

The legacy of the 16th World Petroleum Congress

BY NEIL MCCRANK

CHAIRMAN, CANADIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE, WORLD PETROLEUM COUNCIL



The 16th World Petroleum Congress was held in Calgary from 11-15th June, 2000, and was the first World Petroleum Congress to be held in Canada. Its theme was *Petroleum for Global Development: Networking People, Business and Technology to Create Value*. Almost 3,000 delegates from 97 countries attended the Congress. Overall attendance, including accompanying persons, press and exhibitors totalled 4,600, almost matching the 15th World Petroleum Congress attendance, which was the largest World Petroleum Congress in two decades.

The sessions programme was comprised of over 300 presentations in plenary or feature addresses, review and forecast papers (RFPs), forum papers and posters. The programme was developed by the World Petroleum Congress Scientific Programme Committee with considerable input from the Canadian Organising Committee, the World Petroleum Congress Executive and national committees of other member countries.

The Calgary Congress offered many innovations, including a Global Business Opportunity Centre (an exhibition with a strong business development orientation) and an improved electronic international communication system for national committees, session chairmen, authors, and other Congress participants.

The decision to attempt to bid for a World Petroleum Congress in Calgary was made in 1990 after the Canadian National Committee determined that there was broad industry and government support. The first bid to host the 1997 Congress was not successful, but the Canadian National Committee persisted and in 1996 Canada was awarded the hosting of the 16th World Petroleum Congress. Hosting such a large and prestigious international event was an awesome undertaking but the Canadian National Committee determined to make it a success. The Canadian National Committee appointed an organising committee comprised entirely of dedicated volunteers to develop a budget and organisation that would make Calgary proud. Eventually, under the expert leadership of Co-Chairmen James K. Gray and Ray P. Cej, the organising committee recruited a small staff who, along with over 1,000 volunteers, worked through to the successful completion of the Congress in June 2000.

The 16th World Petroleum Congress was an unqualified success with extensive compliments coming from Congress participants from around the globe. At the time of the Congress, Canada was just emerging as an energy power and Calgary, the host city, was just beginning to take its place as an important energy centre. The 16th World Petroleum Congress was instrumental in developing this reputation.

Shortly after the Congress in 2000, the recognition of Canada as a major supplier of petroleum products was enhanced when the international energy community recognised the extent of the reserves 'proven and probable' that existed in Western Canada

(approximately 176 billion barrels of oil in the massive oil sands).

With the knowledge that Canada was becoming an energy power, international oil and gas companies began to focus more attention on developing a presence. With that development, it became easier for Canadian oil and gas companies and related companies, such as engineering and service sector organisations, to venture abroad to conduct business in other parts of the world. This also had the added benefit of enhancing the reputation of Canada as an international energy power.

It is acknowledged that the 16th World Petroleum Congress in Calgary contributed to Canada and Calgary, Alberta taking their place on the oil and gas world stage. One of the outstanding legacies to come out of the 16th World Petroleum Congress was a surplus of funds that has been dedicated to educational programmes at Canadian universities and other educational centres. This surplus of funds, due to the strong sponsorship and volunteer support of the 16th World Petroleum Congress, was US\$4.2 million.

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The Canadian National Committee decided to set-up scholarship endowments for energy related studies. This programme has continued since 2000, with over 1,600 scholarships, of US\$3,000 each, being awarded over the past several years. This programme became known as the World Petroleum Council Millennium Scholarships Programme and in total awarded US\$4.848 million in Millennium Scholarships to attract young people into the petroleum industry. The sponsors of the Calgary Congress in 2000 and many other related sector companies are receiving positive results on their investment in the form of highly motivated, high performing personnel in essential areas of this dynamic industry.

In addition, this scholarship programme has inspired other World Petroleum Congress member countries to develop their own scholarship programmes – Brazil, South Africa and, most recently, the Spanish Organising Committee offered 50 international scholarships for young people in the industry to attend the Youth Forum in Madrid, Spain.

The World Petroleum Congress provides an opportunity for a country to put on display its petroleum resources and its expertise in extracting them. The track record of the Congresses has been for there to be advancements in new ideas generated by the coming together of the world's leading scientists and executives in the petroleum industry. The 16th World Petroleum Congress was no exception to this rule and the legacy left behind is important and enduring. □