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SEAHAWK SERVICES

A New Name with a Long History in Fuel Testing

*In economic times good or bad, oil prices high or low, ships at sea depend on the purchase and burning of quality fuel to enhance and extend the life of their ships. Last month we visited with **Wajdi Abdmessih**, Founder & Owner of Seahawk Services, a new name (but a long history) in the fuel testing and inspection business.*

BY GREG TRAUTHWEIN



Please provide a brief background on your company.

Seahawk Services is a fuel testing and inspection operation based in New Jersey. It provides global submitted fuel and lube oil sample analysis as well as bunker quantity surveys in the U.S. and Latin America. The company currently has one fully equipped laboratory in West Deptford, N.J., capable of testing fuel samples to the full ISO 8217:2012 quality standard. It is also equipped with advanced diagnostics instruments such as Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) and Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS).

What was the impetus to found the company in June 2014?

As a laboratory chemist working in the marine industry for many years, I have found that many companies give little attention when it comes to investment in the marine fuel testing laboratory division compared to, for example, gasoline, diesel and chemical testing. Therefore I decided to establish a state-of-the-art laboratory equipped with all the neces-

sary high level of equipment to create an environment where testing and research can work together to protect and to better serve our clients.

As you know, there are many fuel testing & inspection companies and services in the marine sector. What differentiates Seahawk Services?

I have more than 25 years' experience in the laboratory and inspection sectors, and my extensive knowledge of fuel chemistry and vessel operation allows me to serve both the fuel user and the supplier on fuel quality and quantity issues.

Most marine laboratories are focused on one side along – which is usually the fuel user. As such, they are not aware of the fuel blending and optimization operations that suppliers regularly undertake. Furthermore, they usually have limited experience when it comes to fuel overall, with most of them just running ISO 8217 tests and comparing the results against the specification in what I would call a production line approach.

Many marine fuel testing laboratories also have a lack of experience when it comes to fuel handling, and they may depend heavily on a set of standard comments that have been triggered by a computer and which have been based on certain analysis numbers. In many cases the results don't take into consideration the vessel equipment configuration, vessel age and other important vessel condition/operation capabilities.

Give us your view on the global maritime bunker markets, with particular emphasis regarding quality issues in recent years.

We have seen an increase in problematic fuel, specifically an increase in the average level of cat fines in the fuel over the last year, and we expected this trend to continue with the introduction of global sulfur regulation. The bunker market will experience a large shift from residual fuels to distillate fuel in the next few years. While the use of distillate may seem to be less problematic, the new ISO 8217 revised specification (currently being circulated for comment) may

be expected to accept a biofuel mix in distillate fuel which could result in more quality issues.

The marine industry as you know is under tremendous legislative pressure to reduce emissions, with fuel quality (and proof thereof) heading the list. Put in perspective the challenges for the shipowners.

Shipowners are faced with major decisions that they need to take in order to comply with regulation and stay in business. They have to decide how to comply with the new emission regulation and what type of vessel configuration/fuel/other will achieve that goal.

Will it be distillate, LNG conversion, the use of residual fuel with a scrubber, or a switch to dual fuel – or maybe other sort of renewable energy or combination? Each choice will come with a large price tag and the decision will mainly depend on the area in which a vessel operates and the stability of future fuel price.

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Seahawk Services

Seahawk Services is a fuel testing and inspection agency, established by Wajdi Abdmessih in June 2011. Based in West Deptford, NJ, it features a fully-equipped testing laboratory capable of testing fuel to ISO 8217:2012 requirements. The lab is also equipped with advanced diagnostics instruments such as Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) and GC-MS (Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry). It provides a range of bunker services, including bunker quantity surveys, fuel oil analysis, pre-bunker analysis, purifier efficiency monitoring, ship fuel sampling audits, ship remains on board (ROB) audit, lube oil analysis, sampling equipment, failure analysis studies and claim support. Abdmessih has more than 25 years of experience in marine fuel testing, developing internal testing methods and working with various organizations, providing data for sulfur monitoring worldwide.

How do outside factors such as oil prices and shipping volumes impact your business?

The price of oil will not affect our business since vessels will still need to know the quality of the fuel they are consuming and they also need to comply with regulations. However, the slowing world economy will affect our business since fewer vessels will operate which means less bunkering and fewer samples and bunker surveys.

What were the goals for your company from the outset?

Introducing a successful state-of-the-art laboratory and inspection service where quality and customer service can work in harmony without compromising quality or integrity. Our goal is helping C/E to optimize the use of the fuel and to take preventative action so as to avoid problems before they happen. We have introduced a chemist-based laboratory and not a production lab - every sample is handled individually by a chemist.

What factors will drive the whole fuel testing and quality business fastest & furthest?

Fuel testing must not be limited to specification or compliance checks but must be extended to protect the user and to optimize the use of the fuel. We are introducing the lab of the future, working with our clients for better fuel optimization, to protect their investment and maximize the use of the energy they purchased.

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