication of an information note (IMCA D 02/10) by the International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA).

"This information note results from the investigation of recent incidents, where there has been a reduction in the bell internal pressure, raising the issue of whether the bell diving supervisor has direct control of the blow-down in emergency scenarios depending on the configuration of the bell," said Jane Bugler, IMCA's technical director.

"The investigation also highlighted that some systems rely on the handover of the blow-down control from the bell diving supervisor to the bellman, whilst divers are in the bell. In such cases the bellman

would then have overall control of the bell blow-down valve, until he hands control back to the supervisor.

"The information note sets out current IMCA guidance, and explains just why diving supervisors should have control. It also notes that a risk assessment should identify the failure modes that could prevent the supervisor from having overall control of the bell pressurisation. It emphasises that the relevant offshore personnel should be included at all the stages of the risk assessment process."

The information note, available to all IMCA member companies, highlights risk assessment, preventative measures, divers' training in emergency scenarios and emergency response measures as key areas for consideration.