

EXPEC ARC celebrates excellence

Research hub looks back on achievements

DHAHRAN — The EXPEC Advanced Research Center (ARC) hosted its International Advisory Council (IAC) for three days of meetings and the annual EXPEC ARC awards ceremony in January.

President and CEO Khalid A. Al-Falih congratulated the organization on a year of unprecedented achievement. "It's fair to say that the company has a decades-old reputation as the world's largest and most significant operator in oil and gas. But one thing that we have not been recognized for previously is our culture of innovation and our ability to create knowledge," he said.

Through achievements such as those honored for 2008, that perception is changing. "Throughout the year, when you opened any journal of the petroleum industry, you came across praise for Saudi Aramco, not only as a reliable, sizable, significant, important oil company, but increasingly as the most innovative and the most technology-driven company on the planet," Al-Falih said.

Farouq El-Baz, a member of the IAC, spoke about the importance of development and continuing the legacy of innovation. "An emphasis on developing the young is very important. I see that emphasis here, and I applaud you for that," he said. "We expect good work — hard work. We expect diligence, and we expect to raise the level of our intellectual prowess together. This is all happening at EXPEC ARC, with the support of Saudi Aramco management."

In 2006, EXPEC ARC established the IAC to give advice on the strategic direction of Saudi Aramco's research and development activities.

The IAC reviews EXPEC ARC's activities and performance, suggest future directions, and recommend new and emerging technologies to benefit specific business needs and challenges of Saudi Aramco. The council consists of world-renowned scientists from highly respected institutions.

The annual awards provide a platform to the researchers and initiatives that sparked innovation during the past year. This year, Al-Falih, senior vice president Amin H. Nasser and EXPEC ARC manager Muhammad M. Al-Saggaf presented the awards together.

Al-Saggaf highlighted EXPEC ARC's accomplishments. "This was the year the first experiment in industry was successfully conducted to demonstrate that nanorobots represent a reality, not a myth. It was the year the giga-cell simulation barrier was shattered, and Saudi Aramco widened its lead ahead of everyone in the industry."

"2008 was our best year yet,"



Photos: Hasan M. Al-Taraiki

EXPEC ARC award winners pose with International Advisory Council members and company management at the January awards ceremony.



Among the winners of EXPEC ARC's awards were, from left, Yi Luo, receiving his award from Khalid A. Al-Falih; Tareq M. Al-Shaalan, Larry S. Fung and Usuf Middyya; and Ghaithan A. Muntasheri.

EXPEC ARC award winners

- Team Player Award: Ali Al-Meshari.
- Most Productive Technician: Ahmad A. Humaidi.
- Creative Contribution Award: Yi Luo.
- Best TWIX Presentation: Ghaithan A. Al-Muntasheri for "Development of a Cost-Effective Polymer for High Temperature Water Shutoff."
- Effective Publication Award: Sunil L. Kokal, winner for the second year in a row.
- Mentorship Award: M.D. Amanullah.
- Milestone Award: Usuf Middyya, Larry S. Fung, Tareq M. Al-Shaalan, for developing and implementing key components of the GigaPOWERS code that allowed the company to break the giga-cell barrier, the industry's first billion-cell reservoir simulator.

Saggaf concluded. "We won four SPE individual international awards — twice as many winnings as all the international oil companies combined. After all, as our motto says, we will get there: 'We will either find a way, or we will make one.'"

Sunil L. Kokal, Petroleum Engineering consultant at EXPEC ARC, recounted the achievements of his colleagues. "On a personal level, the one thing that strikes me the most about 2008 is that EXPEC ARC became a close-knit

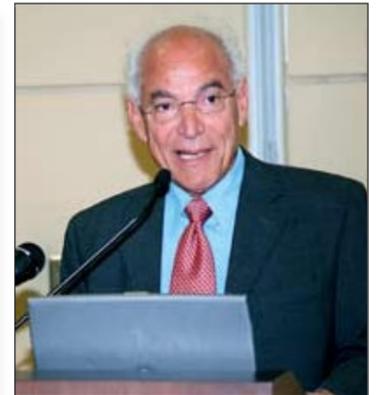
family," he said. "It has come a long way in a very short time. It has quickly grown and strengthened to become a center of excellence. 2008 was the year of the nano and the giga: from the smallest to the largest. It was the year EXPEC ARC was recognized with its first international technology award for Resbots, a testament that we are on the right track."

With near-perfect attendance, about 240 EXPEC ARC employees turned out to congratulate

their colleagues. Other guests included Abdulla A. Al Naim, vice president of Petroleum Engineering and Development; and Mohammed Y. Al-Qahtani, chief petroleum engineer.

EXPEC ARC spearheads the research and development of all upstream technology, anticipating future needs, to create innovative, high-impact solutions and tools for Saudi Aramco Exploration and Producing.

Several awards were presented for excellence in contributing to



Farouq El-Baz



Sunil L. Kokal

this mission. However, due to the numerous achievements attained in 2008, the most hotly contested award category was the Milestone Award, which is awarded to those who "made the most significant contribution in their projects for the year 2008 in terms of design, execution, or completion, and with the highest impact for the lifecycle of the project."

Therefore, in addition to the winning team (giga-cell simulation), other project teams received honorable mentions in this category: the cross-well electromagnetic project, Resbots™ physical experiment milestone, technology test site well completion, inline water separation project, and casing drilling and ceramic centralizers.