170 Delegates Attend FEMME 2013

Organised by Kongsberg Maritime, FEMME is the Forum for Exchange of Mutual Multibeam Experiences. This biennial conference brings together a diverse delegation of Kongsberg Maritime multibeam users who regard it as one of the most rewarding events of its kind on the calendar. FEMME is a truly global affair – this year’s conference, which took place in Boston, USA, from 16 to 19 April, was attended by 170 people from 27 countries.

The main conference was opened by Arnt-Helge Olsen, vice president Subsea Sales at Kongsberg Maritime on Wednesday 17 April 2013 and the audience was treated to an interesting opening address by Larry Mayer, Professor and Director of the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping/NOAA-UNH Joint Hydrographic Center at the University of New Hampshire.

His presentation, titled An ‘Almost Old’ Man’s Look at from Whence We’ve Come and Where We May be Going, looked in-depth at the area of bathymetry and improving data quality. Other topics covered include the growth of ocean mapping applications and how this is tied to backscatter, and water column measurements, whilst asking; “Why can’t we map our own planet as completely as we’ve mapped the moon and Mars?”

A big question certainly, and a presentation that really engaged the audience. Larry also played a part, as one of several joint authors, in the presentation that followed his opening address, when J. Beaudoin from the University of New Hampshire looked at Multibeam Echosounder System Optimization for Water Column Mapping of Undersea Gas Seeps.

Papers with topics from different applications, both traditional and new were presented during the conference and all were at a very high technical level. Topics covered included logging, displaying and processing water column data, also referred to as mid-water column data, and seabed backscatter data. With new more powerful systems and technology the potential and the usage of these data are increasing rapidly, which was highlighted in papers throughout the conference.

A lot of interest was also taken on how to ensure that the quality of the bathymetric survey was in compliance with the IHO S-44 standards, especially on target detections. To achieve this, the importance of good alignment and calibration of all systems was highlighted. This is especially important since the Kongsberg Maritime EM 2040 produces very clean and high resolution data, displaying more and smaller features on the seabed.

“More data and better data quality will have a great impact on the data flow and the production line from logging to finished products,” explains product sales manager Helge Uhlen, Kongsberg Maritime. “Amazing results were presented, from pipeline inspection and shallow waters surveys to deep waters survey from different research projects.”

Regardless of topic, several key aspects tied all presentations together; they were presented by experts to experts, and featured real technical detail that the audience could openly discuss and take away with them to help them in their own work.

In addition to the many customer papers, Kongsberg Maritime presented several new products including the new EM 2040 Compact, which is a small version of the EM 2040. Throughout the conference, Kongsberg Maritime took many requests for new features and improvements to its products, which it considers a key part of events like this.

The next FEMME will take place in Autumn 2015 in Singapore.

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