

Shell Prepares For Arctic Offshore Exploration

Dan Joling, AP

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A spokesman for Shell Alaska says the company will submit an Arctic offshore exploration plan sometime over the next few weeks, but hasn't decided whether it will move forward with drilling next year. Curtis Smith says by email that the company is "putting the building blocks in place" for an upcoming exploration season but hasn't made a final decision. He says if Shell drills in 2014, it will be in the Chukchi (chuk-CHEE') Sea only, and not the Beaufort (BO'-fort) Sea.

The plans were made public during Royal Dutch Shell PLC's third-quarter earnings announcement. Shell drilled in both the Chukchi and the Beaufort in 2012 but suffered serious setbacks, culminating with the grounding of a drill vessel near Kodiak. The company subsequently decided it would not drill in 2013.

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