

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Suncor Energy Foundation helps develop a vibrant and sustainable Fort McMurray**

**Community leaders come together to identify and collaborate on social and community building opportunities**

**Fort McMurray, Alberta (March 14, 2011)** – More than 100 community leaders from Fort McMurray and area gathered in February at the Suncor Community Leisure Centre for a day-long session with Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement. Facilitated by renowned community builder and Tamarack president, Paul Born, the session’s aim was to implement a change agenda that will build long term non-profit and social capacity in support of Envision Wood Buffalo’s Statement of Sustainability for the region. Additional speakers included representatives from Suncor Energy, the city of Waterloo and mayor of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB), Melissa Blake.

The conference, supported by the Suncor Energy Foundation and hosted in “kitchen party” fashion, was the kick-off for the broader Developing Social Stability and Building Capacity in a Northern Community initiative that is being facilitated by the University of Waterloo. This initiative will connect community leaders from the Wood Buffalo and Waterloo regions in action learning teams to implement social change. It is also part of a larger action-based research project aimed at identifying ways to address impending regional opportunities and challenges through development of the community’s non-profit and social capacity.

“Suncor has passion and commitment for this community,” says Lori Gammell, manager of Community Investment and the Suncor Energy Foundation. “We’ve done a lot of research on how we can best support the well-being of the RMWB and are excited about this new approach to address systemic issues on a broad basis. We are interested in the long-term sustainability and resiliency of the community - not just bricks and mortar projects.”

This collaborative initiative, steered by the United Way of Fort McMurray, the RMWB, Suncor Community Leisure Centre, the Suncor Energy Foundation and the University of Waterloo, will challenge leading community agencies and individuals to work together to generate new, innovative solutions to support social stability and build community capacity.

“I think that going into the meeting, most of the folks were of the opinion that we *were* doing what was possible,” says Ray Floyd, senior vice president of Maintenance & Reliability at Suncor Energy and United Way of Fort McMurray board member. “It became clear as we went through the day that each of us was doing what was possible for ourselves, but if we all got together, we could make many more things possible.”

This initiative is part of a new strategy that the Suncor Energy Foundation is developing to change how they engage with communities of interest. The new program will go beyond simply allocating funds and will focus on the creation of sustainable communities through the development of collaborative and integrated solutions that address the unique needs of the area.

“The Suncor Energy Foundation is a group of innovative people known for critical thought about what is necessary in communities where their employees live and work,” says Tamarack president, Paul Born.

“The Foundation wants to be involved in long-term solutions and doesn’t just give money to one-off projects or initiatives. We wouldn’t have gotten involved otherwise.”

This Fort McMurray community conversation is the first of many with the next collaborative learning event scheduled for June 2011. Participants have formed action learning teams and will spend the next 18 months developing and implementing the ideas put forward during this first session. At the conclusion of the project, the Suncor Energy Foundation and their partner organizations hope to be able to share learnings with other resource-based communities in Canada.

More information on the Suncor Energy Foundation can be found at [www.suncor.com/community](http://www.suncor.com/community). Further information on the Foundation’s new investment strategy will be available on the website in the spring of 2011.

*The Suncor Energy Foundation is a private, non-profit charitable foundation established by Suncor to receive Suncor’s contributions and support registered Canadian charitable organizations. Its funding priorities are educational, environmental and community-based initiatives that primarily support Suncor’s operating communities. Since its inception in 1998, the Foundation has contributed more than \$57 million to Canadian communities.*

*Suncor Energy Inc. is Canada's premier integrated energy company. Suncor's operations include oil sands development and upgrading, conventional and offshore oil and gas production, petroleum refining, and product marketing under the Petro-Canada brand. While working to responsibly develop petroleum resources, Suncor is also developing a growing renewable energy portfolio. Suncor's common shares (symbol: SU) are listed on the Toronto and New York stock exchanges.*

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Media inquiries:  
403-296-4000  
[media@suncor.com](mailto:media@suncor.com)