FACT SHEET: SUBSEA OIL RECOVERY SYSTEM

The Subsea Oil Recovery System is a large containment structure designed to be placed over the largest leak source in the Transocean Deepwater Horizon Rig. The system was designed to collect hydrocarbons from the well and pump them to a tanker at the surface, where they would have been stored and safely shipped ashore.

The dome-topped containment system was deployed in early May but large formations of gas hydrates – similar to ice crystals – clogged the collection system. The system has been placed on the seafloor away from the wellhead and the riser leak as other options are developed for its potential future use.

How it works

- The system is made up of a 125-ton, 14’ x 24’ x 40’ structure.
- Equipment at the top of the system is connected to a 5,000 foot riser that would convey the hydrocarbons to the surface ship, the *Deepwater Enterprise*.

- Once in place, oil would flow up into the containment system’s dome to the surface ship.

- Once on the surface ship, the hydrocarbons would be processed and oil would be separated from water and gas. The oil will then be temporarily stored before being offloaded and shipped to a designated oil terminal onshore.

How it was developed

- This is the first time this system will be used at this water depth.

- To develop the system, BP quickly located existing structures that had previously been used as coffer dams in shallow water recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina.

- After Katrina, these structures were lowered over damaged wellheads to allow divers to repair wellheads.

- BP engineers have worked closely with the firm Wild Well Controls, Inc. to convert these structures for use in deep waters.

What’s next

- The system has been placed on the seafloor away from the wellhead and the riser leak as other options are developed for its potential future use.

Illustrations follow