

Tanker Operator industry news

TOTAL signs long term Charters for new Stena P-MAX tankers

www.concordia-maritime.se

French oil major TOTAL has signed a five-year charter for the first two Stena P-MAX tankers currently under construction in the Croatian shipyard Brodosplit in Split and scheduled for delivery in 2006. The vessels are owned by Concordia Maritime.

The new tanker design is specifically engineered to reduce the risk of accidents and oil pollution, and has been designed in a two-year cooperation between the technical and commercial departments of TOTAL and Stena.

The tankers are medium-sized, short and wide-bodied with reduced draft and have an intermediate loading capacity of 65,000 ton.

They feature two engine systems, double rudders and double propellers for reliability and manoeuvrability, and the bridge has a 360-degree view and a cockpit inspired by the aircraft industry.

Enhanced structural strength and ice design will also allow the P-MAX tankers to follow icebreakers in conditions of ice up to a thickness of 80 centimetres.

Baltic's Handymax Index guaranteed to 2006

www.balticexchange.com

The Baltic Exchange has announced that the daily handymax vessel assessments making up the Baltic Handymax Index (BHMI) will continue to be published until at least 1 January 2006.

This is primarily to meet the concerns of Forward Freight Agreement (FFA) traders who have already agreed contracts into 2005.

According to Michael McClure, chairman of the Baltic's Freight Indices and Futures Committee (FIFC), a Baltic Supramax Index (BSI) will be introduced as soon as possible, but this index will not contribute to the Baltic Dry Index (BDI) until the BHMI ceases publication.

In a separate move the Baltic Exchange will also be reviewing its tanker market routes through another FIFC sub-committee which will include representation from the Baltic's Tanker User's group, the FFABA and panellists.

Also, Andy Lucey of UK freight derivatives broker, Freight Investor Services, has been elected as the new chairman of the Forward Freight Agreement Brokers' Association (FFABA) for 2004.

V.Ships wins ice tanker management contract

www.vships.com

Primorsk Shipping Corporation of Nakhodka (PRISCO) has awarded V.Ships a contract for full technical management of three ice-class tankers.

These vessels will be on long-term time charter to the Sakhalin-1 Consortium ExxonMobil for operations in Phase 1 of the Sakhalin-1 Project, an oil and gas field project in the Russian Far East.

V.Ships has already been involved in the contract - its consulting division, V.Ships Consulting, was hired by PRISCO to assist in its bid to build the vessels. The work of V.Ships Consulting included assisting with the development of the vessel specifications and reviewing the shipyard offers.

A further two newbuild charters were awarded to Sovcomflot, the State-owned shipping company.

All five vessels, based on an ice performance optimised 105,000 dwt Hyundai Heavy Industrie's Aframax design, include a number of special features to meet ExxonMobil's requirements, concerning the harsh climatic conditions of the region. They are scheduled to be operational in the Sakhalin Island field by 2006.

V.Ships Consulting will be involved with the complete lifecycle of the project, including approving the vessel design, and will have a team in the shipyard in South Korea to undertake new building supervision alongside the owners' technical teams. When delivered, V.Ships Asia, based in Singapore, will provide technical management for the vessels.

IMO AB launches leak-free Opti Line Pump

www.imo.se

Sweden-based IMO AB, based in Sweden and a member of the Colfax Pump Group, has launched a new pump series called Opti Line that uses magnetic couplings to eliminate leakage.

The coupling consists of an inner rotor with permanent magnets coupled to the pump and is sealed by a non-magnetic can.

On the atmospheric side, an outer rotor, also with permanent magnets, is coupled to the drive. Torque from the driver to the pump is transmitted without any mechanical interference.

IMO AB has also launched Winpump version 2.0, a software application to calculate pump needs. Winpump 2.0 is downloadable free from the IMO website.

Shell uses Thordon lube bearing system

www.thordonbearings.com

Shell Gas & Power has accepted delivery of the first oil-free Thor-Lube stern tube bearing system on the Granatina built by Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Co. (DSME) of South Korea.

Further systems have been ordered by DSME, Hyundai Heavy Industries and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries for ten other LNG carrier projects for various operators.

The system, developed by Thordon Bearings, eliminates the potential legal consequences of stern tube oil leakage pollution as the lubricant leaves no sheen and is categorized as "relatively harmless/non-toxic" to fish.

The bearing uses TL3G, a biodegradable water-based lubricant that can outperform mineral oil in some stern tube performance tests.

It also features a non-metallic Thordon XL bearing configuration and a new 5000 Series lubricant circulation and monitoring system.