

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Suncor Energy recognizes operational excellence leaders at awards ceremony

Calgary, Alberta (March 19, 2009) – Suncor Energy Inc. showcased the best of the best at its President’s Operational Excellence Awards on March 17. The event recognized employees and contractors who showed exceptional safety leadership, environmental excellence and commitment to health and wellness in 2008.

Throughout the evening, a recurring theme emerged: award winners had embraced the opportunity to find ways to operate more efficiently or cost-effectively and sought creative solutions to problems.

“We need to focus on operational excellence now more than ever – it’s the key to making sure we get the most out of our existing assets,” said Rick George, Suncor’s president and chief executive officer. “Our future depends on our ability to operate all facets of our business in a safe, reliable manner that also respects the environment and people.”

People across Suncor are coming up with ideas, innovations and solutions that are producing tangible results, such as reduced costs, improved production, improved environmental performance and safer operations – all based on continuously improving operating procedures and processes.

“I think it’s vital to recognize and celebrate those team members who help us achieve improved reliability and operational effectiveness. They inspire others with their expertise and are key contributors to Suncor’s culture of excellence,” said George.

The program’s two top awards recognize world-class safety performance by Suncor employees and contractors. The employee award went to Suncor’s Oil Sands Extraction group, which further improved its safety performance by engaging and involving employees and increasing their commitment to safety. The contractor award went to Ledcor Projects Inc., which elevated their commitment to safety at Suncor’s oil sands facility by developing a comprehensive training and orientation program for new workers.

This year’s 29 award recipients were chosen by a panel of Suncor judges from a field of almost 130 nominees. Suncor launched the annual President’s Operational Excellence Awards in 2002 as part of a company-wide initiative to eliminate occupational illness and injuries. The awards program was later expanded to include recognition for environmental excellence and health and wellness commitment.

NOTE FOR EDITORS: See Backgrounder below for information about award recipients and the communities in which they live and work.

Suncor Energy Inc. is an integrated energy company headquartered in Calgary, Alberta. Suncor’s oil sands business, located near Fort McMurray, Alberta, extracts and upgrades oil sands and markets refinery feedstock and diesel fuel, while operations throughout western Canada produce natural gas. Suncor operates a refining and marketing business in Ontario with retail distribution under the Sunoco brand. U.S.A. downstream assets include pipeline and refining operations in Colorado and Wyoming and

retail sales in the Denver area under the Phillips 66® brand. Suncor's common shares (symbol: SU) are listed on the Toronto and New York stock exchanges.

Suncor Energy (U.S.A.) Inc. is an authorized licensee of the Phillips 66® brand and marks in the state of Colorado. Sunoco in Canada is separate and unrelated to Sunoco in the United States, which is owned by Sunoco, Inc. of Philadelphia.

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For more information about Suncor Energy Inc. please visit our web site at www.suncor.com .

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Backgrounder

Suncor Energy President's Operational Excellence Awards

Recipients of this year's President's Operational Excellence Awards for safety leadership, environmental excellence and health and wellness commitment were:

Fort McMurray, Alberta

Bonnie Semeniuk, owner, Bonnie's Rapid Delivery. Thanks to her leadership, Bonnie's team traveled approximately 125,000 kilometres and handled more than 500,000 pieces of mail without an occupational injury or traffic violation.

Don Schoendorfer, Aecon, was responsible for overseeing trades workers on several projects at Suncor's oil sands facility, including mining, extraction, upgrading and downstream. During this time, his teams achieved 118,000 hours without a first aid, medical aid, or lost-time incident.

Randy Young, Suncor, is highly respected for his leadership and dedication to safety. Often working in difficult conditions and interacting with workers and contractors at all levels, his commitment to safety is reflected in his area's 2008 safety performance of zero recordable incidents.

Colin Butt, Suncor. Colin Butt's contributions and continuous efforts toward project goals led the Steepbank Extraction Plant team to substantially improve their safety record. Under his leadership, the project's safety performance improved significantly in 2008.

NorCan Electric Inc. set out to improve safety performance with a zero injuries target for the year. Through strong communications, commitment, and a proactive approach, they completed this goal while working more than 322,000 hours.

Bird Voyageur team. Proactive management of hazards and risks proved successful for Bird during the 17-hour continuous pour of the coker concrete foundation for Suncor's Voyageur project. The continuous pour was technically difficult but thanks to Bird's meticulous attention to safety, it was completed with zero recordable injuries.

Major Projects Integration Turnover Team continued the commissioning and start-up of the Millennium Coker Unit and the Millennium Vacuum Unit full capacity projects. The team achieved zero recordable injuries and just four first aids over more than 200,000 hours, despite complex activities within an operating plant environment, often under adverse winter conditions.

Firebag Construction Management Team stewarded construction work on six separate projects at Suncor's in-situ bitumen extraction facility, representing over 5.7 million hours of work. The team successfully managed multiple safety hazards and issues, put significant effort into fostering continuous improvement, and recognized safety performance achievements throughout the year.

Temporary Foreign Worker Committee implemented the safe mobilization and engagement of non-English speaking workers in the coker fabrication shop at the construction site of Voyageur. The team addressed complexity of issues, hazards and risks in a competent and sustainable manner. This team set the standard for future initiatives of this kind.

Secondary Extraction Cross Functional Team's environmental investigation improved understanding of what triggers naphtha loss to the tailings ponds. The team improved naphtha recovery unit performance, resulting in a ten-fold decrease in naphtha losses to the ponds.

Rob Mytopher, Suncor Energy Canadian Pipeline Partnership, ensures safety processes are understood and followed. He challenges the status quo and offers real solutions. He improves his work, and the work of his peers, through positive safety leadership.

Sarnia, Ontario

Tony DiFederico, FT Services, is a safety advocate and performs his work without incident. He's been involved in the safe slowdown, shutdown and start-up of numerous units, and was the lead hand for confined space entry work at the Sarnia refinery in 2008.

Matrix Service Inc. has consistently maintained an injury-free work site despite working in hazardous conditions when cleaning crude storage tanks at Suncor's facilities in Ontario. The team developed safe work procedures and conducts daily field level risk assessments and safety pauses before each shift.

One Team Safety Plant 1 Turnaround team, took a 'one team' approach that led to safe completion of the 2008 Sarnia refinery Plant 1 planned maintenance work, on time and on budget. The team achieved zero lost time injuries, zero recordable injuries and a significant reduction in medical aid injuries.

David Rath. During a pipe repair project at the Sarnia refinery, Dave discovered the pipe liner contained styrene, which could have entered the St. Clair River. His diligence led to replacing the existing pipe with a new pipe, avoiding river contamination, and earned him an award for environmental excellence.

Commerce City, Colorado

Bob Sekich, Martinez & Hromada, always demonstrates his thorough understanding of the refinery's safety culture. For the fourth consecutive year, Bob had no lost-time or recordable incidents.

Dean Martinez, Suncor. His single-mindedness about safety resulted in zero first aids in the Light Oil and Heavy Oil units at Suncor's refinery in 2008 – a commendable record for a supervisor who's responsible for coordinating many potentially hazardous tasks.

Groendyke Transport. Over the past five years, this contractor has safely delivered 350 million gallons of fuel to all sites within Suncor Energy U.S.A.'s retail network. Employees of Groendyke Transport are always looking to improve safety equipment and procedures.

Commerce City Emergency Response Team volunteers to protect people and assets at Suncor's refinery, and in the surrounding community. In 2008, team members responded to 38 medical situations. Despite the inherent dangers of their work, no team member was injured during a response – a testament to their competence, discipline, teamwork and communication skills.

Commerce City Wastewater Operations. New operating procedures, operator-driven reliability, and an unwavering dedication to operational excellence inspire this team's performance. As a result, at Suncor's refinery, wastewater contraventions are at an all-time low, an accomplishment reflected in the quality of nearby aquatic ecosystems, and in positive stakeholder relations.

Calgary, Alberta

Calgary United Way Day of Caring Coordinators took home the award for health and wellness commitment for their efforts in increasing United Way Day of Caring volunteer hours among Suncor's Calgary-based employees to 3,029, up 289 per cent from 2007. The team managed 551 individual volunteers who participated in 39 projects.

Mike Petroski, Petroski Oilfield Consulting, engages crews and promotes safety in on-site personnel at Suncor's natural gas drilling locations. Years of experience in the field resulted in his high standard for safety leadership and operational performance. Mike does an outstanding job of identifying and anticipating potential hazards and manages logistics proactively.

Garth Gress, Suncor, has made the safety journey real for drilling, completions and construction contractors at Suncor's drilling sites. He is an excellent role model; a change leader everyone can learn from. Plus, in his 32 years with Suncor, Garth has driven some 1.8 million kilometres – safely.

Weatherford Canada Partnership drilled eight natural gas wells for Suncor in 2008, with 18 unique operations. Strong communication and preparation before and during job execution resulted in excellent safety performance. Weatherford has had zero lost-time incidents in the past five years and only four minor first aids in 2008.

Simonette Plant Operations Group at Suncor's Simonette natural gas processing plant (located near Edson, Alberta) installed a control system upgrade that is the first of its kind in an operating sour gas plant. The project resulted in significant sulphur recovery improvements, plant capacity optimization, and emissions reduction.

Edmonton, Alberta

Brian Cikaluk, Colt Engineering, led Suncor's pipeline operations group to maintain zero recordable incidents at the company's oil sands and in-situ facilities in 2008, despite construction of new facilities. Strictly monitoring construction activities along the pipeline corridor kept all workers aware of operating pipeline locations.

Suncor Energy Canadian Pipeline Partnership. An emphasis on emergency training and hazard identification paid off when employees of Suncor's pipelines operations group responded to a pipeline incident in July 2008. All systems worked exactly as planned and the situation was resolved with no injuries.

Division Award recipients

Oil Sands Extraction. This large group of Suncor workers embarked on a major safety improvement initiative in 2007. The initiative focused on engaging and involving employees and increasing their commitment to safety. In 2008, the plan was supplemented with additional actions that positively reinforced safety performance. As a result, this group achieved zero lost-time incidents in 2008.

Ledcor Projects Inc. Working at Suncor's oil sands facility near Fort McMurray, Alberta, Ledcor put an enormous effort into developing a comprehensive training and orientation program for new workers, as well as an improved task hazard assessment process. Ledcor site workers read the company's daily newsletter at all toolbox meetings and they instituted a brainstorming session at regular safety meetings to gather ideas on safety improvements.