

# TELUS Camp-in-a-Box<sup>®</sup> team improves quality of life for oil sands workers in northern Alberta

Below the ground in northern Alberta is the world's largest known hydrocarbon resource – the oil sands. An estimated 1.7 to 2.5 trillion barrels of oil are trapped in a complex mixture of sand, water and clay. About a dozen companies have descended upon the wilds of Alberta to extract this sought-after resource.

In 2003, a major Calgary-based oil and gas exploration, development and production company began developing a multi-billion dollar oil sands project north of Fort McMurray – the largest oil sands region in the province. These 21st century prospectors don't have to rely on tents and camp fires for shelter and warmth. The oil sands developer is spending hundreds of millions to create deluxe camps and dormitories, complete with fitness centres, bars, lounges, Internet kiosks and TV for thousands of temporary workers.

## enter TELUS

The oil sands developer needed an innovative communications partner that could provide far more than just phone service. It required high-speed Internet access and other consumer services for the contractors who live on site, not to mention a range of sophisticated business solutions such as IP networks and emergency management services.

TELUS won the five-year contract in early 2005, beating out other competitors. We earned the business – worth up to \$40 million – because we offered a wider range of solutions the oil sands developer was seeking. Plus, TELUS had proven capabilities in providing similar solutions to other oil and gas companies in remote areas.

Nonetheless, we still faced a major challenge – delivering these solutions in a distant location would take exceptional leadership, creativity, planning and teamwork.

## a dedicated team delivers

A large cross-organizational team was formed to design, develop and implement a customized suite of TELUS Camp-in-a-Box solutions.

"There was tremendous dedication to get this project off the ground," says TELUS senior project manager Randy Yablonski. "Everyone jumped on board without hesitation and gave 150 per cent."

During the first week of the project, Randy and other team members worked quickly to install telecommunications equipment in the project's newly constructed communications building. Incredibly, all of this work was done without any electricity.

"We had to open all the doors and rely on sunlight to see what we were doing," Randy adds. "We also had to work about two to three times faster than usual to meet our client's deadline."

TELUS energy marketing director Andy Burgess says this project gave the team an opportunity to do some very unique things. For example, Andy and a team member conducted research with Ipsos-Reid on how to improve the quality of life at work camps and dormitories by providing access to personal entertainment and distant education services.

They asked camp residents to complete a brief questionnaire and held a prize draw as an incentive. Seventy two per cent of respondents indicated they would be motivated to stay at the construction camp versus finding a job elsewhere if they had access to services such as Internet, TV and gaming.

"The oil sands developer was very impressed with this survey and it ultimately led to TELUS selling voice and high-speed Internet into every dormitory room," notes Andy.

Then came the tough part: Developing a user-pay system for the Internet access.

The oil sands developer wanted contract workers using the Internet to pay for it. TELUS'

conventional paper-based bills sent via mail to individual clients would not work in this camp. And collecting the money owed would be difficult.

Thanks to some collective brainstorming, TELUS designed and developed a unique solution using a combination of wireline and wireless services. TELUS Mobility's Hotspot service, which is normally found at airports and other urban locations, is now in use at the camp for Internet user authentication and automated credit verification. With Hotspot and an ADSL line, camp residents can order high-speed Internet to their room by the day, week or month and prepay with a credit card.

"The TELUS team consistently thinks outside the box while keeping the customer at the forefront," says Joe Natale, EVP and president of Business Solutions. "The Camp-in-a-Box team worked together beyond their everyday responsibilities, never lost sight of their end goal and achieved their objective. I'm proud to be part of such a dedicated and innovative team."

## future opportunities abound

Although most of the 62 team members have completed work on this oil sands project, many of them may work together again in the near future. That's because a decade or more of major construction is expected in Alberta's oil sands. About \$54 billion worth of oil sands projects are conservatively forecast to be completed by 2012.

"We're confident we can provide Camp-in-a-Box services to more than 16 more projects over the next 10 years," Andy says. "Also, Camp-in-a-Box applies to any large-scale construction project in a remote area. While our initial success has been with a number of oil sands operators, we are pursuing new opportunities in other resource-based sectors."

