Keeping the Community Informed

The companies operating in the Peace River area are committed to sharing information with the community and continue to address concerns about air quality, emissions and traffic.

Winter 2016

Shell Canada, Murphy Oil, Baytex Energy and PennWest Exploration operate in the Peace River area and are committed to listening to their neighbours and addressing concerns about air quality, emissions and traffic. Representatives from these companies, as well as Tervita, have formed an Industry Steering Committee to provide direction and resources at the senior leadership level for the collective work of the companies involved in looking at how to improve air quality, reduce emissions and reduce traffic impacts.

On October 27 Shell Canada announced that after very careful consideration, we would be halting the Carmon Creek Project. This means that project activity will wind down for the foreseeable future – with drilling and construction stopping. Day-to-day project activities have now shifted to the safe wind-down and decommissioning of Carmon Creek – as well as determining the future plans for the Peace River Complex and the Cliffdale Battery.

Peace River Area Operators' Committee

Chair and Facilitator: David Hill

The "Best Practices Working Group" has changed its name to the "Peace River Operator's Committee". Committee members felt that their mandate went beyond the original objectives of developing "Best Practices" for the Three Creeks area and into a wider review of operations. The committee, made up of representatives from Baytex, PennWest, Murphy, Shell, and Tervita, has continued to meet throughout 2015 and plans to continue into 2016.

One of the committee's activities over the past year was providing the regulator with a field tour of some representative facilities of the member companies to assist in the development of legislated requirements to reduce emissions for trucking and fugitive sources of emissions. The tour was an effective way to engage with the Regulator and promote understanding of the challenges faced both by the Industry and the Regulator.

The committee also reviewed the field studies conducted by Clearstone and reviewed some of the emissions data that emphasized the critical areas for emission controls.

A significant achievement of the year was the final construction and commissioning of the 840 road extension to provide more efficiency for truck routing.

The committee is looking into ways to reduce or eliminate emissions from operations and we have reviewed some new techniques and technologies. We expect to be able to share more details of this work in 2016.

Air Quality Working Group

Chair: Allison Fisher, Shell Canada
Facilitator: Karla Reesor

Peace River Area Monitoring Program Committee

Facilitator: Karla Reesor

The Peace River Area Monitoring Program (PRAMP) was launched by the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) in January, 2015. The PRAMP has built on the work of the previous Three Creeks Multi-stakeholder Air Monitoring Subcommittee. The region covered by PRAMP now includes the areas of Three Creeks, Reno, Seal and Walrus.

Participating members on the PRAMP Committee include the local industry operators, AER, Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency (AEMERA), Northern Sunrise County, Town of Fahler, Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, First Nations, Métis and community representatives. The program provides foundational air monitoring data and information for the Peace River area oil sands region to assess trends in air quality across the region, communicate results, evaluate effectiveness of emissions controls, and verify that air quality is at acceptable levels and that emissions residents are exposed to are below toxic thresholds.

A new continuous air monitoring station has been operating in the Reno area since January 2015, along with the two existing community stations in the Three Creeks area. Each station monitors meteorology, total hydrocarbons (THC), nonmethane hydrocarbons (NMHC), sulphur dioxide (SO2) and total reduced sulphur (TRS). When hydrocarbons exceed a threshold, canister sampling is used to detect volatile organic compounds. Procedures for using the equipment and handling the canister samples continue to be reviewed and updated to ensure sample integrity is maintained and that appropriate and consistent analyses can be completed.

So far in 2015, PRAMP has completed a number of studies to facilitate development of the program and the identification of opportunities for future improvements:

- Field Measurements of Heavy Oil Truck Loading and Tank Cleaning Activities in Three Creeks, completed by Clearstone Engineering (2015);
- Inventory of Atmospheric Emissions from Heavy Oil Production Facilities in the Three Creeks Area, completed by Clearstone Engineering (2015);
- Study of Ambient Hydrocarbon Concentrations in the Three Creeks Area, completed by AEP (2015);
- Peace River Air Monitoring Network Assessment, completed by Sonoma Technology Inc. (2015); and
- Peace River Area Ambient Air Monitoring Plan, drafted by AER/PRAMP (2015).

Currently, the PRAMP Committee is engaging with AEMERA to leverage future financial and outreach support through the AEMERA Oil Sands Monitoring Program. Enhancing communication with the Peace River area community is a key area of focus for the PRAMP Committee. Watch for regular reports from the PRAMP Committee in 2016 that will provide analyses of the air monitoring data.

Positive trends have been observed to date in hydrocarbon monitoring within the region. With new regulations on venting, THC and NMHC measurements have decreased. Also, odour complaints to the AER have decreased and the number of canister events has decreased. The PRAMP is focused on continuous improvement and work is currently underway to develop the 2016 operating plan.

The Vision of the PRAMP is that the Peace River area will have air free of emissions and odours from heavy oil and bitumen operations that affect human health.

PennWest BAYTEX ENERGY CORP. MURPHY OIL CORPORATION

For additional information, please contact the facilitators for the working groups:

Dave Hill / davidhilladr@gmail.com / 403 923-2824

Karla Reesor / karlareesor@movingfwd.ca / 403 807-2995