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KUWAIT OIL COMPANY RECEIVES NAUI ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT AWARD (JULY 2007)

In February, representatives from NAUI Worldwide traveled to Kuwait to recognize the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) for their Marine Colony Project and to announce their receiving of the NAUI Environmental Enrichment Award. The Marine Colony Project, organized, supported, and promoted by the Kuwait Oil Company, is undertaking to mitigate damages to the marine environment and habitats in Kuwait through the installation of an extensive system of reef balls.

Three members of NAUI were invited to Kuwait for the special banquet and ceremony marking the placing of the one thousandth reef ball. Representing NAUI were Keith Sliman from the NAUI Board of Directors, Randy Shaw from NAUI Worldwide Headquarters in Tampa, and Michael Tong, president of NAUI Services Pacific Rim. The public announcement of the award was also made at the banquet. The award will be presented at the NAUI Awards Ceremony at DEMA 2007 in Orlando, Florida, in October.

The reef ball project was carried out by teams of Kuwaiti divers with logistical support from the KOC. Installation of the final reef ball was shown at the banquet. It has since been announced that the Marine Colony Project was so successful, both environmentally and from the standpoint of raising public awareness, that it has been extended to the installation of 9,000 additional reef balls in selected offshore areas.

The Marine Colony Project was spearheaded and directed by Wafa'a Al-Huraiibi. Wafa'a, a member of the Kuwait Oil Company diving team, became a NAUI Course Director in November 2006 and is NAUI's first female Course Director in the Middle East. She regularly gives courses on environmental protection in area schools and colleges.

One of the expressed visions of the KOC's overall mission statement is: "Health Safety and Environment: Drilling will have to perform these activities safely and ensure good protection of the environment (Land and Offshore)."

Speaking at the banquet for NAUI Worldwide, Keith Sliman said: "The environment is a key element in the future of our planet. It is for this reason that the National Association of Underwater Instructors happily celebrates activities such as this which foster the well-being of our underwater world.

"As a member of the Board of Directors, it is my extreme pleasure to represent

NAUI in commemoration of this very special event. I wish to extend my congratulations to Kuwaiti Divers who have participated in this event, and especially to the Kuwait Oil Company who have sponsored this and allowed NAUI to be a part.

“It is my pleasure to announce that in recognition of its ongoing efforts to protect our oceans and seas, the KOC has been awarded NAUI’s Environmental Enrichment Award that will be presented at the DEMA show in Florida in October 2007. This is NAUI’s highest award regarding the environment.”

“If you look at the efforts in Kuwait by the dive teams and the Kuwaiti members who are teaching and instructing here, per capita, per area, there is more protection and care taken here than any place else.”

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