Bigger, Better U.S. Scientific Ocean Drilling Ship for the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program

All new quarters and laboratories more than 25% larger

WASHINGTON DC, April 19, 2007-- Joint Oceanographic Institutions (JOI), a consortium of 31 U.S. oceanographic research institutions, announced that Overseas Drilling Limited has signed a contract with Jurong Shipyard PTE LTD for the overhaul and enhancement of the research vessel ***JOIDES Resolution***, a 20-year workhorse for scientific seabed exploration and observation. The shipyard contract was signed April 9, 2007, and covers work through the end of 2007, when the vessel is to be delivered for sea trials before returning to service for the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) in early 2008.

Overseas Drilling Limited (ODL) is owned 50% by a subsidiary of Transocean Inc., the world's largest offshore drilling contractor, and 50% by Siem Offshore Inc., an offshore vessel owner and operator for the oil and gas industry. ODL is the owner of the vessel and a subcontractor to the Texas A&M Research Foundation (TAMRF), a partner with JOI.

The renovation plans, paid for mostly by the National Science Foundation and partly by ODL, include:

- State-of-the-art upgrades to the ship's science laboratories and facilities;
- Augmentation of logging and drilling capabilities;
- All -new, expanded and refined accommodations;
- Refurbishment and renewal of ship equipment and infrastructure;
- Advanced safety and environment safeguards.

"The resulting science facility will be a vast improvement over the existing vessel," said Steven Bohlen, president of JOI. "The IODP-U.S. Implementing Organization and partners have worked very hard to redesign laboratory, sleeping and living spaces so that all of the objectives of the science community will be met within budget."

For a complete list of enhancements and detailed specifications, please visit http://www.joiscience.org/sodv.

During the past three years, the *JOIDES Resolution* has been the U.S. platform for the IODP. For the majority of the previous two decades, the ship was employed by the Ocean Drilling Program, predecessor to the IODP.

Jeff Fox, director of science operations at IODP at Texas A&M University, said "The *JOIDES Resolution* has been our wagon train, allowing the world[1]s scientists to explore and read the record of our planet's history and to monitor ongoing processes. We will be much better able to do this as a result of this transformational enhancement, which is made possible by the National Science Foundation's generous support."

The newly refurbished and enhanced research facility, which is the U.S. contribution to the international IODP fleet, will join the Japanese-built *Chikyu* and European-sponsored mission-specific vessels.

Mark Smock, president and CEO of Texas A&M Research Foundation, said ,"The Foundation is excited at this opportunity to combine a longtime relationship with its partners in support of scientific ocean drilling. We are particularly excited to contribute to an initiative to create an enhanced scientific drilling capability that will ensure continued scientific discoveries far into the future."

Science outcomes from expeditions completed under ODP and the first phase of IODP have advanced our understanding of sea level and climate history, gas hydrates, deep biosphere and the structure of ocean crust. Scientific ocean drilling expeditions have validated the theory of plate tectonics, given researchers insights into Earth's ancient climate and provided evidence of an asteroid impact that caused mass extinctions 65 million years ago.

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