

# OBAMA

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"The system failed, and it failed badly. And for that, there is enough responsibility to go around. And all parties should be willing to accept it," the president said.

Obama's tone was a marked departure from the deliberate approach and mild chiding that had characterized his response since the huge rig went up in flames April 20 and later sank 5,000 feet to the ocean floor. Then came the leaking crude, the endangered wildlife, the livelihoods of fishermen at risk.

The magnitude of the disaster has grown clearer by the day and with it the apparent need for a presidential response to choke off any comparison to the Bush administration's bungled handling of Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast. White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said Obama had been growing increasingly frustrated with the situation, and the congressional hearings hardened that sentiment and prompted the president's more forceful tone Friday.

Next week administration officials face their own Capitol Hill grillings for the first time since the accident, with Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano appearing before a Senate committee Monday and Salazar testifying on Tuesday.

The Obama administration insists its response has been aggressive since Day One, and Obama sought Friday to leave no doubts. He said he shared the anger and frustration of those affected and would not rest or be satisfied "until the leak is stopped at the source, the oil in the Gulf is contained and cleaned up, and the people of the Gulf are able to go back to their lives and their livelihoods."

Obama announced that the Interior Department would review whether the Minerals Management Service is following all environmental laws before issuing permits for offshore oil and gas development. BP's drilling operation at Deepwater Horizon received a "categorical exclusion," which allows for expedited oil and gas drilling without the detailed environmental review that normally is required.

"It seems as if permits were too often issued based on little more than assurances of safety from the oil companies," Obama said.

Echoing President Ronald Reagan's comment on nuclear arms agreements with Moscow, he said, "To borrow an old phrase, we will trust but we will verify."

Obama already had announced a 30-day review of safety procedures on oil rigs and at wells before any additional oil leases could be granted. And earlier in the week Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced plans to split the much-criticized Minerals Management Service into two agencies, one that would be charged with inspecting

oil rigs, investigating oil companies and enforcing safety regulations, while the other would oversee leases for drilling and collection of billions of dollars in royalties. Salazar has said the plan will ensure there is no conflict, "real or perceived," regarding the agency's functions.

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform announced Friday it is opening an investigation into potential oversight lapses at the Minerals Management Service.

Obama decried what he called "a cozy relationship between the oil companies and the federal agency that permits them to drill." But the president, who's announced a limited expansion of offshore drilling that's now on hold, didn't back down from his support for domestic oil drilling, saying it "continues to be one part of an overall energy strategy."

"But it's absolutely essential that, going forward, we put in place every necessary safeguard and protection," he said.

This week executives from three oil companies — BP PLC, which was drilling the well, Transocean, which owned the rig, and Halliburton, which was doing cement work to cap the well — testified on Capitol Hill, each trying to blame the other for what may have caused the disaster. Obama decried that scene.

"I did not appreciate what I considered to be a ridiculous spectacle during the congressional hearings into this matter. You had executives of BP and Transocean and Halliburton falling over each other to point the finger of blame at somebody else," the president said.

"The American people could not have been impressed with that display, and I certainly wasn't."

BP hadn't publicly discussed the latest maneuver to stop the leak until the past few days, and went ahead with it only after X-raying the well pipe to make sure it would hold up with the stopper inside, spokesman David Nicholas said. Technicians also had to check for any debris inside that may have been keeping the oil at bay — dislodging it threatened to amplify the geyser.

Philip Johnson, the petroleum engineering professor at the University of Alabama who made the soda bottle-and-cork comparison, said the idea was that a cork stopper by itself would probably be blown off, but a straw would lower the pressure on the cork, allowing the soda (or oil) to pass into another container — in this case a tanker at the surface.

BP has refused to estimate how much of the leak could be siphoned off through the skinny pipe, though Johnson said it could be a significant amount.

If it works, it would mark the first time since the rig exploded that BP has controlled any part of the rogue well. How much oil is actually leaking has become a matter of debate, and Obama said Friday that it was uncertain but that the federal government's response was always geared toward a catastrophic event.

# AWARD

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It was representative of the Pioneer Award they received in honor of the late Bob Steffen, who was raised in the Fordyce area. Wyatt Fraas of the Center for Rural Affairs talked about Steffen, who was a board member for the Center and a long-time farm director at Boys Town. He was very dedicated to organic farming. The Pioneer was created in his memory and is presented each year for extraordinary excellence in rural stewardship.

"Just as Steffen promoted organic farming for years believing in it before anyone else did, so did these strong women build community," Fraas said.

The Center worked with the women when they needed advice on running a non-profit and found other resources to help them realize their dream. The Center linked the St. James Five with the College of St. Mary who helped them with business planning.

Today, the women speak at meetings across the state talking to others interested in finding out how they do what they do and their success. Their positive example gave the Center another reason to nominate for the award.

"It was nice to receive the award," Guy said. "Even after working with us, I guess the Center is still thinking of us at the Marketplace."

The trade show is a gathering place for speakers and networking for any individuals or groups looking at adding value to their business. There are presentations on goal setting and achieving, understanding the trade resources and how to increase the value of a product for a consumer.

"For me, the award reinforced our thought process and was very encourag-

ing," said Mary Rose Pinkelman, who had attended the show in the past to assimilate information from other vendors creating a new market. After all, Pinkelman can see improving marketability makes a small business opportunity a survivor in today's tough times.

"There are five of us and we all head in different directions," Pinkelman said. "We know we want to be entrepreneurs; we have the right ideas and lots of enthusiasm and skills but we needed work in the management area."

The Center did that for the five farm wives, but their dedication to their hometown spurred them to create life where only darkness hovered on the horizon.

"All we wanted to do was preserve the life we have here in rural Nebraska," said Violet Pinkelman. "This was a nice payback and makes what we do all the more worthwhile."

This summer will be a busy one for the five women and all the volunteers they can convince to help them. It's painting time for the 100-year-old mission-style schoolhouse. The Seiler family from Sioux City, Iowa whose mother attended the former school building as a child, offered to help with the painting project. They are pleased to keep their St. James' roots alive and growing.

"If anyone would have told me 30 years ago I would be doing this, I would have told them they were crazy," said Jeanette Pinkelman, mother of 15 children.

"What we do here is more important than money," said Jeanette Pinkelman. "And it seems people are shopping closer to home now."

"The award was such a surprise because we are a small group. It is beautiful and we will be proud to display it."

The Marketplace is open for the season every Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

# Accused Student Impostor Faces Sex Charge

ODESSA, Texas (AP) — Authorities say a 22-year-old man accused of posing as a high school student in Texas is now facing a sexual assault charge. Police in Odessa, Texas, say Guerdwich Montimer turned himself in Friday after a 16-year-old girl reported that she had a sexual rela-

tionship with him last summer when she thought he was 15-year-old Jerry Joseph.

Montimer was originally arrested Tuesday on a misdemeanor charge of failure to identify himself to a police officer. Officials say he posed as a sophomore and helped lead Permian

High School to the state basketball playoffs.

Suspicion was raised after coaches from Florida said they recognized Joseph as Montimer, a 2007 graduate of a Florida high school.

Jail records have no information on an attorney for Montimer.

# PLANT

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year's 17 percent.

The USDA estimates about 75 percent of the total corn acres have been planted, and 26 percent of the soybean crop is in. The average for soybeans for this time of year is 15 percent complete.

But some areas in eastern South Dakota that had flooding problems last year may face challenges yet with getting their crops in.

With corn as the biggest U.S. crop, valued at \$48.6 billion in 2009, followed by soybeans at \$31.8 billion, delays can translate into lost dollars.

South Dakota State University crop specialist Bob Hall said understanding the effect of delayed planting and close communication with the crop insurance agent is necessary when making decisions about late planting and replanting of crops.

Hall said SDSU has conducted research on delayed planting and its effect on crop growth and yield in South Dakota.

After April 27, spring wheat, durum wheat, oats and barley show a steady decline in yield with each later plant date. By May 11, oats and barley lost about 30 bushels per acre yield in trials at the Northeast Research Farm. In the same period, spring wheat and durum fared better, but still lost 10 bushels per acre yield.

In trials at Research Farm, Hall

said 103-day corn holds it yields through a May 17 plant date. But by May 27 yields drop 10 bushels per acre.

He added that "116 day corn yields drop 40 bushels per acre between April 27 and May 27."

Soybeans also show 10 bushels per acre yield drops between planting dates of May 1 and June 14.

Though research is limited, Hall said fact sheets showing average bushels-per-acre day figures for delayed planting of crops in South Dakota can be found on the university's Web site.

Also, Today, gives weather predictions for the planting season at [http://sdces.sdstate.edu/ces\\_website/conferences/coffeeshop](http://sdces.sdstate.edu/ces_website/conferences/coffeeshop) Dennis Today.



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