

**AAPG Annual Meeting
March 10-13, 2002
Houston, Texas**

Keith Firmin¹ (1) Shell Canada Limited, Calgary, AB

Unlocking the Athabasca Oil Sands Bitumen Resource

The oil sands deposits located in the Province of Alberta, Canada contain some 1.3 trillion barrels of bitumen, of which approximately 250 billion barrels are considered potentially recoverable using current technology. Shell Canada Limited, together with its joint venture partners Chevron Canada Limited and Western Oil Sands L.P., are currently constructing the \$Can1.8 billion Muskeg River Mine, 75km north of Fort McMurray. This development comprises a surface mine and an oil sands processing plant capable of producing 155,000 barrels per day of bitumen from a leased reserve base held by the joint venture partners of close to 9 billion barrels.

New technologies developed for the project have enabled the project to proceed whereas a Greenfield development using existing process configurations would have been sub economic.

The Muskeg River Mine forms an integral part of the Athabasca Oil Sands Project which also includes a bitumen upgrader located adjacent to the Shell Canada Limited Scotford refinery near Edmonton, Alberta. The Athabasca Oil Sands Project with associated infrastructure is expected to cost in excess of \$Can 5 billion.

The presentation will briefly describe the resource base, the technologies being used to extract the bitumen and will provide an update on the project.