

## VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

“Hurricanes don’t  
stop SkyBitz.”

**Don Dunbar,**  
Manager of Marine Electronics,  
Fugro Chance



# FUGRO CHANCE

## SITUATION.

Fugro Chance Inc. is an offshore survey company working with oil drilling rigs and production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. The company uses SkyBitz to track its equipment on land and at sea.

“The Mineral Management Services (part of the U.S. Department of the Interior) maintains blocks of territory in the gulf. Each block is a certain size. An oil company looks at the data from geophysical companies and leases a block. They decide to put a rig at a certain location; that’s when they hire us,” explained Don Dunbar, Manager of Marine Electronics for Fugro Chance. “We survey the location they specify and keep them off any pipelines or hazards that may be out there in that area,” Dunbar said.

## SOLUTION.

On land, Fugro Chance operates a fleet of pickup trucks used by two-man crews. The crews are dispatched to various ports along the gulf, anywhere from Texas to Florida. Their pickup trucks have been equipped with SkyBitz for more than three years.

“We installed them ourselves,” Dunbar said. “There’s very little maintenance.” Crews may leave from one port but come back through another, Dunbar explained, so crews sometimes end up separated from vehicles. SkyBitz lets Fugro Chance know where all the pickups are so management can let an incoming crew know if a pickup is waiting at a particular port.

And then there’s the infamous gulf weather. “Hurricanes don’t stop SkyBitz. So if one comes into the gulf, we know where all the trucks are. We go grab them and bring them back,” Dunbar said.

Pickup trucks are just part of the picture. Fugro Chance crews in the gulf use specialized equipment for their surveying work. That equipment is moved in special shipping containers which can ride in the back of a pickup and be transferred to vessels and oil rigs. At any given time, an individual container can be located anywhere from company headquarters in Lafayette, La., to an oil rig or crew boat somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico. Those equipment containers, nicknamed “Silver Bullets,” are also equipped with SkyBitz Mobile Terminals.

## RESULTS.

SkyBitz coverage doesn’t end where the water begins. Unlike many other tracking systems, SkyBitz communicates over an L-band, geostationary satellite, 22,000 miles from earth. A geostationary satellite circles the earth in synch with the earth’s rotation; it stays in the same relative position in the sky. So a SkyBitz Mobile Terminal is never out of sight, or beyond communication range – whether it’s afloat in the Gulf of Mexico or rolling down a remote highway, far from the nearest cellular tower. And when Katrina blew down the cell towers – SkyBitz kept on working.

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For Fugro Chance, those “Silver Bullets” are as visible on the Gulf of Mexico as they are on a Texas Interstate, and they are always within communication range.

“We have probably \$50,000 worth of equipment in each box. We don’t want that sitting on a dock someplace or blowing around in a storm. We use SkyBitz so we know where they are,” Dunbar said.