

South Island Company has new petroleum drill rig capacity

17 August 2006 - A Timaru-based drilling company Washingtons Exploration has entered the oil drilling market and recently drilled the Sharpridge Creek well in Southland for L&M.

Washingtons' co-director Steve Pilcher said the company had converted one of its rigs to full oil and gas standards and was capable of drilling holes to around 1200 m deep.

Mr Pilcher said the company has had inquiries to drill oil wells on the West Coast, North Canterbury as well as Southland. He has even had inquiries to drill in the North Island.

Mr Pilcher said the company had in recent years moved into mineral drilling and coalbed methane drilling as restrictions on water bores had reduced the amount of water exploration work they did. The company's reverse circulation rigs have been drilling exploration holes at the Macraes gold field.

Mr Pilcher had 10 years experience in oil and gas exploration in Australia, so Washingtons decided to divert some of their operations into petroleum drilling.

The company had invested a lot of money in specialist equipment and training of staff.

"We converted one of our rigs to make it flame-proof; we had to put spark arresters on the exhaust and removed some of the electrics."

Blow out prevention equipment had been imported and two staff had blow out prevention certificates and other staff are undergoing additional training in New Plymouth.

The company had a full drill programme in petroleum wells until the end of the year, Mr Pilcher said.

Source: Washingtons Drilling & Exploration