

## **DLB "Hercules" Reel / Tensioner System**

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### **History/Abstract**

In 1990 Global Industries acquired the Reel Lay Barge “Chickasaw” from Santa Fe Pipelines. The “Chickasaw” had been laying pipe from its horizontal reel since 1969 in the Gulf of Mexico and had laid many millions of feet of pipe up to the time of the acquisition.

The normal mode of pipe laying for the “Chickasaw” entailed setting up at the initiation point on anchors, tying the pipeline off to a structure or some anchor point, then slipping anchors and pulling the barge down the route with a tug while laying out pipe. While this method was successful, it had a number of shortcomings. These included the ability to control pipeline tension accurately, the ability to lay the pipe on a precisely controlled route, and handling anchors in close proximity to congested structures.

In order to overcome these problems, plans were put in place shortly after the acquisition to enhance the barge’s capabilities by the upgrading it with Dynamic Positioning. The project to install a redundant DP system on the “Chickasaw” began in 1993. In August of 1994 the “Chickasaw” began, and completed, the first of many successful projects utilizing Dynamic Positioning.

Drawing upon the success of the “Chickasaw”, Global has sought to capitalize upon the experience gained in deepwater operations. As a result, Global acquired the Derrick Barge “Hercules” in 1995 and began to lay plans to upgrade the barge with Dynamic Positioning.

With project engineering beginning in the fall of 1996, the “Hercules” conversion began. Conversion was completed with successful sea trials and subsequent conventional pipeline and heavy lift projects beginning in the summer of 1998.

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