

# Drilling Deep With ODBC

**By Amy Petré Hill**

Last winter, after months of planning, mapping, drilling, and seismic analysis in a frigid Wyoming prairie, the geologists at KCS Mountain Resources, Inc. finally found their buried treasure—a sea of liquid gold-oil. For these KCS scientists, their mission was over and it was time to head home to the relative warmth of the KCS headquarters. But for Jim Greenway, MIS Director for KCS, and his team, the work had just begun.

The oil and gas industry is one of the most heavily regulated in the United States. Every move made on this new oil field had to be meticulously recorded, archived, and formatted for the hundreds of reports required by federal agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the oil and gas regulators of Wyoming. Using the BASIS ODBC Driver™, Greenway was able to pull all the essential oil field data into a myriad of reporting tools, prepare the pounds of paper required by the regulators, and have the reports done and in the mail weeks before government deadlines.



Since its founding in 1995, KCS Mountain Resources, Inc., a subsidiary of KCS Energy, has been using the latest technology to find oil and gas in the Rocky Mountain states running from North Dakota to Utah. The company has been very successful and has grown quickly from 45 to 120 employees in only two years. As KCS has grown, so have the demands upon Greenway and the corporate database he oversees.

Greenway started the company with a local-area network (LAN) made up of one Compaq server hosting BBxPROGRESSION/4 Data Servers® for Novell NetWare, 14 PC workstations, and a customized oil and gas software package created in BBxPROGRESSION/4® by Metro Systems. The system has since expanded to 3 Compaq servers and 90 workstations. Because reports required by the different government agencies were so diverse and exacting, Greenway found that the company had to utilize three different reporting tools—Access, Excel and Crystal Reports—to get the essential paperwork done. For Greenway, the real nightmare was lack of an automated process that would send new or revised BBx® data to all of these reporting tools. Data had to be pulled out of the database and then hand-keyed into each of the different reporting programs.

"It's taken more than a year just to create all the necessary reports for the company. In fact, my staff and I are still working on them," Greenway said. "On top of that, people were having to manually input the same data over and over, in programs like Access, to get the reports out. It was incredibly inefficient."

Then Greenway got his hands on the BASIS ODBC Driver and everything changed. "All of a sudden, our office throughput just

jumped. Now we could key in the information just once, and the data would be automatically propagated through all the reporting programs. This is very important because we continue to grow-we are adding another seven workstations this month-and in six months we are going to start migrating from Novell NetWare to Visual PRO/5™ on Windows NT. The BASIS ODBC Driver is helping us handle this."

When asked if there have been any drawbacks to using the BASIS ODBC Driver, Greenway answered with a firm, "no," and promptly commended ODBC technology to all developers. "It's not just the BASIS ODBC Driver, but ODBC in general, that will be used more and more in the future," he says. "Before using ODBC technology, you were really re-inventing the wheel every time you did a report. But now, you can drastically improve your company throughput. I have found it to be a very powerful tool. I recommend it to everyone."