

ACE 2010 in Calgary will focus on Energy and Environment

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By Mark Lowey

The focus will be on western Canada's challenges and opportunities on the path to clean energy at the Air & Waste Management Association's Annual Conference & Exhibition (ACE 2010), June 22-25, in Calgary, Alberta.

Alberta's energy industry, from the upstream oil and gas sector to the province's vast oilsands, will be in the spotlight at ACE 2010, whose theme is "Energy and the Environment." Speakers also will look at alternative energy sources such as renewable and nuclear energy, and at the environmental, policy and regulatory issues associated with energy production and use – whatever the energy source. Building on the conference theme, the technical program will explore a range of issues, including the future of fossil fuels, alternative energy solutions, and greenhouse gas emissions management, innovation and technology.

Joe Lukacs, Chair of the Calgary conference, recalls attending his first A&WMA conference in San Francisco about 50 years ago, when he was a young engineer just starting out in what he calls the pollution-control business. "I went to this conference and in one week I just learned so much. All the people who are the key people – the decision-makers, policy-makers, the movers and shakers – are all at this conference. It brings together all the different sectors of the environmental community that move the environmental knowledge and the solutions forward."

It is befitting for Calgary – known as Canada's "energy capital" – to host ACE 2010, which is expected to attract upwards of 2,400 delegates to the Calgary Telus Convention Centre, Lukacs says. The city is known as Canada's "energy capital" and has a strategic plan to become "the global centre for all things energy."

Most of Canada's oil and gas production companies, major pipeline operators, oilfield service and drilling firms, and energy-related engineering and consulting firms are located in southern Alberta's "foothills city." Calgary is headquarters to major North American pipeline and distribution companies such as TransCanada Corporation, Enbridge, Terasen Pipelines and Alliance Pipeline.

Canada's largest concentration of investor-owned electric power generation companies are based in Calgary. These companies produce electric power for millions of customers from sources as diverse as coal, natural gas, hydro, biomass and wind.

Canada's national energy regulator, the National Energy Board, has its headquarters in the city, as do provincial regulators the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board, the Alberta Utilities Commission and the Alberta Natural Resources Conservation Board. Several research and technology facilitation organizations focused on energy and the environment are located in Calgary, including the Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy at the University of Calgary, the Canadian Energy Research Institute, and Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada.

"No other industry in the country is as highly concentrated as Canada's energy sector: the decisions made in downtown Calgary affect multi-billion-dollar projects in Alberta, Canada and around the world. This concentration makes Calgary a global leader in all aspects of energy: project design, exploration, production, finance, processing, transportation, marketing and

management,” according to a profile of Calgary’s energy sector by Calgary Economic Development.

Calgary’s employment is focused in the financial, scientific, technical, professional, engineering and high-tech service sectors that serve the energy industry, with much of the city’s employment growth focused in professional services.

Calgary is also home to the Sustainable and Renewable Energy (SURE) industry group, which encompasses 40 local companies working in wind energy, solar, biofuel, hydro, environmental technologies and waste management.

“Alberta is one of the major energy producers in the world,” Lukacs notes. Because of this, the province is also Canada’s largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions. The fine balance between developing Alberta’s abundant energy resources while ensuring environmental stewardship will be front-and-centre at ACE 2010, Lukacs says.

“The international community is coming to Calgary. Here is an excellent opportunity in which we can put our best foot forward and show the world what we’re doing in environmental technologies and regulations. There are many areas in which Alberta is an international leader.”

ACE 2010 will include about 160 sessions and more than 500 papers. New for 2010, the “Mega Poster Session” will feature more than 100 posters. Hundreds of exhibitors will display the latest in environmental technology and innovation. There are also fun social and networking events, and professional development courses taught by leading industry instructors.

On Tuesday morning, June 22, the plenary session will set the political framework for the management of energy development, environmental stewardship, and a strong economy. Federal Environment Minister Jim Prentice and Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach are scheduled to speak, along with CEOs from Canada’s largest energy corporations.

On Thursday morning, June 24, the plenary session will focus on “Transforming North American Energy Systems.” Six speakers, including representatives from various energy sectors, will each make presentations and then form a panel to engage in a ‘town hall’ style discussion with conference delegates. Panel moderators will be Heather Kennedy, Assistant Deputy Minister, Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat in the Government of Alberta, and David Layzell, Executive Director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy at the University of Calgary.

Lukacs says the Calgary organizing committee also hopes to present an “Alberta Pavilion” at the exhibition to showcase environmental technologies and companies working in the province. Suncor Energy Inc. will be coordinating a trip for delegates to its oilsands mining operation in the Athabasca oilsands region in northern Alberta.

One of the greatest energy-and-environment challenges of the 21st century is that most energy production and usage results in greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming and climate change, Lukacs says. “Alberta is part of the solution in meeting the world’s energy needs. But we’re also part of the problem because we produce carbon dioxide that goes into the atmosphere. There are other parts of the world that produce as much or much more CO₂ than we do. But we have to take our share of the responsibility.”

Along with discovering that Alberta takes its energy- and-environment responsibilities seriously, Lukacs invites ACE 2010 delegates to enjoy themselves in a cosmopolitan urban centre of more than one million people within an hour’s drive of the majestic Rocky Mountains. *Mark Lowey is a member of the Calgary Organizing Committee for ACE 2010 and the communications director at the Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy at the University of Calgary.*