

Shoal Point drilling on target; prospective zone encountered 🚧

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SHOAL POINT — With the largest drilling rig ever to be brought to this province, those involved in the drilling of the directional well at Shoal Point are encouraged by finding a prospective zone and by the accuracy of their drilling.

Steve McIntosh, project supervisor, said drilling is currently about 2.5 kilometres deep and a little more than 2.5 kilometres under the ocean.

“All I can say is that when we’re finished we’ll be 4,000 metres from the rig,” he said.

Kirby Mercer, vice-president of Canadian Imperial Venture Corp. — one of the companies involved in the project — was quick to point out they have already encountered one prospective zone and while it’s not their primary target, it’s something they are excited about.

“This is a resource play that has to do with shale gas and oil,” he said. “It’s related to the shallow wells, which were drilled many years ago here on Shoal Point that produced oil but we’re testing that at a deeper rate now.”

Mercer said this zone has the right mineralization, porosity and maturity to be similar to the Utica shale play in Quebec, which the company Porous Oil is currently have tremendous success with.

“We think we have potential for similar play, in addition to our target at Shoal Point, which is known as the Aguathuna formation,” he said. “We will continue to work towards the Aguathuna target and come back to test this resource play that we think will produce.”

Mercer said when they drilled the area where shale was encountered, they had a lot of gas come back to the surface, which is related to oil.

McIntosh said currently the companies are working on setting the intermediate casing before going into their target zone and he expects they will be getting into some pretty interesting rocks at that time.

“We’ve crossed over enough faults that we know our seismic is true,” he said. “If the pot of gold is at the end of that, then we should know in another 35 or 40 days. We’re coming in on the structure just where we thought it was. Our bit is within two feet of where we wanted it to be and the faults and structures are coming in where we programmed them to be.”

He said it’s been hard drilling through some pretty tough rock and there is much harder rock on this side of the island than in eastern Newfoundland.

Roland Strickland, site geologist, said there is much harder rock on the west coast because it’s much older rock and that makes it much more difficult to drill.

Strickland worked on site in 1999 when Pan Canadian and Hunt Oil drilled the first well on Shoal Point and he said it’s different this time. That particular well missed its target.

“We’re drilling with much more sophisticated directional tools which give us much more accuracy and allows us to be on target,” Strickland said. “We’ve lined up the drilling trajectory to within meters of where we want to be.”

He said things are going well and he is optimistic after seeing the geology in terms of the potential.

“It’s now time to put fact to what we’ve been speculating during the years.

“That gas show is encouraging and when we wire-line this well that’s when we’ll see if it reveals what the rocks are telling us,” Strickland said.

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