

# Amoco to drill from artificial ice island in Beaufort Sea

ANCHORAGE (January 6) — Amoco Production Company, acting as operator for itself and other companies, plans to start drilling an exploratory well from a specially constructed ice island in the Beaufort Sea about 100 miles west-northwest of Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, in late February of 1986.

According to Wayne G. Smith, Amoco's Anchorage District Manager, the OCS-Y-0302 No. 1 Mars, in the OCS Sale 71 area, five miles northeast of Cape Halkett, will be drilled to a depth of 8,300 feet in 25 feet of water. A conventional rotary rig will be used to drill the well.

Smith said the ice island will be circular in shape, approximately 950 feet in diameter and extend 20 feet above sea level. The Mars project represents the first exploratory well to be drilled from an island built entirely of spray ice.

The spray ice technique calls for sea water to be pumped through nozzles and sprayed into the air where it forms ice granules that settle on the ocean's

natural ice sheet. The process continues until the ice mass sinks to the ocean floor and is grounded.

Smith noted that logistical support for the Mars project includes an ice airstrip on an existing dry lake bed, and onshore support base and living facilities and the ice island. He pointed out that the peak workforce during drilling will total between 80 people and 90 people.

Drilling and testing of the well will take about 45 days, Smith said. Full clean-up and abandonment is expected to be complete by May 1, 1986. Shortly thereafter, the ice structures will melt, returning both onshore and offshore sites to their natural state.

Amoco acquired 104,362 net Federal acres at OCS Sale 71 in October of 1982 and 33,634 net acres at Alaska State Sale 43 in May of 1984. Amoco Production Company is the exploration and production subsidiary of Amoco Corporation. Amoco's Beaufort Sea operations are conducted out of Anchorage.