



APEGGA
The Association of
Professional Engineers, Geologists
and Geophysicists of Alberta

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APEGGA President Addresses Mega-project Overruns

Edmonton – At a speech to the Fort McMurray Branch of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA), president of the 40,000 member-strong regulatory association, Mike Smyth, P.Eng., spoke to a crowd of both members and newly-inducted members, on the issue of cost overruns on mega-projects in Alberta.

“We have only to read some of the headlines of late to know that there is some concern with cost overruns on mega-projects such as the oil-sands. With overruns in the billions of dollars you can understand the concern,” says Smyth.

“As an engineer, I would just love to jump in, grab the problem by the horns with my own two hands, and wrestle it to the ground. There are lots of things you could work on. Scope definition, scope growth, labour availability and productivity, estimating, contracting strategy, execution strategy, and project management as a whole, are just a few of the things that would be on the list.

“Most of the overruns have come in the field with a large increase in field labour person-hours. Bad productivity is cited as the cause but that is misleading because bad productivity is a symptom of the underlying larger problem – construction management.

“We need to do a better job of managing these projects, that much is clear. To that end, APEGGA has initiated dialogue with industry representatives and will continue to do so in forums such as this one. It’s our role as leaders in the practice of the professions in Alberta.”

Smyth also presided over the induction of 32 new professional engineers who join the 752 other professional engineers and geoscientists who are APEGGA members in the Fort McMurray area.

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