

Regional Petroleum Research Partnership Receives Federal Funding

Halifax, NS, May 18, 2004 – Petroleum Research Atlantic Canada (PRAC), a public-private partnership focused on building the region’s petroleum-related research and development capacity, has received a \$1,277,400 investment from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).

In making the announcement today, Minister of Natural Resources R. John Efford stated this funding complements the commitment made by PRAC members, including representatives from the oil and gas industry, academia and various levels of government throughout Atlantic Canada.

“The funding will allow PRAC to continue its Pan-Atlantic research and development activities in support of this region’s oil and gas industry,” said Efford. “Oil and gas makes a significant impact on the economies of the Atlantic provinces, influencing private enterprise, as well as opportunities in academic and private sector R&D and commercialization. This industry, and the physical and intellectual infrastructure that accompanies it, helps ensure Atlantic Canada’s leading role in the 21st century economy.”

In addition to funding assistance from the Government of Canada and cash and in-kind support from members, PRAC also realizes revenues from project management and contract research activities to further support operating costs. This is a crucial part of the group’s formula for success – industry buy-in for sustainable activities.

“The mandate of PRAC is to foster within Atlantic Canada inter-disciplinary research and development (R&D) related to oil and gas and to diffuse that knowledge,” said Lee Shinkle, executive director of PRAC. “We plan to increase our focus of funded research on projects that have commercial potential. We are helping strengthen links between the business and research communities to find ways in which pure and applied R&D can meet the needs of industry and how industry can help commercialize R&D activities.”

Specific project activities identified by PRAC include developing and storing detailed knowledge of existing and/or planned oil and gas related research in Atlantic Canada; and establishing and maintaining a relationship with organizations and individuals involved in oil and gas research in the region.

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Minister Efford added the ability for PRAC to assist the region's companies and R&D facilities commercialize their research activities demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to innovation.

"I believe this project is an excellent example of the kind of initiative the Government of Canada has identified as crucial to the future development of our country, and particularly of Atlantic Canada, where the oil and gas industry holds so much potential," said the Minister. "This project will enhance PRAC's ability to act as a bridge from innovation to commercialization."

Research proposals are solicited across a broad range of topics, in matters related to:

- Engineering;
- Natural and social sciences;
- Environment;
- Public policy and socio-economics;
- Human resources, education and training; and
- Pre-commercialization R&D in support of technology development.

A key objective of PRAC is to add significant value to Atlantic Canada by building capacity and scale in oil and gas research and development. In collaboration with partners, PRAC acts as a catalyst to establish research priorities, coordinates the writing of research proposals, identifies leveraging opportunities and provides ongoing support in the administration of research programs.

PRAC's membership covers all four Atlantic provinces and includes companies involved in offshore exploration and production, industry associations including the supply and service sector, universities and community colleges, and both federal and provincial governments

This funding will support strategic PRAC activities for the three-year period of January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2006.

ACOA is providing funding for this initiative under the Business Development Program, which offers non-commercial investments to support the promotion of entrepreneurship, trade, marketing and education through industry, community, youth and business associations.

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Petroleum Research Atlantic Canada, a public-private partnership of the oil and gas industry, academia, and various levels of government in Atlantic Canada, has received a contribution of \$1,277,400 in funding from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to permit it to continue its work.

Executive Director Lee Shinkle said the funding will help PRAC in its plans to increase the focus of funded research on projects that have commercial potential. He said the organization wants to gain a better understanding of the capability and capacity of companies to commercialize new technology so the entire region can learn from and leverage the experience of the many organizations throughout the region that are involved in technology commercialization.

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