

INSIDE ENERPLUS: Technical expertise the key to unlocking new strategy

by SHANNON SUTHERLAND

With the strategic objective of entering into early-stage resource plays to provide a balance of growth and income for investors, Enerplus is turning to its new technical chiefs as a core part in executing this strategy.

Over the past two years, Enerplus has been advancing its internal technical skill sets to build the capacity needed to succeed as an oil and gas producer.

The development of the “Chief” role in the fields of engineering, geology and geophysics has positioned industry experts with decades of experience in leadership roles within the organization.

“We’re in transition from the old-style royalty trust model—in which you typically purchased producing assets which required you to assume little risk—into a company with a focus on early-stage resource plays,” says Executive Vice-President Ian Dundas. “Now we can get in on the front end of the value-creation curve, which means there’s more risk, but there’s also more reward.”

Technology has breathed new life into many of the mature oil and gas plays in the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin.

ENERPLUS CHIEFS: From left, Grant Duncan, P.Eng, Chief Completions and Production Engineer; Bruce Slevinsky, P.Eng, Chief Reservoir Engineer; Elaine Honsberger, P.Geoph, Chief Geophysicist; Brian Zaitlin, P.Geol., Chief Geologist.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Focus is shifting to early-stage resource plays
- Acquiring more than \$30 million worth of new seismic data
- Bringing new and uniquely qualified key technical experts on board to pursue growth areas

Enerplus has a portfolio of mature assets such as waterfloods, where technology can be used to recover more of the resource than originally thought. But it’s also chasing a number of new plays—the Bakken, Montney and the Marcellus, to name a few.

Chief Geophysicist Elaine Honsberger draws on 27 years of industry experience which Enerplus will leverage to help identify

opportunities and mitigate risk.

“My role as Chief Geophysicist for Enerplus is to act as a leader by bringing highly qualified technical staff into the organization and ensuring we engage in the appropriate application of both new geophysical technology as well as the tried-and-true methods,” says Honsberger.

This will allow Enerplus to use advanced geophysical technology as a tool to characterize reservoirs and refine the company’s understanding of the risks of a play.

“More than half of the geologists we employ have been brought in over the last two years, and we have selectively targeted key technical people. We’re in this for the long term and we needed specific skill sets moving forward to pursue the growth areas identified by Enerplus,” says Dr. Brian Zaitlin, the company’s Chief Geologist, who brings more than three decades of industry experience to his new role.

While creating the new roles was strate-

Management is committed to growing this business with the application of technology and technical knowledge

gic for the company, Dundas says, the Chiefs bring more than a title to the table. “We value technical expertise as much as managerial expertise. The Chiefs are an integral part of our leadership team.”

Adds Bruce Slevinsky, Chief Reservoir Engineer: “Enerplus has provided us with some very aggressive goals, and it’s providing the people and the money to achieve them.

“Senior management is committed to growing this business with the application of technology and technical knowledge.”



NAME: Sarah Molnar, Geol.I.T.

Our Resources

What do you do for Enerplus?

I’m a geologist and I’ve been with Enerplus for one year working on a team focused on assets in southern Saskatchewan that includes geologists, a geophysicist and production and development engineers.

Do you like working for Enerplus?

Definitely. I started with Enerplus as a summer student, evaluating resource properties in advance of provincial land sales. Now I’m working on waterfloods and I’ve had great mentorship. That’s really important to a new grad like me and it’s one of the ways that Enerplus shows a serious commitment to career development. Plus, I’m part of a great team that works well together, so I enjoy coming to work every day.

Is there room for career growth at Enerplus?

I think there is. Enerplus has a very large land base, with a variety of assets. And they’re expanding into new areas, such as the Marcellus shale gas in the United States and tight oil like the Bakken play in Saskatchewan. There are waterfloods and conventional oil and gas and I’m sure there will be other opportunities in the future as the company grows.



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