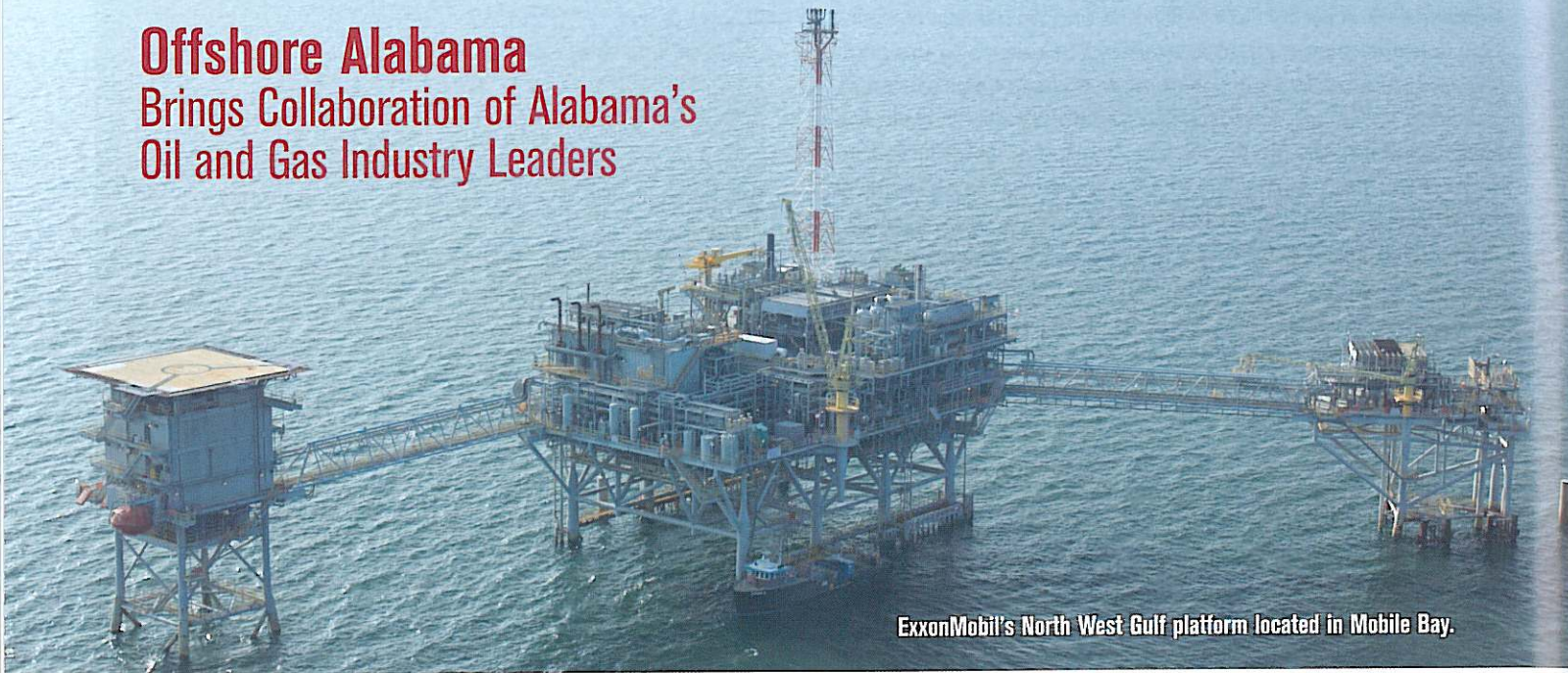


## Offshore Alabama Brings Collaboration of Alabama's Oil and Gas Industry Leaders



ExxonMobil's North West Gulf platform located in Mobile Bay.

When Aker Solution's Don Craig traveled across the country on business, he saw an opportunity for an idea to bring back to Mobile that would help Alabama's oil and gas industry leaders collaborate to more effectively advocate for and support increased oil and gas activity in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. After putting his head together with a few Mobile area executives, Offshore Alabama was born.

Offshore Alabama began in August 2008 thanks to efforts by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and various oil and gas service and supplier companies in southwest Alabama who not only wanted to highlight their current capabilities, but also to support and advocate for increased oil and gas activity on the Outer Continental Shelf of the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

Made up of approximately 25 companies, Offshore Alabama members are invited to participate on the task force. Member companies, who meet six times a year, include local gas producers and processors such as ExxonMobil and Shell, and those companies involved in the oil and gas industry like TORP Technology, Midstream Fuel Services and Construction Solutions. Other members include companies who provide specific services to these operations such as Aker Solutions, Offshore Inland Marine & Oilfield Services, Hargrove Engineers + Constructors, Prism Systems and Technip. The Alabama State Port Authority is also taking a proactive role. "The Port sees the critical need to support our region's oil and gas companies," said Jimmy Lyons, director and CEO. "We also see the Port's assets, and connecting transportation infrastructure, as providing an attractive platform to expand this important market."

According to Steve Russell, director of business retention and expansion for the Mobile Area Chamber, "The Offshore Alabama task force believes Mobile's high growth potential will benefit existing businesses that provide support services to the offshore oil and gas industry. Also, the task force pools funding and resources to better market southwest Alabama as a whole."

The oil and gas task force began with a strategic planning process completed in December 2008 that developed the goals for the organization. These goals are to:

- Understand the collective industry's needs and gain knowledge of Gulf Coast competition in terms of support services;
- Promote the area's current capability and stage itself as the next great oil and gas operations support center location serving the eastern Gulf of Mexico;
- Educate community and state officials about the positive impact of oil and gas operations on the economy including jobs, tax revenues, high tech operations, environmental protection and overall safety issues.

Russell said, "We are trying to educate city, county, state and national political leaders about pending eastern Gulf of Mexico lease developments – opening more of the offshore waters for exploration and production means boosting the economy and less reliance on foreign sources of oil and gas. We support deepwater offshore activities in the eastern Gulf of Mexico and want Mobile to be part of the solution."

One of Offshore Alabama's first initiatives was to create a directory of companies that currently support offshore oil and gas activities. The directory, available on the organization's Web site, [www.offshorealabama.com](http://www.offshorealabama.com), was developed to provide a clear overview of the services offered by various companies in the area.

Most recently, Offshore Alabama underwent a branding initiative, working with Red Square Agency in Mobile, to develop a logo and brand identity for the energy task force. Additionally, advertisements were developed by Airwind, which will appear in targeted trade publications.

"We are trying to get the word out that our area's oil and gas industry is open for business, and that we are a better alternative compared to other locations," Russell said. "We want deepwater offshore companies to know they don't have to go other places to repair their rigs, build their offshore supply vessels, and supply and service their platforms."

In late October, Offshore Alabama will be participating as a platinum sponsor in the Louisiana Gulf Coast Oil Exposition (LAGCOE) show. The LAGCOE trade show features industry exhibitors and technical sessions attracting the major decision makers in the petroleum industry and drawing more than 16,000 attendees and exhibits by more than 300 leading companies. Russell explained that the trade show will create awareness of the accessible oil and gas industry in Alabama and will allow task force members to talk to those who utilize services of Offshore Alabama members in our community. Task force members will also speak to those who want to expand services into our community serving as both a recruitment and expansion initiative.

The task force was created when Craig, former head of Aker Solutions in Mobile and now with Aker Solutions in Houston, Texas, met with Bob Chappelle, executive vice president of the Mobile Area Chamber. Craig described a vision for how Mobile could benefit from the exploitation of oil and gas exploration in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Chappelle put Craig in contact with Russell who asked Craig to lead the oil and gas task force as the first chairman of Offshore Alabama, helping develop the group from ground zero.

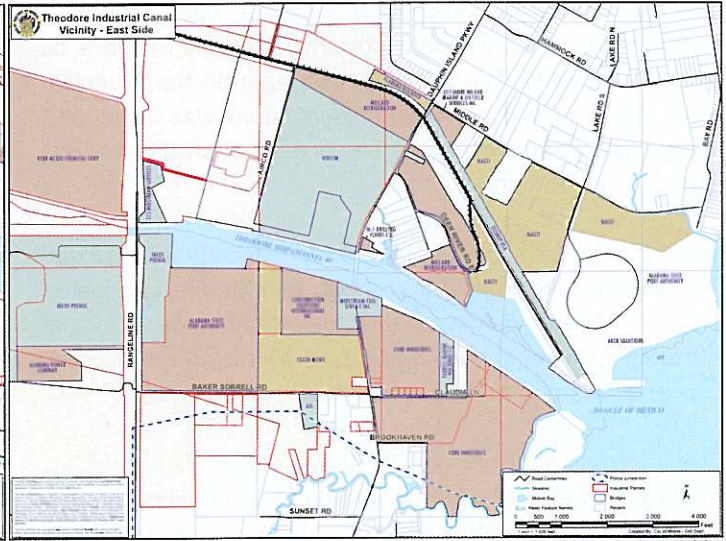
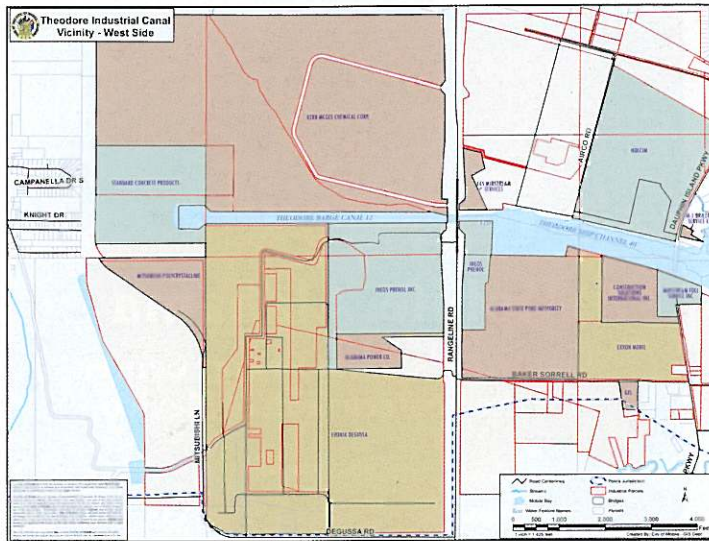
Craig said, "Through collective efforts, the task force will recruit new business opportunities that will firmly establish Mobile as a high tech offshore support center for major subsea developments in the eastern and central Gulf of Mexico, in turn resulting in more business for Aker Solutions' Mobile operations."

Craig explained that Offshore Alabama's Web site enables users to locate needed resources when operating in the Mobile/Gulf Coast region.

The Oil & Gas Task Force pools its funding and resources to market the region as a whole, some of which include producing a magazine ad shown here, and purchasing sponsorships for industry trade shows such as LAGCOE.



Thermal oxidizers located at ExxonMobil's Onshore Treating Facility in Theodore, Alabama.



**This map shows the west side of the Theodore Industrial Canal.**

**This map shows the east side of the Theodore Industrial Canal**

“When the Offshore Alabama Buyer Guide directory was first compiled, I was amazed at how many companies in the Mobile Region offered products and services to the offshore oil & gas industry,” Craig said. “By consolidating the information in one easy-to-navigate location, key decision makers with multibillion-dollar corporations will ultimately recognize that Mobile could become home to their offshore Gulf of Mexico operations, bringing a sustainable benefit to Mobile and the surrounding region.”

Dieffenthaler added, “This group has enabled us for the first time to collectively define the strengths that position Mobile to favorably compete with other communities along the Gulf Coast in this business sector. We now need to share this collective information so that companies can leverage our deep water port, air, highway and rail infrastructure, local businesses, and capable workforce for safe and environmentally sound exploration/production in the Gulf Of Mexico.”

ExxonMobil, the largest offshore natural gas producer in Alabama, plays a key role in the state’s economy and is a major driving force in the Offshore Alabama group.

Offshore Alabama currently has a broad range of businesses in Mobile including engineering and technology firms, maritime vessel fabrication/repair, logistical support (fuel, cargo, supply boats, etc.), offshore construction and subsea umbilical systems.

Paul Dieffenthaler, head of ExxonMobil’s operations in Alabama and the current Offshore Alabama chairman, said, “Participating in the task force allows me to help highlight the breadth of Mobile area industries that benefit from offshore oil and gas exploration and production, and work to bring more business to the Mobile area.”

“As the opportunities open for potentially more offshore exploration and production, we want to position Mobile now as a place to do business to capture some of the future benefits that will bring new sustainable jobs to our area,” Dieffenthaler said.



**The umbilicals made by Aker Solutions provide power, data, hydraulic functions and chemical injects to underwater drilling sites.**

**Aker Solutions manufactures umbilicals onsite. Every wheel provides a different element of the umbilical including power and remote control.**