

Official: Hayward to be replaced

By Harry R. Weber
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW ORLEANS — Gaffe-prone BP Chief Executive Tony Hayward — who incensed many on the Coast by saying he wanted his life back as they struggled with the fallout from the company's massive oil spill — will be replaced, a senior U.S. government official said Sunday.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because an announcement had not been made, was briefed on the decision by a senior BP official late last week.

The government official did not know who will replace Hayward or when it will happen.

One of the most likely successors is BP Managing Director Bob Dudley, who is currently overseeing the British company's spill response.

Earlier Sunday, BP spokesman Toby Odone seemed to downplay media speculation about Hayward's departure, saying he "remains BP's chief executive, and he has the confidence of the board and senior management."

BP's board would have to approve a change in company leadership.

An official announcement could come as early as today.

It's been more than three months since an offshore drilling rig operated by BP exploded off Louisiana on April 20, killing 11 workers and setting off the spill.

A temporary plug has stopped oil from gushing for more than a week now, but before that the busted well had spewed anywhere

from 94 million to 184 million gallons into the Gulf.

Since the explosion, Hayward has made several highly publicized gaffes.

Among them: going to a yacht race while oil washed up on Gulf shores, and uttering the now-infamous: "I want my life back" line.

Oppenheimer & Co. senior analyst Fadel Gheit said in an interview Sunday that it was too bad Hayward's career was derailed by the spill, but "unfortunately he became a sacrificial lamb in a politically charged world."

Dudley would be well-suited to take over, Gheit said, describing him as even-tempered and a good delegator.

It's never an easy time to install new leadership in a company, though, he noted.

"I'm not sure if removing Tony Hayward is going to throw BP's problems away," Gheit said.

U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., said BP's attitude about making things right is more important than who is running it.

"BP, from I think everybody's perspective, made a very bad mistake," she said. "I think what the world expects from BP is an acknowledgment that something was done wrong. I think BP has a long way to go to gain the trust of the people."

The company has already spent roughly \$4 billion on its response to the crisis.

The final tally could be in the tens of billions of dollars.

News that the CEO will depart came as no surprise to people living along the Gulf.

Patrick Shay, 43, sat on a porch

swing of his cottage in Grand Isle on Sunday, his front yard filled with small, white crosses, each bearing the name of sealife or ways of life the oil spill has killed.

"He seems like a pretty self-absorbed person, so I'm not surprised to hear he would walk away in the middle of all this," he said. "If anything it will help. They need to get him out of the way and get this cleaned up."

David Duet, 62, of LaRose, La., filled his ice chest at the grocery store in Grand Isle, where he brings his camper every weekend despite the oil.

"I don't think he's directly responsible for the spill, but he still had to answer for it," said Duet, who worked on oil rigs for more than 22 years. "I can understand the time it took to cap it. I know how hard things are out there."

In New Orleans, Chris Hearn, a 23-year-old security guard, said what's important is getting the oil stopped permanently.

"It doesn't matter who's in charge," he said. "As long as they clean it up, I really could care less. They just need to get it cleaned up because it's affecting all of us down here."

Crews trying to plug the leaky well for good had to stop work late last week because of the threat from Tropical Storm Bonnie, but the effort was back on track as skies cleared Sunday.

A drill rig is expected to reconnect at around midnight to the relief tunnel that will be used to pump in mud and cement to seal the well, and drilling could resume in the next few days.



BP Chief Executive Tony Hayward testifies before a committee in June.

Completion of the relief well that is the best chance to permanently stop the oil now looks possible by mid-August, but retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the government's point man for the spill, said he wouldn't hesitate to order another evacuation based on forecasts similar to the ones for Bonnie. "We have no choice but to start well ahead of time if we think the storm track is going to bring gale force winds, which are 39 mph or above, anywhere close to well site," Allen said.

Allen said officials will spend the next day determining how Bonnie, which did no real damage on shore, affected the area. Oil may have migrated north, and officials are checking to see if boom that was protecting sensitive marshlands was pushed ashore.

Allen said he had not heard whether Hayward is being replaced.

"I've got no knowledge of the inner workings of BP," he said.

Board makes changes

The PLCB hopes to gain revenue

By Kathy Matheson
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW HOPE, Pa. — The state's newest wine and spirits store is bright, modern and airy, but it's not just another pretty space.

The alcohol emporium represents the latest effort by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board to win the hearts and minds of consumers as the recession intensifies talk of privatization.

Over the past few months, the board has unveiled a new retail website, trained employees in customer service, installed wine vending machines in supermarkets and — with the popping of a prosecco cork — opened a state store that incorporates consumer ideas.

Board Chairman P.J. Stapleton said buyers will have a "world-class retail shopping experience" at the store in New Hope, about 30 miles north of Philadelphia.

"This is the store the consumers want," Stapleton said at the grand opening last Thursday.

The new emphasis on customer service rings a little hollow to those who say it simply aims to deflect calls for privatizing the state monopoly on liquor and wine.

Critics have long argued the board should not simultaneously police and promote alcohol, and that customers pay more for fewer choices and less convenience under Pennsylvania's antiquated system.

Such talk has gained traction as the state faces steep budget cuts, said State Benefield, director of policy research for the conservative Commonwealth Foundation.

Rep. Mike Turzai, R-Allegheny, introduced legislation in April to privatize liquor and wine sales, estimating private licenses could generate \$2 billion.

GOP gubernatorial candidate Tom Corbett has said he'd explore the idea.

"Trying to be more customer-friendly is part of their way of saying, 'We don't need to privatize, we're doing a good job,'" Benefield said.



A couple shops at the new store opened by the liquor control board.

Customers seem to have embraced board initiatives like the supermarket wine "kiosks" — essentially high-tech vending machines that enable shoppers to get vino and groceries in one place, instead of making a separate trip to a state store.

Consumers also admired the layout of the store in New Hope, which officials say was designed based on customer surveys and focus groups.

Its wide aisles, hanging lamps, faux wood cabinetry, informational booklets and dedicated space for product tastings are supposed to encourage browsing and enhance the shopping experience.

Eco-friendly aspects include energy-saving lights and no plastic bags. Two more such stores are planned in the coming months for Philadelphia and Harrisburg. Revamping all approximately 620 state stores, which are largely utilitarian spaces, will take at least five years, board Executive Director Joe Conti said.

Board officials did not provide overall prices for the redesign. Conti said utility savings and an expected 5 percent to 10 percent increase in sales — because of the nicer environment — would help offset costs.

Hugh Hoffman, 65, of Wycombe, said customers could "hardly walk down the aisles" at the old state store in New Hope.

Looking around the spacious new store, he said, "the selection compared to the old one is pretty phenomenal."

But Hoffman also noted the prices on some products were sev-

eral dollars higher than in neighboring Delaware.

Greg Walker, 52, of Stockton, N.J., said the staff would need to be knowledgeable about pairing wine and food to get her business.

"It'll depend on the help with the wines," Walker said.

The board employs about 140 wine experts statewide, and Conti said officials are working on a civil service waiver that would allow the hiring of more part-time connoisseurs.

But customer service has long been a key issue.

The board came under fire last year for spending \$174,000 to train employees in retail courtesies such as greeting customers.

On Thursday, Conti said the program has been successful — and a bargain, considering that the agency had budgeted \$1 million for it.

The board's 4,000 employees have had about two dozen sessions of "very intense, well-developed, retail service training," he said.

A WGAL-TV report last week cited three customer complaints about rude employees at a store in Lemoyne even after the training.

Board officials say they are responsive to what little feedback they get, noting they received 1,067 comments on 55 million transactions in 2008-09.

"The PLCB is focused on making every customer experience within our stores, on our toll-free hot line or online, the best it can be, every time," the agency said in a statement Friday. "We leave the issue of privatization to the Legislature and the governor to decide."

County commences plans for memorials

By The Associated Press

SOMERSET, Pa. — Officials and residents in western Pennsylvania's Somerset County teamed up to mark two events that put the county in the national spotlight within a year of each other — the crash of an airliner hijacked by terrorists and the dramatic rescue of nine trapped miners.

The National Park Service and Queecreek Mine Rescue Foundation held back-to-back events at the scenes of the Sept. 11, 2001 plane crash in Stonycreek Township and the mine rescue eight years ago.

U.S. Rep. Mark Critz said residents of the county felt they had taken a one-two punch when the first word came that an underground deluge had trapped nine miners.

"The folks in this area did think, when the mine disaster happened, 'Oh, my, what are we going to be known as for the rest of our lives? The place of disasters?'" Critz said.

But that all changed when rescuers hauled the ninth miner back to the surface in a narrow yellow capsule.

"I guess the saving of the nine miners was reaffirming that we're in this together, and when we pull together, great things can happen," Critz said.

At the Dormel Farm near Somerset, Bill Arnold spoke about the efforts of volunteers and fundraisers that have

helped start a visitor education center near the 240-foot rescue shaft.

Blaine Mayhugh, one of the rescued miners, said the event coming after the attacks "brought a lot of people together and put our county on the map."

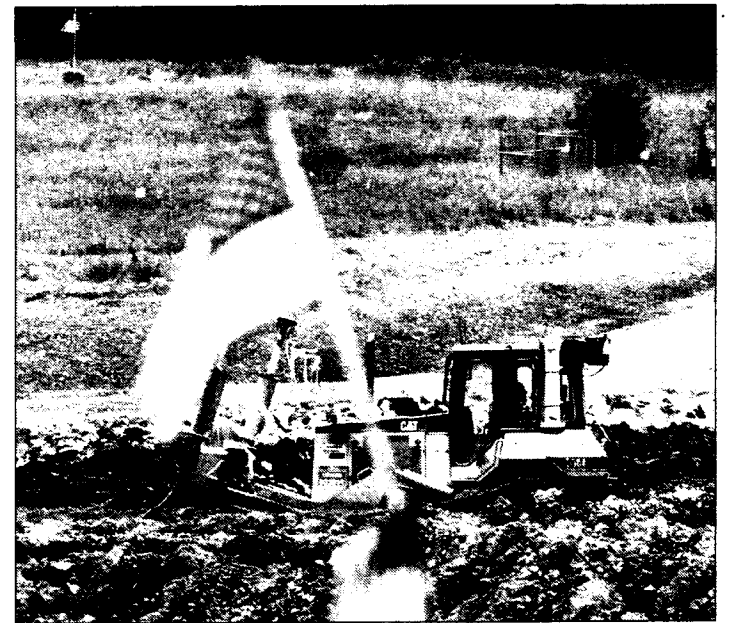
He has a job serving windmills, working far above the ground rather than beneath the surface.

At the Flight 93 crash site, manager Jeff Reinbold said the National Park Service and the National Park Service and the National Park Service have raised \$15 million in donations, triggering a matching amount of federal help.

He said that makes up half of the \$60 million needed to complete work at the planned 1,000-acre site and protect the surrounding 1,200 acres from dramatic change.

By the 10th anniversary of the terror attacks that toppled the World Trade Center towers and damaged the Pentagon, as well as the struggle aboard Flight 93 that likely prevented a fourth attack, a plaza at the edge of the crash zone will bear the names of the passenger and crew, he said.

A future phase is to include a walkway and visitor center, and later a 93-foot Tower of the Voices with wind chimes reminding visitors of the conversations between passengers and crew and their loved ones who alerted those aboard the aircraft to the hijackers' plans and prompted them to take action.



Construction has begun for both memorials in Somerset County.

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