



Rod Starr, TGS General Manager - Asia Pacific

**R**od Starr, TGS-NOPEC Geophysical Company General Manager - Asia Pacific, has been charged with the responsibility of heading up the Asia Pacific arm of the geoscience data products and services provider, last year transferring to TGS's Perth office to oversee its development in the region.

Previously based in Houston, Starr told *PESA News* he has worked in the oil and gas business the entirety of his career, getting his first break straight out of college with Unocal (then Union Oil Company), where he spent 16 years working 'across all segments of the energy business', mostly in North America.

Starr said he was attracted to the industry even before taking up his first post.

"Even when I was at university it was an intriguing industry. In my opinion, oil and gas drives economies around the world ... That was truly the intrigue of it all", he said.

In 2001, Starr joined A2D Technologies, a well log data provider. Within a year of his arrival, A2D was acquired by TGS. Starr said in his time at the company, working in sales and marketing and business development roles, TGS has made a concerted effort to grow the well data business globally, expanding its US model of gathering public well data, standardising and marketing it.

He told *PESA News* the well log business has grown from a largely US-only focus to a well log data library now spanning more than 20 countries.

"Once A2D teamed up with TGS, I spent most of my time growing the well log data business, or what we now call geologic products and

## TGS Seeks Further Asia Pacific Growth

services. And then in January of last year, I moved over to the seismic side of the business by taking the position in Asia Pacific", he said, adding overseeing TGS's growth in the Asia Pacific has been both challenging and rewarding.

"I'm somewhat familiar with the region, including Thailand and the Philippines, with my previous life at Unocal. I was never based in the region, but oversaw projects here and commuted, if you will. I enjoy working in the region with its abundant opportunities. It's been really interesting to address all the unique challenges in each country."

Starr said TGS follows a 'unique business model' in the geophysical services industry, including chartering all its seismic vessels, which he said provides the company with valuable flexibility in the often boom and bust world of oil and gas.

"It can work for and against you. Certainly, it works for us in this type of market, when vessels are more readily available and certainly less expensive than they were 18 months ago. So, that's played in our favour.

"TGS has strategic long-term charters, where it benefits us in a very tight vessel market. So, it has allowed us to compete even in challenging times. Regardless of the market, TGS maintains rigorous pre-funding thresholds, which is critical to our business model to ensure we obtain industry support for new seismic investments in our multi-client data libraries."

While TGS has previously focused on multi-client 2D seismic acquisition in the Asia Pacific, Starr said the company is working towards initiating 3D projects.

"TGS around the world conducts extensive 3D acquisition, including single and wide azimuth projects. Our goal is to introduce the TGS experience to the Asia Pacific region as well."

Starr said TGS is making a concerted effort to 'expand its success' with its multi-client data libraries in Indonesia and Vietnam to other Asia Pacific markets such as Australia.

"We want to be fairly selective and target opportunities that support industry needs and the TGS multi-client business model. Due to our focus in areas such as Indonesia—where we maintain the industry's largest multi-client data library—we are playing a bit of catch-up in places like the Australia market.

"Our plan is to be intelligent about it and try to differentiate ourselves, and look at areas or projects where we can offer a technical advantage. TGS can do this with its experience in high quality acquisition, top-notch imaging services, and experienced geologic products and services business."

The company is currently undertaking a program in the Browse Basin, mapping the geology and creating a facies map of the area. The program kicked off at the beginning of 2010 with industry pre-funding. The initial phase of the interpretation and online database will be available in August.

Starr said the product is known as the FMB (Facies Map Browser), a visualisation interface for reviewing and interrogating depositional system models, which comprises data from multiple wells and seismic profiles.

"Our plan is to introduce TGS into the Australian market with some unique offerings like FMB", he said. "We can expand upon the knowledge gained in our interpretive work in order to offer intelligent and value-added seismic acquisition and reprocessing programs. With TGS's combined geoscience data offerings we can provide industry with a new look to solve complex exploration and development challenges."

Starr said TGS initiated data processing capabilities in Perth earlier this year. He told *PESA News* the company "can now combine geologic knowledge gained through projects like the Browse Basin FMB with ... acquisition expertise and local data processing capabilities".

"Largely, the processing capacity was built to handle our multi-client acquisition programs. Once we are fully operational, including technology transfer from established TGS data processing centres in Houston and the UK, we will contemplate expansion to a limited level of proprietary work. TGS's global proprietary data processing business ranges from 5% to 10%.

"We'll grow the Perth processing capacity as our acquisition programs grow. Again, our strategy is to pursue geophysically challenging projects, including interpretation, acquisition and imaging.

"Finally, look for TGS to continue its lead in the multi-client geophysical data business in Southeast Asia—Indonesia and Vietnam—and to expand across the Asia Pacific region, with a clear focus on Australia." ■