

CALGARY LEADS THE WAY WITH CLIMATE CHANGE ACCORD

By Saad Bashir

In October 2009, Calgary Economic Development and the City of Calgary hosted 15 of the world's top energy cities as part of the 2009 World Energy Cities Partnership Annual General Meeting. More than 100 government representatives and business delegates from around the world gathered at the Westin Calgary for three days of events, meetings and networking.

The World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) is an international organization that brings together global energy regions for increased collaboration between governments and businesses. WECP cities, their people and their businesses will be at the centre of the global transition from a hydrocarbon-based energy economy to one focused on emerging energy technologies and leading-edge conservation practices.

As part of the official program, delegates were treated to an overview of City of Calgary operations, a panel discussion focusing on education and research, networking lunches with high level government and top industry guest speakers, and two evening networking events at the Calgary Tower and Heritage Park. In addition to this, two new elements were introduced to the 2009 agenda:

1. Focus on International Business – Calgary introduced a significant focus on attracting international business delegates to meet with local Calgary firms for business partnership opportunities, as well as with other visiting international firms. The intention of expanding the AGM to include business delegates was to promote Calgary as a growing international hub of energy business development.

The business component of WECP provided an excellent opportunity for local Calgary companies to seek joint venture partners from countries that are potential export markets. It also enabled major Calgary based exploration and production firms, as well as large engineering companies, to evaluate possible new suppliers of various products and technologies.

Some highlights of the business sessions include:

Speed Networking Event – An opportunity for international business delegates to have quick introductions with major Canadian energy players like Imperial Oil, Nexen, Husky, SNC Lavalin, EnCana, Enbridge, etc.

One to One Introductions – Prior to the international delegates arriving in Calgary, matchmaking was performed with local Calgary firms based on common areas of interest. 50+ such meetings took place over the course of WECP.

Site Visits – A couple of unique manufacturing facilities were showcased for Chinese and African business delegates to observe a sample Calgary's manufacturing expertise.

2. Calgary Climate Change Accord of the WECP Cities– 9 member cities signed a landmark agreement to formalize their commitment to reducing greenhouse gases for their municipal organizations and broader communities, as well as encouraging action and leadership on climate change. Specifically, it calls for policies, plans and operations that reduce the GHG emissions generated by their activities by a minimum of 20 per cent by 2020, with a further minimum reduction of 80 per cent by 2050, using 2005 levels as a baseline. The Accord is consistent with, and supports, the emerging agreement targets of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15) to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009. The Accord urges world leaders gathering in Copenhagen to establish new targets for GHG reduction in an ambitious global agreement that will safeguard people, societies and the planet from the effects of climate change. The goal of the Copenhagen meeting is to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

These two unique elements of the 2009 AGM have greatly assisted in putting WECP on the energy map in a big way and have gone a long way towards maturing the organization and its activities. The successful planning and execution of the 2009 WECP AGM has also demonstrated Calgary's leadership and drive to become the global centre for all things energy – a goal set forth by the City of Calgary in its 10 year economic development strategy.

The 2010 WECP AGM will take place in Perth, Australia October 27-29, 2010.