

LABOUR MARKET NEWS

Government of Alberta ■

Fort McMurray • Wood Buffalo



Employment in the oil sands

Jobs in the petroleum industry are some of the most sought after positions in Fort McMurray and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

This issue of the *Labour Market News* looks at jobs in the upstream sector of the petroleum industry. This includes exploration, production, and various scientific, technical, service and supply companies. (See page 5 for info on other kinds of oil sands jobs.)

Who are local employers hiring?

Most people working in the oil sands are employed either by oil sands mining companies or by contractors, often in construction.

Your education, skills and experience will determine what kind of job you might qualify for.

Oil sands companies typically hire skilled workers such as engineers and technologists, as well as management and business/administration staff. They also employ certified tradespeople, such as welders and pipefitters, process operators and heavy equipment operators. Major oil sands companies in the region include Suncor, Syncrude, Shell Albian Sands and Canadian Natural Resources Limited.

Contractors often work for the oil sands companies doing construction and maintenance work. They also work outside the oil sands, in areas such as residential or commercial construction. Labourers, building tradespeople, heavy equipment operators and project managers are some of the workers hired by contractors. Major contractors in



Contacting employers

Before you apply for a job, find out how employers prefer to be contacted. Some companies don't accept employment-related telephone calls. Most major employers want applications to be submitted online, or via email. For help building your electronic resumé, visit one of the region's employment service providers (see page 6 for locations).

the region include Flint Energy, Kiewit, Ledcor and Canonbie, but there are many others.

Online job search

Most employers list job openings on their websites. Look on their website home pages for headers such as Careers, Employment, Join Our Team or Working With Us. See woodbuffalo.net for a list of employer websites.

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UPCOMING ISSUES...

- IN-SITU CAREERS IN THE OIL SANDS
- TRADES IN FORT MCMURRAY

This publication has been prepared by Alberta Employment and Immigration.

Housing

Part of the job hunt in Wood Buffalo involves finding housing. Due to demand, housing is expensive and very limited in Fort McMurray. A bachelor suite, for example, rented for \$1,448 per month in June 2009.

Jobs may include housing, but it depends on the company and the position being filled.

Work camps and LOA

Some oil sands companies and contractors provide housing at work camps, which are much like hotels. Suncor, for example, provides camp housing to process operators at its Firebag site, but not at its main oil sands mining site.

Other companies may provide a living-out allowance (LOA) or housing allowance to offset the high cost of living in Fort McMurray. Housing allowances may only be temporary until workers are settled.

Don't get left without a place to stay. Remember to research local housing options as part of your job search.

Oil sands companies vs. contractors

If you are trying to decide whether to work for a large oil sands company or a contractor, go back to the basics.

Research the company you are interested in. Find out what skills you need to work there. Find out if the job you're interested in is permanent or temporary, then decide what is best for you.

Online HELP

GENERAL CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION:

- 📌 Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information: woodbuffalo.net
- 📌 Apprenticeship and Industry Training: tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca
- 📌 Alberta Learning Information Service (OCCinfo, WAGEinfo, CERTinfo): alis.alberta.ca
- 📌 Alberta Employment and Immigration: employment.alberta.ca

OIL SANDS CAREER INFORMATION:

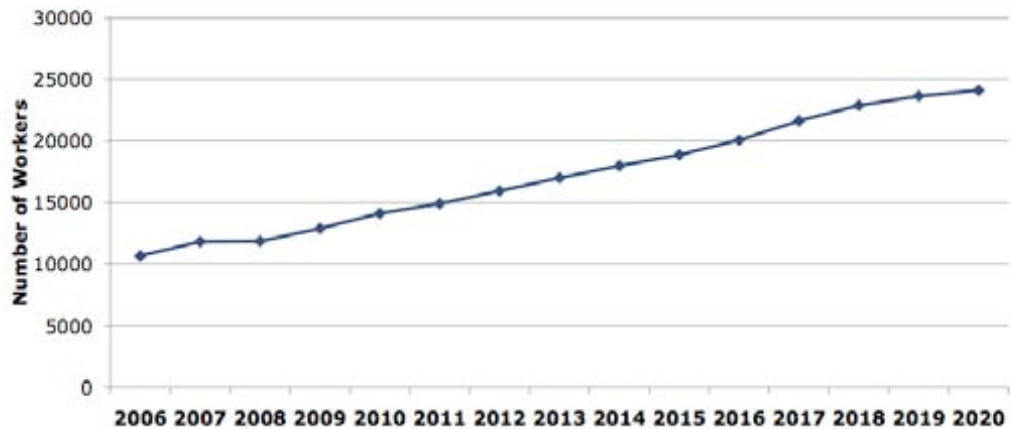
- 📌 Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada: petrohrsc.ca
- 📌 Oil Sands Safety Association: ossa-wb.ca
- 📌 The Oil Sands Developers Group: oilsandsdevelopers.ca
- 📌 Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers: capp.ca
- 📌 Centre for Energy: centreforenergy.com

A contractor may only be able to hire a worker for the length of a contract. Contractors may provide housing, while major oil sands companies usually want their employees to move to Fort McMurray.

For more employment information in Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, call the Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information Line at 780-715-0222, email info@woodbuffalo.net or visit woodbuffalo.net.



Canadian Upstream Petroleum Industry Workforce Demand for Oil Sands 2006-2020*



* Information compiled in April 2009 by Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada (petrohrsc.ca).

Getting oil from sand

Oil sands are basically oil mixed with sand. This oil, called bitumen, is thick and heavy and can't be extracted by conventional oil wells.

There are three major oil sands areas in Alberta: Cold Lake, Peace River and Athabasca. Fort McMurray and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo are situated in the Athabasca oil sands region. An estimated 1.7 to 2.5 trillion barrels of bitumen are contained in the oil sands of Alberta. More than one third of all oil produced in Canada comes from the oil sands.

There are two ways to separate the oil from the sand—surface mining (open-pit mining) and in-situ recovery. About 80 per cent of recoverable oil sands is through in-situ production, with less than 20 per cent recoverable by mining.

Surface mining

The Athabasca deposit directly around Fort McMurray is the only deposit shallow enough to be surface mined. Surface mining involves first scraping off the top layer of earth (overburden) and then mining the oil sands by shovel and truck.

The trucks dump the oil sands into machines called sizers or crushers

to break up the larger pieces. Suncor Energy Inc., Syncrude Canada Ltd., Shell Albian Sands Energy Inc. and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. are the companies currently mining north of Fort McMurray. (See woodbuffalo.net/linksFACTSProj.html for a current project listing.)

In-situ recovery

About 80 per cent of the oil sands around Fort McMurray are too deep in the ground to be recovered by surface mining, so in-situ (in place) processes are used. There are several different techniques that may be used, depending on the location of the bitumen and its consistency.

One of the most common methods in the Wood Buffalo region is Steam Assisted Gravity Drainage (SAGD). SAGD technology involves drilling two parallel horizontal wells through the oil-bearing formation. Steam is injected into the upper well, to create a high-temperature steam chamber.

The heat loosens the thick crude oil causing it to flow down to the second horizontal well. The bottom well catches the heated, thinner oil and then pumps it to the surface. Water is simultaneously injected into the bitumen-emptied area to maintain ground stability.

Other methods include Toe to Heal Air Injection (THAI), Cyclic Steam Stimulation (CSS) and Vapour Extraction Process (VAPEX).

There are 91 active oil sands projects in Alberta. Of these, five are mining projects and the rest use various in-situ recovery methods. To learn more about oil sands developments in Alberta go online to oilsands.alberta.ca.

SURFACE mining



CAT 797s, used in oil sands surface mining, are one of the world's largest trucks.



Hydraulic shovels load bitumen onto the trucks. The bitumen is taken to the extraction plant for processing.



Oil sand is processed in the extraction plant.



The finished product—high quality, light sweet crude oil.

Oil sand or tar sand?

Bitumen is a heavy, thick oil resembling tar. Oil sand is often referred to as 'tar sand,' but this is incorrect. Tar is a man-made substance.

Exploring the upstream oil industry

Different phases of an upstream oil sands project need different kinds of workers. For more in-depth information about the job categories here, visit the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada (petrohrsc.ca), the Centre for Energy (centreforenergy.com) or careersinoilandgas.com.



Suncor Energy Inc.

The training you need to get the job you want

Engineers – minimum undergraduate degree; many occupations also require professional designation

Geosciences Professionals – minimum undergraduate degree; many also require professional designation

Helpers, Labourers, and Semi-skilled Workers – high school diploma preferred

Operators – high school diploma preferred; on-the-job training as well as technical and safety courses

Specialty Business Services – various qualifications and industry experience and knowledge required

Technicians (Certified) – range from specified technical course work to two-year diploma

Technologists (Certified) – two- to three-year diploma

Trades – Certificate of apprenticeship or certification of qualification

Surface Mining	In-situ Recovery
<p>Project Development and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔧 Engineers 🔧 Geosciences Professionals 🔧 Specialty Business Services 🔧 Technicians 🔧 Technologists 	<p>Project Development and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔧 Engineers 🔧 Geosciences Professionals 🔧 Specialty Business Services 🔧 Technologists
<p>Mining Extraction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔧 Engineers 🔧 Geosciences Professionals 🔧 Operators 🔧 Specialty Business Services 🔧 Technicians 🔧 Technologists 🔧 Trades 	<p>Seismic Surveying and Interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔧 Engineers 🔧 Geosciences Professionals 🔧 Labourers 🔧 Operators 🔧 Specialty Business Services 🔧 Technicians 🔧 Technologists
	<p>In-situ Extraction and Co-generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔧 Engineers 🔧 Geosciences Professionals 🔧 Labourers 🔧 Operators 🔧 Specialty Business Services 🔧 Technicians 🔧 Technologists 🔧 Trades
<p>Surface Mining and In-situ Recovery</p> <p>Processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔧 Engineers 🔧 Operators 🔧 Specialty Business Services 🔧 Technicians 🔧 Technologists 🔧 Trades 	
<p>Upgrading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔧 Engineers 🔧 Operators 🔧 Specialty Business Services 🔧 Technicians 🔧 Technologists 🔧 Trades 	
<p>Transportation and Storage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔧 Engineers 🔧 Labourers 🔧 Operators 🔧 Specialty Business Services 🔧 Technicians 🔧 Technologists 🔧 Trades 	

Suncor Energy Inc.

Syncrude Canada Ltd.

Information courtesy of the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada.



I'm looking for work in the trades.

Past issues of the *Labour Market News* have profiled a variety of trades and what training you need to work in Alberta. There's also a story on how to become an apprentice. Check them out: woodbuffalo.net/LMNMAIN.html



I want to be a labourer. Who's hiring?

Find out about the experience, training or safety tickets you need Get answers here: woodbuffalo.net/mediaLMN0208.html



I want to drive a heavy hauler in the oil sands.

Oil sands companies hire heavy equipment operators. So do construction contractors. Go online to find out who's hiring and what training they look for: woodbuffalo.net/mediaLMN0609.html



What kind of workers are needed at different stages of an oil sands development?

Check out *The Life of an Oil Sands Construction Project* to find out labour needs: woodbuffalo.net/PDFs/Life.pdf



Is there a list of oil companies operating in the region? What about contractors?

Yes! A list of employers and their contact info is online: woodbuffalo.net/linksEMPLIntro.html



Do I need safety training to get a job?

To work on a construction or oil sands site, you'll need safety training. Find out what is required here: woodbuffalo.net/trainSAFE.html



What oil sands construction projects are underway right now? Proposed? On hold?

For a list of current projects and possible future projects, as well as a list of potential employers, go online to this link: woodbuffalo.net/linksFACTSProj.html



How do I apply for a job with an oil sands company?

For help with the online job search and application process, look in the Process Operators issue of the *Labour Market News* on page 5: woodbuffalo.net/mediaLMN1008.html



How can I find a camp job?

Want to work for a company that provides camp housing? Read this article to find out what's available: woodbuffalo.net/mediaLMN1007.html



Do oil sands plants hire process operators?

Yes, there is a growing need for process operators to help maintain production at oil sands plants. Find out more at this link: woodbuffalo.net/PDFs/LMNWB200810vFinal.pdf



What about other jobs in Fort McMurray?

Administration. Security guard. Technologist. Janitor. Safety officer. Bus driver. Truck driver. Find out more about these jobs in the *Labour Market News*: woodbuffalo.net/LMNMAIN.html

**Looking for work? Got questions?
Find answers online at woodbuffalo.net!**

Franco Job

Franco Job aide les francophones à trouver un emploi durable et valorisant. Tous nos services sont offerts en français et gratuitement.

Des services pour vous aider:

- centre de ressources/journaux locaux
- information sur le marché du travail local
- évaluation des besoins/plan d'action
- orientation professionnelle
- aide à la recherche d'emploi
- planification de carrière
- accès gratuit à Internet, téléphone, fax et photocopieur
- ateliers de recherche d'emploi
- initiation à l'informatique
- techniques d'entrevue
- rédaction de curriculum vitae
- traduction et services d'interprétation.

Visite acfawoodbuffalo.ab.ca/Services.html
courriel: francojob@acfa.ab.ca;
ou téléphone: (780) 791-9779.

franco job



YMCA – Immigrant Employment Services

Immigrating to Canada can be a challenge. YMCA – Immigrant Employment Services can help. The agency offers a variety of services for new Canadians who are looking for work in Fort McMurray and area. These include:

- free computers, Internet and fax for job searches
- job board, updated daily
- resumé writing assistance
- job search assistance
- job interview preparation
- one-on-one career counselling

Immigrant Employment Services has helped immigrants from around the world find employment in Fort McMurray and area.

For more information, call them at 780-791-1115. You can also drop by their office, located at Suite #205, 10011 Franklin Avenue. Hours of operation are Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed from noon to 1 p.m.).



For information on resources and career decisions in Fort McMurray, contact us at:

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information
780-715-0222

Email: info@woodbuffalo.net

Online: www.woodbuffalo.net
employment.alberta.ca

Alberta Employment and Immigration career and employment services

Fort McMurray

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information
Ph. 780-715-0222
info@woodbuffalo.net

Canada-Alberta Service Centre
Labour Market Information Centre
Provincial Building, 9915 Franklin Avenue
Ph. 780-743-7192
Website: employment.alberta.ca

Other career/employment services

Fort McMurray

Fort McMurray Association for Community Living - CHOICES Employment Services
10010 Franklin Avenue, Ph. 780-791-3355
fmacl.ca

YMCA - Youth Connections
(in-school services only)
Ph. 780-791-7520

YMCA – Immigrant Employment Services
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue
Ph. 780-791-1115 ymca.woodbuffalo.org

Franco Job

312 Abasand Drive, Centre Communautaire Solaire, Boréal, Ph. 780-791-9779
acfawoodbuffalo.ab.ca

Athabasca Tribal Council Employment
9206 McCormick Drive Ph. 780-791-7445
atc97.org/employment

Keyano College Career Employment Services Ph. 780-799-1589 keyano.ca

Métis Employment Services
Ph. 1-888-486-3847, albertametis.ca

Career Planning Services
Toll free: 1-866-776-7773, olconconsulting.ca

Fort McKay

Fort McKay First Nation Employment & Training Office
Ph. 780-828-2430, fortmckay.com

Conklin

Conklin Employment Services
Nakewin Centre, Conklin, Ph. 780-559-8995

Employment and Training

Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative
Ph. 780-747-6500
(previously Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project)

Immigrant services

YMCA – Immigrant Settlement Services
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue
Ph. 780-743-2970, ymca.woodbuffalo.org