NEWS RELEASE

Patterson-UTI Reports Drilling Days for December 2006

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SNYDER, Texas, Jan. 4 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Patterson-UTI Energy, Inc. (Nasdaq: PTEN) today reported that for the month of December 2006 the Company had a total of 8,619 drilling days, or an average of 278 drilling rigs operating, including an average of 267 rigs in the U.S. and 11 rigs in Canada. For the three months ended December 2006, the Company reported a total of 26,685 drilling days, or an average of 290 drilling rigs operating, including an average of 278 rigs in the U.S. and 12 rigs in Canada.

Drilling days reported in the Company's monthly announcements represent the number of days in which a Patterson-UTI drilling rig was moving or operating under a drilling contract. This total will differ from monthly drilling days considered in determining revenues and expenses for financial reporting purposes because the Company uses the completed contract method of accounting on turnkey contracts for financial statement purposes. Under the completed contract method, revenues and expenses, along with the related drilling days associated with turnkey contracts, are recorded in the period in which the turnkey contract is completed.

Additionally, the Company cautioned that numerous factors in addition to drilling days can impact the Company's operating results and that a particular trend in the number of drilling days may or may not indicate a trend in the Company's financial performance. The Company intends to continue providing monthly updates on drilling days shortly after the end of each month.

About Patterson-UTI

Patterson-UTI Energy, Inc. provides onshore contract drilling services to exploration and production companies in North America. The Company owns 403 land-based drilling rigs that operate primarily in the oil and natural gas

producing regions of Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and western Canada. Patterson-UTI Energy, Inc. is also engaged in the businesses of pressure pumping services and drilling and completion fluid services. Additionally, the Company has an exploration and production business.

Statements made in this press release which state the Company's or management's intentions, beliefs, expectations or predictions for the future are forward-looking statements. It is important to note that actual results could differ materially from those discussed in such forward-looking statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially include, but are not limited to, declines in oil and natural gas prices that could adversely affect demand for the Company's services, and their associated effect on day rates, rig utilization and planned capital expenditures, adverse industry conditions, difficulty in integrating acquisitions, demand for oil and natural gas, and ability to retain management and field personnel. Additional information concerning factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those in the forward-looking statements is contained from time to time in the Company's SEC filings. Copies of these filings may be obtained by contacting the Company or the SEC.

SOURCE Patterson-UTI Energy, Inc.
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