

## **Aboriginal Partnerships: Becoming a Partner of Choice**

Andrew D. Popko\*  
Vice President  
Aboriginal Relations  
EnCana

EnCana will share its ups and downs of implementing an in house Aboriginal program which has only existed for the past eight years. EnCana will share some recent examples of successful partnerships with First Nations and it involved the service industry and how provincial and federal government all assisted in their success.

### **Biography**

Since joining EnCana in 1978, Mr. Popko's career has included value-added contributions through Administration, Field Operations, Investor Relations and Public Affairs, before establishing the Aboriginal Relations function within the Company's North American oil and gas division. Under Mr. Popko's lead, EnCana has won the INAC/AWPI Aboriginal Relations Best Practice Award of Distinction in 2003 and 2007 and received an award from the United States Minerals Management Services for Corporate Leadership for work done in Alaska working with the northern Eskimo communities and the Alaska Whaling Commission.

As well EnCana was a finalist in the Social Accountability International's Corporate Conscience Awards for Innovative Partnerships. Mr. Popko is an Honorary Chief for Heart Lake First Nation and was also presented a Life Time Achievement Award for outstanding work in providing pioneering innovative capacity building programs from the Tribal Chiefs Institute of Treaty 8 This was the first time this Award was presented to a non-Aboriginal person.

In 2004, Mr. Popko was nominated for the Ontario Premiers Award of Distinction after having been awarded the same recognitions from Durham College earlier that year.

In June of 2006, Mr. Popko received the Senator Thelma Chalifoux award presented by N.A.I.T. for encouraging and supporting Aboriginal entrepreneurs through business partnerships and ownership.

Mr. Popko returned to EnCana in 2006 after an 18-month secondment in Ottawa where he worked for the Privy Council Office and had the opportunity to attend and work on various projects including the Aboriginal Roundtable, the Kelowna Accord and Northern Strategy. He also did short term secondments with Treasurer Board of Canada Secretariat, Industry Canada, INAC, Department of Fisheries and Ocean, Correctional Service Canada and Canada Border Services Agency before returning to his Vice-President, Aboriginal Relations role at EnCana Corporation.