Alberta Partners Launch Oil and Gas Career Pathway Program

CALGARY, Alberta (March 9, 2005) – EnCana Corporation announced today a joint partnership with SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology), CAREERS: the Next Generation, South Eastern Alberta Youth Career Development and Alberta Education to create Canada's first Oil and Gas Production Field Operator Career Pathway program, targeted to high school students interested in pursuing education and training in the oil and gas industry.

"The pilot program provides an excellent career exploration prospect for youth, while helping meet the labour demands of the oil and gas industry," says Jeff Wojahn, Executive Vice-President & President, Canadian Plains Region. "The industry needs trained, educated and experienced individuals and offers lucrative employment in rural regions. We're proud to support this initiative that aims to create a template that can be adopted in other regions where EnCana operates."

The Program, targeted to Grades 10 through 12 in South Eastern Alberta, combines a distance learning application with field work, resulting in an Oil and Gas Production Field Operator certification from SAIT following successful course completion.

Students will also receive the opportunity to attend the EnCana Energy Camp at SAIT and compete for summer employment internships with EnCana Production Field Operator mentors.

"Over 3450 Albertans are employed in the Petroleum, Gas and Chemical Process Operators occupational group, which is expected to grow up to .5% each year from now until 2008 in Alberta. Additional job openings will be created by employment turnover as members of the baby boom generation retire over the next five to ten years," according to Vivian Haland, Coordinator, South Eastern Alberta Partners for Youth Development.

"Fifty-two students, nine of whom are females, are participating in the program, which includes 31 students from the Medicine Hat area and 21 from the Brooks area. Eleven out of the 14 schools in the region, incorporating five school divisions, are participating in this pathway," added Haland.

South Eastern Alberta Partners for Youth Career Development is a multi-stakeholder group based in Medicine Hat and responsible for programs assisting local students with career transitions. The organization meets the needs of local business and industry by engaging youth through workplace internships in the trades, health services, the oil and gas industry and career preparation within the local region. **http://www.nextgen.org/communities/partnerships.html**

CAREERS: The Next Generation is a unique industry-driven private/public partnership dedicated to the career development of Alberta's youth in order to provide a continuous supply of skilled and motivated people to meet industry needs today and in the future. The organization is a proven entity with a solid track record of strong performance and impressive results. **www.nextgen.org**

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Alberta Education is responsible for kindergarten to Grade 12 programs in the province of Alberta. Alberta Education, through its leadership and work with stakeholders, ensures that learners are prepared for lifelong learning, work and citizenship to contribute to a democratic, knowledge-based and prosperous society. Alberta's 20-year plan includes a *Leading in Learning* pillar that ensures government's goal for the basic education system is to give students of all ages the opportunity to excel and achieve their full potential. Government is committed to ensuring the accessibility, quality and affordability of the basic education system. **www.education.gov.ab.ca**

As Canada's leading polytechnic, **SAIT** is world-renowned for its training expertise and is the leading provider of skilled workers to the energy sector and other industries. Instructors deliver industry-ready graduates through certificate and diploma programs, applied degrees, apprenticeship programs, continuing education courses, and customized training for employee upgrading and professional development. Employer partnerships ensure SAIT provides the high-tech skills and knowledge-based training required by industry and students alike. **www.sait.ca**

EnCana Corporation is North America's largest natural gas producer and a leading developer of oilsands. EnCana focuses on contributing to the strength and sustainability of the communities in which it is privileged to operate. In 2004, EnCana invested more than C$15 million in these communities, and expects to contribute an additional C$15 million in 2005. EnCana subscribes to the Imagine Canada program, which sets a benchmark for corporate giving at one percent of pre-tax profits. **www.encana.com**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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