



**AES DRILLING FLUIDS**





# LEADING THE FIELD



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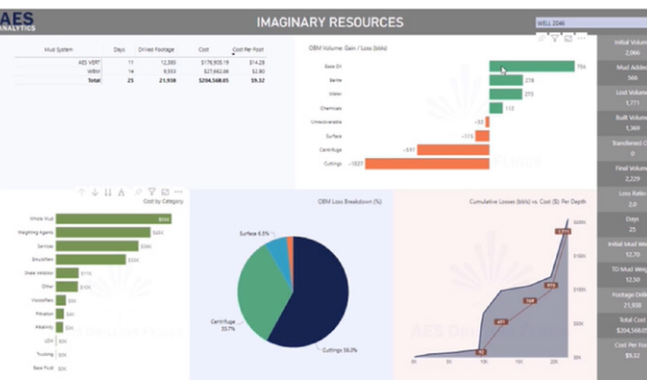
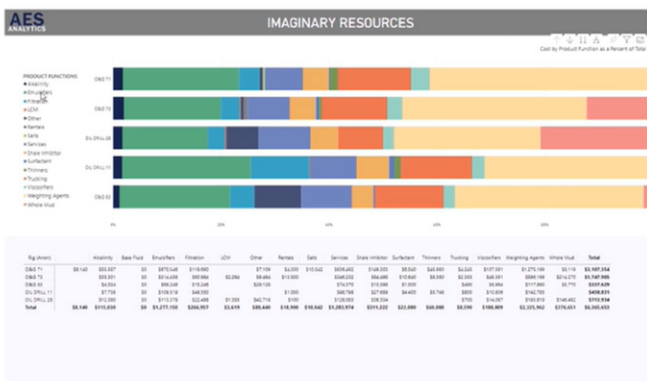
Written by  
**Robert Hoshowsky**

**K**nown for the science and technology behind its products, Houston Texas-based AES Drilling Fluids is an industry leader, and a key player in the success of its clients.

With its prominent motto – *Better Fluids Equal Better Wells* – AES Drilling Fluids would be cruelly exposed if it didn't live up to these aspirational words as well as it has since the company was founded. AES was built upon the foundations of several smaller mud companies, and is today led by President Richard Baxter.

With an Associates of Science and Engineering from Tyler Junior College, and a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Petroleum Engineering from Texas A&M University, Baxter served as a senior drilling engineer for one of America's largest energy companies before joining Fluids Management Ltd (FMI) in 1997. Originally ►►





► an engineering firm that focused on providing mud consultants, drilling fluids and office engineering support to operators, FMI was one of the companies that evolved into AES Drilling Fluids in 2010 when parent company CES Energy Solutions purchased them. From day one, Baxter was focused on product and technical development and sales support, becoming the President of AES in 2014. Today, almost 25 years later, Baxter remains hands-on with fluid product development, innovation and blending.

“AES has been a technology leader for years – from satellite connectivity on rigs and creating our own Rig File Reporting System, to now developing technologies such as AES ANALYTICS and streamlining processes through automation. We have always had a proven record of rapid product development to meet customer needs,” says Baxter.

Growing to four offices, eight warehouses, and a staff of 350 to 400, AES is recognized for its products and experienced, committed workforce.

“We have very little turnover at AES,” says Mike Provada, IT Manager with the company for 17 years. “There’s lots of



experience in all these products. Our people have seen it all; they've been in the field, worked with all different products, and they keep making them better. We have some really smart engineers working very hard, and it shows," he says.

"Technology on its own is never a complete solution, it is just a tool," he continues. "You always hear throughout the industry how AI will displace jobs, but at AES our mindset is if we can free up our users from repetitive tasks with automation and AI, they can focus on more stimulating work and provide our customers with an even better service. AES keeps up with the latest technologies, not only to stay competitive, but also to attract talent and provide value to our employees as well as our customers."

"Automation will simplify processes, eliminate errors, and make operations safer. It means that our talented work force will spend more time using their gifts to serve our customers and less time performing basic, repetitive tasks," agrees Director of Technology and Marketing Matt Offenbacher.

When it comes to recent challenges, AES was well-prepared for the pandemic and able to get out in front of it with technology such as VPNs, collaboration software, and cloud-based web applications. "Always Expect the Unexpected" was instilled in me at a young age, and COVID was a perfect example," shares Provada. "Through collaboration software, we can deliver faster insight between each other and generate more value for our customers all over the country. It has aided in stronger connections among our employees and our customers. From the pandemic, AES as a company is even stronger than before."

Customer service and innovative products are just some of the reasons customers keep coming to AES for all their drilling fluid needs, and to continue delivering in these areas, the company invests in advancements in technology, automation and a robust IT infrastructure.

"The AES IT Department not only supports our business and users within, but also focuses on how we can save our customers time and money through advanced technologies and custom applications," says Provada. "When developing any application, we are always ensuring it is mobile/tablet friendly for today's user. As we have many generations in the field, our main focus, along with security and value, is simplicity."

The team's Mud Engineer Portal is one example of technology meeting service. A web-based application, the portal connects all parties, from the setup of the well through to invoicing. "Mud Engineers can place their orders via the web," explains Provada, "and orders are automatically loaded into our ERP system for picking and staging. Trucking kiosks at the location are automatically pre-loaded with pick-up numbers ►







► so they never have to get out of the truck and can efficiently get loaded. As soon as the truck leaves, a text is sent to our mud engineer on location letting them know the order is on the way and a delivery ticket is emailed," he shares.

"All daily reporting on the rig is submitted through the portal which feeds our Rig File Database to provide our customers with daily analytics via AES ANALYTICS, another custom application which not only provides detailed well information, but also makes recommendations through advanced AI," continues Provada. "Once the well has completed, the approval workflow is triggered with notifications and the billing process begins. This includes automatically packaging up all files, notes and anything else pertaining to the well for simplified billing."

AES also provides service to its customers by way of education, reaching out through different channels including its popular online podcast, **The Flowline** and its YouTube channel, which hosts a variety of drilling fluids Tech Tips.

Since going live in March 2019, **The Flowline** has garnered an attentive audience of oil and gas industry specialists across

America and worldwide. Brought to audiences by Offenbacher and Account Manager Justin Gauthier, this year has featured episodes on "Weird Mud Tests," "Nanotechnology," "Surfactants," and "Drilling Fluid Selection," to name a few. Priding itself on being an industry leader in technology and a resource to its customers, the company provides these free technical channels to help anyone interested in drilling fluids or basic oilfield processes and procedures.

A relationship-based business, AES Drilling Fluids keeps pace with the needs of its customers as it continues developing and improving products and technologies, such as AES Analytics. Focused on leveraging detailed data obtained during drilling, AES Analytics maximizes information for clients, resulting in improved performance.

By allowing operators to compare wells "and identify outlying cost and performance data quickly and easily," according to the company's website, up-to-date prime options can be considered, including the best treatment solutions and drilling fluid properties.

A comprehensive tool with custom visualization dashboards and the ability to benchmark and compare offset performance, AES Analytics can be analyzed anywhere. Open as always with its documentation, including case histories and technical papers, AES has more information available at [www.aesfluids.com/aes-analytics/](http://www.aesfluids.com/aes-analytics/), including **AES ANALYTICS Optimizes Mud Weight, Eliminates Wellbore Instability**, and **A Data Analytics Platform Dedicated to Drilling Fluids**. By adding value, AES helps clients maximize their returns on investment through careful analysis of evolving needs, identifying, recommending, and producing effective chemical treatments based on exhaustive laboratory studies.



When customers aren't familiar with AES's wide range of products and solutions including fluid systems, oil-based mud, water-based mud, synthetic-based mud and HDD/Trenchless Systems – the company provides information and resources on water-based mud additives, invert emulsion additives, and more.

"We experiment a lot to help customers be educated and familiar with our products and services in ways I think other folks haven't encountered," says Offenbacher, "and then, I think, with respect to Mike's side of things, streamlining so many elements where we make it easier for our customers to see why they would want to work with us," he says.

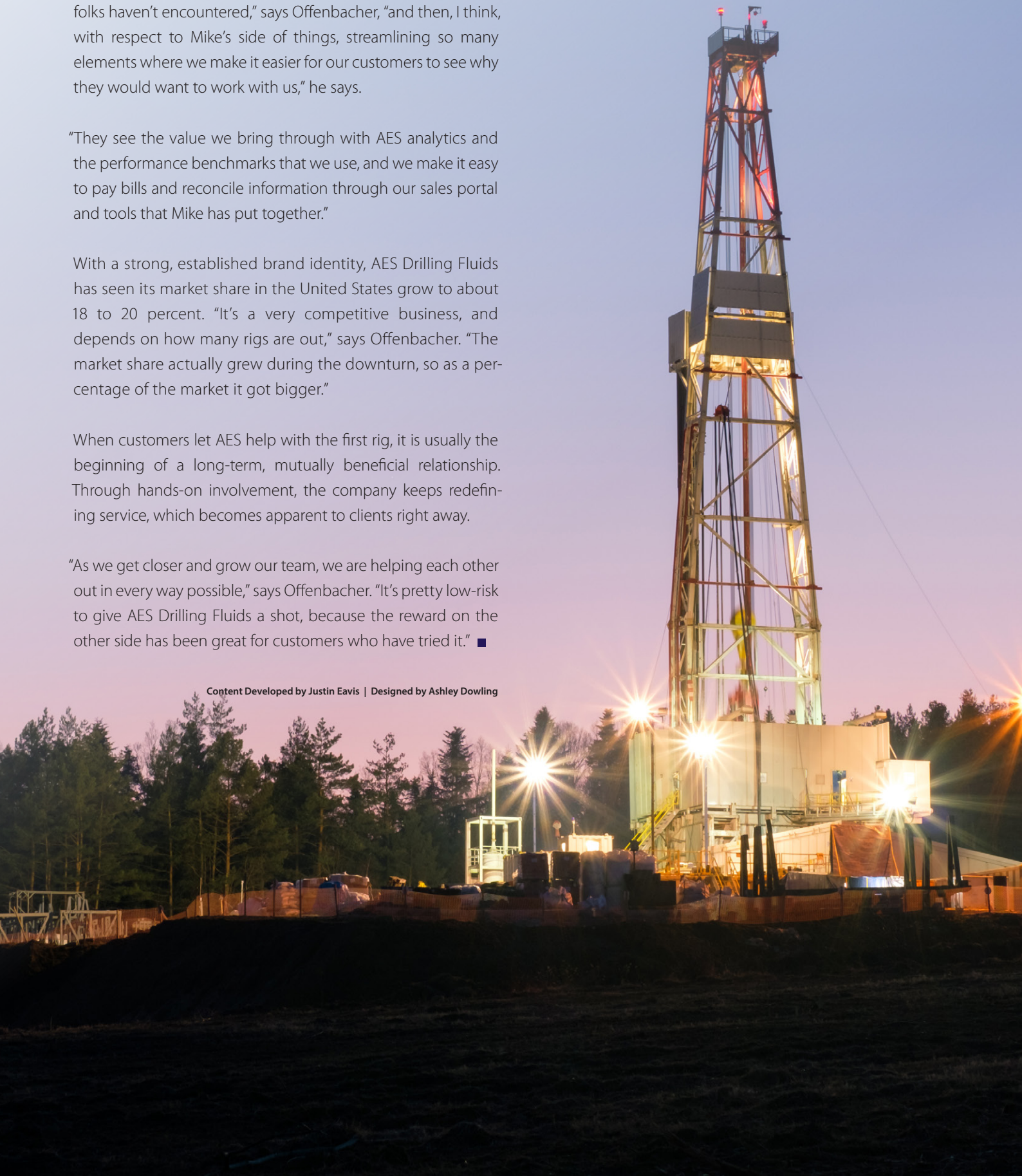
"They see the value we bring through with AES analytics and the performance benchmarks that we use, and we make it easy to pay bills and reconcile information through our sales portal and tools that Mike has put together."

With a strong, established brand identity, AES Drilling Fluids has seen its market share in the United States grow to about 18 to 20 percent. "It's a very competitive business, and depends on how many rigs are out," says Offenbacher. "The market share actually grew during the downturn, so as a percentage of the market it got bigger."

When customers let AES help with the first rig, it is usually the beginning of a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship. Through hands-on involvement, the company keeps redefining service, which becomes apparent to clients right away.

"As we get closer and grow our team, we are helping each other out in every way possible," says Offenbacher. "It's pretty low-risk to give AES Drilling Fluids a shot, because the reward on the other side has been great for customers who have tried it." ■

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