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Building on our Success at Cold Lake

Given Imperial's track record of environmental, social and economic improvements at our Cold Lake operations, a sustainable future for Canada's oil sands is possible

In October, our Cold Lake in situ operation celebrated a significant milestone, becoming one of four operations in Canada to produce one billion barrels of oil. As you'll learn in the article "A Billion Barrels and Counting..." this achievement is a story about human ingenuity. It's also a story that says a lot about the oil industry's approach to responsible energy development.

From the outset, the key to developing the oil sands has been a focus on continuous improvement to create new, more efficient and environmentally effective technologies. This principle has been proven repeatedly throughout the industry's history and our Cold Lake operation stands as a model example.

Back in the late '90s and early '00s, when we acquired our heavy oil leases at Cold Lake, Alta., the technology did not exist to commercially develop the massive underground bitumen reserves, but the company took a long-term view toward development.

Imperial began research into new ways to enable the bitumen to be recovered economically and in an environmentally acceptable manner. It was a slow, incremental, sometimes frustrating learning process that took more than two decades but has paid off with spectacular results.

Since Imperial's bitumen recovery operation first went into commercial production in the mid-1990s, the cost of producing a barrel of oil has been reduced by about one-third. We're now producing about 30 percent of the heavy oil in the reservoir, versus 13 percent when we first started. Cold Lake is now arguably the third-largest producer of crude oil in Canada with about 147,000 barrels of oil a day—or about one out of every 20 barrels of crude oil produced in the country.

But the success at Cold Lake goes beyond just past production. Significant environmental improvements have accompanied our progress in oil recovery. We've pioneered state-of-the-art water recycling techniques. Today more than 95 percent of the produced water used to generate steam is recycled. We've also added emission controls, promoted energy efficiencies and developed directional drilling techniques that enable multiple wells, more than 20 from a single surface site.

The result is that more oil is being produced with less fresh water, fewer emissions and a smaller surface footprint.

This effort to improve recovery while reducing environmental impacts is ongoing. At Imperial we don't believe that the current oil sands technologies are the best they can be. They can and will continue to be improved and that's why we spent $80 million on oil sands research last year.

Our researchers and partners in Canadian universities are exploring a variety of next-generation oil recovery technologies that can be applied at Cold Lake and elsewhere.

The Cold Lake story is also about the importance of community. Initially employing just a handful of people, the operation has grown into a major facility employing hundreds. Over time, the operation and the community have developed a strong and mutually beneficial relationship. Cold Lake has become a model of how the energy industry can, for example, work with Aboriginal groups to create new opportunities.

An Imperial Native Network has been established with employees of Aboriginal descent to raise awareness about Aboriginal people and create stronger relationships with the region's First Nations and Métis communities. In addition, an award-winning internship program enables Aboriginal people to get hands-on training in field and plant operations, and helping to promote educational opportunities for youth in local Aboriginal communities remains a focus for the network and the operation.

In these and other ways, we're working hard to build enduring relationships with our neighbors.

Along the way, we've learned some valuable lessons as an energy producer. We've realized the power that technology holds in solving tough environmental challenges. We've also learned that enhancing the quality of life in the local community is just the right thing to do—it's also good business.

This is a model of development that we're now applying to other projects such as our Kearl oil sands mining project in northeast Alberta. Here, we are employing creative ways to reduce our environmental footprint. Using a water storage system, we will reduce water withdrawal from the Athabasca River during the low-flow periods of winter. We will also employ cogeneration technology, which produces both electrical power and steam efficiently. And we're working with government and Aboriginal communities to identify ways not only to reduce and offset impacts from the project, but to increase biodiversity in the area as the project progresses.

We know that the decision to move forward with oil sands projects brings great interest and environmental concerns forward for many Canadians. As a company, we do not have all the answers. But we are committed to finding innovative solutions to delivering environmentally and socially responsible energy from the oil sands.

Our approach of continuous improvement is one that has been thoroughly developed and proven in Cold Lake, and it is this experience that gives us confidence that a bright, sustainable future for Canada's oil sands is achievable.
A FINE BALANCE
Finding the right balance between work and life is getting easier thanks to supportive programs that help women develop rewarding careers on their terms

By Marcia Kaye

Not long ago, most working women were forced to choose between a professional life and a personal life. Those who wanted a rewarding career often had to sacrifice family time, while those who wanted a fulfilling personal life had to forgo career opportunities. That's still the case in some workplaces, especially for women in non-traditional occupations. But Imperial has been a leader in recognizing the importance of a healthy work-life balance.

"Many employees will need flexibility at some point during their career to deal with family or personal interests," says Roland Schuster, manager of workplace policies. "The company is committed to being the workplace of choice for the most capable and high-performing people in our industry, and workplace guidelines and programs that provide flexibility and assist employees in achieving balance are a key part of that commitment." He adds that the company encourages managers to be creative in considering how to apply the guidelines, since every employee's situation may be unique.

The programs have evolved over time, in response to employees' needs. In addition to long-standing programs like flex-time, parental leave and job-sharing, recently added options include extended leave for personal reasons, such as to train for a marathon, do some extensive travel or home-school a child for a year. Such programs, combined with a variety of job opportunities, support a culture at Imperial that encourages women—and indeed, all employees—to grow both personally and professionally.

Here are four accomplished women in non-traditional occupations at Imperial who have achieved their ideal work-life balance, successfully integrating deeply satisfying personal lives with careers they love.
JANET MATSUSHITA
REFINERY MANAGER
NANTICOKE, ONT.

Janet Matsushita is one of only a handful of women refinery managers in the world. One of her predecessors as manager of Nanticoke refinery, near Hamilton, Ont., was also a woman. But Matsushita says, “It’s not about gender, it’s about what you bring to the role. And refinery managers tend to have broad ranges of experience.”

(Shi’s held 14 different positions in her 24 years with the company.) Having said that, she adds, “It’s important for young women to know that there are opportunities here and the only thing that limits them is themselves.”

Matsushita, raised in Oakville, Ont., and Montreal, is a chemical engineer and mother of two who began her career as a design engineer at the Sarnia refinery. “It was pretty challenging, but they put some experienced people around me so I could learn about the company, not just about my role,” she says. She then went on to work at two of the company’s refineries—Dartmouth and Nanticoke—as well as head office. “What I like is the variety,” she says.

She’s had very technical roles in specialty fields like environmental engineering and process engineering, and commercial jobs like foreign crude oil buyer, as well as a number of management positions. Before moving to Nanticoke, Matsushita spent 16 months as manager of the Dartmouth refinery, which followed a decade of working in various other positions at the refinery. “Safety at Dartmouth has been a high point for me,” she says. The refinery sustained 16 consecutive months without a recordable injury among both employees and contractor workers. “We’re going to bring the same focus on safety to Nanticoke, and that means no injuries—not a scratch, not a bandage.” While safety is number one, her other priorities for the refinery include reliability, efficiency, and profitability. And, of course, people. Matsushita says her biggest challenges are to ensure that the workforce of about 450 employees and contractors knows how much the company values them, and to channel their energy to deliver what the business needs.

Matsushita’s most influential mentors were her father, a former oil company executive, and Ted Wooster, Dartmouth’s former manager. “I admired [Wooster’s] level of caring for people,” she says, “and he really encouraged every individual to excel and go beyond boundaries in their thinking.”

As for balancing work life and home life, Matsushita says, “Your needs for work-life balance change over time and you need to react that. Nothing is static, and career opportunities may change for you. We sometimes forget that.”

With two adolescent children aged 16 and 11, Matsushita says her spouse “anchors our family.” He gave up his excavation and snowplowing business when the family moved from Nova Scotia to Ontario. She admits her husband and kids had to warm to the idea of the move, but she says keeping the family together is important right now. “For us, finding the right balance between our family and work opportunities is a priority.”
On Thursdays, when Kelly Morrison leaves her job, she looks forward to a four-day weekend with her family. That happens every week. Morrison works on a part-time basis in the position of technical supervisor in asset enhancement for Imperial Oil Resources. Heading a small team that looks for advantageous opportunities to acquire or divest assets, Morrison could have been overwhelmed with trying to fit what had once been a full-time job into three days a week. But she says, “The company did a really good job of pulling away some responsibilities and setting up the job to be successful for me.”

Morrison, who has been with Imperial since 1996, started the part-time schedule after taking an 18-month leave when daughter Rachel, now four, was born, and she has continued it since having her son Kyle, now two. “With Rachel in preschool on Mondays and Fridays I can be that mom who’s there, who volunteers,” says Morrison, who is married to her high school sweetheart.

Growing up in the Manitoba farming community of Lockport, north of Winnipeg, Morrison always loved math and science. When her high school guidance counselor recommended she study engineering, she said, “What’s that?” Even when he tried to define this enormous and varied field, she couldn’t quite grasp it. But when he mentioned there might be more scholarship money for engineering students, she decided to give it a try. She majored in geological engineering.

When Morrison was hired right out of university to work in Cold Lake, Alta., she remembers thinking that she didn’t want to be one of those new hires who say, “I have an engineering degree and I know all I need to know.” Instead, she says, “I took the approach, I don’t know anything and I’m here to learn from you guys.” She tagged along with Bob Claude, hopping in his truck and going out to the wells. “Bob is six foot three, tarred up and down his arms, a voice as low as it gets. I should have teared him, but I told him I wanted to learn from him and he took me under his wing.” As she learned the business from the ground up, she earned the respect of people on both the operations and the technical sides, and gained the confidence to pilot new ideas. One of her on-the-job highlights was doing onshore safety training to prepare for a two-day visit by helicopter to the Thebault platform, part of the the Sible offshore gas-production project off of Nova Scotia.

From time to time Morrison’s supervisors let her know about full-time career opportunities, but she tells them, “Not yet. Let’s talk again in two years.” As she says, “I have many years yet to work full-time and to advance my career.”
HEATHER BURKETT
U.S. DISTRIBUTOR BUSINESS ADVISER – EASTERN REGION, EXXONMOBIL
FAIRFAX, VA.

If not for Imperial, Heather Burkett probably wouldn’t be looking forward to a scuba vacation in the British Virgin Islands next May. But scuba diving is a popular activity in Fairfax, Va., which is also the home of ExxonMobil’s downstream global headquarters. And when Burkett took an assignment there, she decided to take up the sport. She’s since done dives off Mexico and the Caribbean island of Bonaire.

Originally from the Toronto area, Burkett didn’t expect that her career would ever take her beyond that city. After graduating with a combined five-year degree in mechanical engineering and business, Burkett had several job offers, but Imperial was her top choice. “Imperial hadn’t even been on my radar screen, because I saw them more as a chemical engineering company,” she says. “But their presentation on career growth really impressed me.” What particularly attracted her was Imperial’s commitment to being an “employer of choice,” offering several different career paths within the company, and its commitment to assigning challenging projects from the get-go. “And that’s not just talk,” she says. She started in the technical services group in lubricants and specialties at the Toronto office and began receiving challenging assignments almost immediately, such as providing technical consultations to large industrial customers.

But when the company relocated its corporate headquarters to Calgary in 2005, Burkett was thrown for a loop. “That wasn’t exactly what I’d signed up for,” she admits. “But moving to Calgary was a real turning point for me.” Not only did her new marketing job open up doors and help her understand the business much better, but she had the opportunity to work on snowboarding, a sport she hadn’t gotten the hang of in Toronto.

Two years later Burkett was offered a marketing assignment in the eastern United States and, with some qualms, took it. “I moved to the U.S. without knowing anyone,” says Burkett. “I felt a little brave, to be honest. But I thought, this is a great job opportunity and I’m just going to go for it.” To her delight she found Fairfax, which is just outside of Washington DC, to be a vibrant, diverse city hosting people from around the world. She liked its pleasant climate as well as its proximity to New York City and Philadelphia for weekend trips. She built up a social network by joining leagues in volleyball, bowling and soccer-baseball (called kickball in the U.S.), as well as through scuba diving. Burkett now manages strategic issues facing the distributor network east of the Mississippi, which involves moderate travel.

“I’ve had a tremendous number of different experiences with the company in a relatively short period of time,” Burkett says. “But my managers have always provided me with an appropriate workload and predictable hours. That allows me to achieve the work-life balance I want.”
SUSAN STARK
CONVENTIONAL RESERVOIR ENGINEERING MANAGER
CALGARY, ALTA.

When Susan Stark first told her dad that she planned to follow in his footsteps and study engineering, he wasn’t thrilled. He was worried, “What if you want to get married and have children?” he asked her.

But now, 23 years later, Stark credits Imperial with having allowed her to develop her career at her own pace, earning for several years after her two children were born, then ramping up as soon as she was ready for greater challenge. “I’ve always been very honest and open about what I thought I could handle, and my supervisors have always respected that,” says Stark.

While studying chemical engineering at the University of Calgary, Scottish-born Stark got summer jobs at Imperial’s Cold Lake oil sands project in northeastern Alberta, first as a plant operator at Cold Lake, then with the Cold Lake reservoir engineering group in Calgary. She loved the work. After graduation she happily accepted a full-time position as a reservoir engineer in Imperial’s conventional oil and gas area. But when her husband-to-be, Shane, also a reservoir engineer with the company, told her that there were two reservoir engineer jobs opening up in Cold Lake and he wanted to apply, Stark felt a pull to go back there, too. “At first I felt I couldn’t even ask, because I’d just been hired,” Stark recalls. “But then I thought that getting two reservoir engineers in one fell swoop to Cold Lake might be good for the company.” The company thought so too, and transferred them both.

Although the town of Cold Lake had little more than a grocery store, a hardware store, a fast-food outlet and a video rental, Stark loved the relaxed pace of the community, a perfect contrast to the huge, busy exciting workplace environment. The couple stayed seven years.

With the birth of each of her two daughters—Kelly, now 15, and Jamie, 12—Stark and her husband took sequential six-month leaves. Back in Calgary, Stark took her work-life balance cues from her manager, Bruce Carey. He worked 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., “to be home for his family,” she recalls. “As a manager he lived that commitment, and I learned that from him.” Stark and her husband have alternated that work schedule for years so that someone is always home for the children after school and to chauffeur them to lessons. Both girls are now serious students of ballet.

While her daughters were young, Stark didn’t seek to advance her career. But as they grew older, she felt she had the time and energy for a greater challenge. She told her boss she would love to go into planning, even though she was more experienced than the typical candidate for such a career move. “I was concerned that I’d waited too long,” she says, “but I found that there was no downside to having waited.”

Within two weeks she was made the conventional and Syncrude planning adviser and in June she became the conventional reservoir engineering manager, leading a team of about 16. “I’m really lucky because I’ve got a great job, and at the same time my kids have never felt that they came second.”
DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES
Empowering Aboriginal communities and developing their female leaders has become a major focus of the Imperial Oil Foundation by Margo Pfeiff

Standing among a group of 15 among a Brazilian, an Egyptian, a Kazakh, and even a Nigerian chief, Jolain Foster felt full of hope, inspired to start her own business and dedicated to making the world a better place. It was the summer of 2007, and she had just completed a month-long course designed to empower and educate women from around the world.

Foster had come a long way from growing up poor in the daughter of a single mother in the northern British Columbia community of Hazelton. A member of the Gitxsan First Nation, Foster had always been motivated to succeed. She finished high school and attended Simon Fraser University and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in Prince George to become a chartered accountant. She then changed course so she could follow her passion to inspire young Aboriginal people to pursue post-secondary education (the term Aboriginal includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples). As UNBC’s first Aboriginal liaison officer, she travelled to communities across the province in an effort to recruit and retain students, and after seven years, she witnessed a promising change: the number of Aboriginal people attending UNBC had tripled. Application rates were increasing by 10 percent a year.

In January 2007, Calgary’s Mount Royal College (now Mount Royal University) hired Foster as the first executive director of the new Inkqsim Centre. The centre, with funding from Imperial Oil, is dedicated to increasing enrolment and retention of Aboriginal students, as well as fostering academic success and increasing awareness of Aboriginal culture and history.

At the centre’s opening ceremonies, Foster asked Monica Sumper, president of the Imperial Oil Foundation, to present traditional blankets to elders and join their pipe ceremony. On first meeting, Sumper was impressed with Foster and knew she had great potential. “She had risen against adversity, was a very positive and forceful role model, and was in a position to have great impact on other women.”

Sumper felt Foster would benefit greatly from formal leadership and business training, so she sponsored her to become the first North American to attend an international program offered by the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA). The program, supported by ExxonMobil, is called Global Women in Management (GWIM) and is held annually in Washington DC. Its aim is to strengthen the business and financial management skills of women working in community organizations in developing countries.

These female leaders are sponsored through ExxonMobil’s affiliate network of community investment professionals.

The month-long crash course of workshops, lectures and discussions on topics
from management and public relations to social issues and financial responsibility is like a mini MBA. Afterwards, Foster was offered an opportunity to become vice-president of operations for the Rochester Americans and the Rochester Knighthawks, professional hockey and lacrosse teams. She was hired by Curt Stutes, a trail-blazing Mohawk from Six Nations who is the first Aboriginal individual to buy a professional sports team. "The course opened my eyes to the kind of impact women can have in business and the community," Foster says. "It gave me confidence. And it was an experience any woman could benefit from."

Imperial Oil has a long history of supporting education and community initiatives and encouraging economic development in the communities in which it operates. And, in many of these communities, the number of residents of Aboriginal origin is much higher than the four percent national average. The Imperial Oil Foundation funds education, literacy and skill development for Aboriginal women as well as men, but, says Sampar, "Increasingly, world experts are learning that educating women and girls in particular significantly contributes to the well-being of communities. And that results in everything from lower infant and child mortality rates to disease prevention and a higher standard of living, says the World Bank. Women certainly need the extra help. According to Statistics Canada, 36 percent of Canadian Aboriginal females live below the poverty line. Their unemployment rate is also double that of their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

By 2016, the population of working-age Aboriginal people is expected to increase by 72 percent compared with 25 percent of other Canadians. Of special concern is the high number of Aboriginal youth who are not finishing high school. "We need to plan for this growth in the Aboriginal workforce," says Sampar. "That's why the Imperial Oil Foundation is preparing to significantly increase funding to support organizations and communities related to development and education."

In 2009, the Imperial Oil Foundation invested more than 10 percent of its budget, a total of about $700,000, in community, education and training programs supporting Aboriginal people across Canada. However, in 2010, the foundation, along with the ExxonMobil Foundation, will support a new program for Aboriginal women at Nova Scotia's Coady International Institute, which has just celebrated 50 years of working to reduce global poverty and injustice. The program is designed to inspire Aboriginal women leaders to improve their own community development projects. The initiative, called the Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program,

"Women need access to programs that encourage them to go beyond what they think they can do," says McDonald. "Then they need to take that message back to their communities to inspire others to make a difference."

At free, McDonald admits, she found the GWIM program humbling. Initially she was partnered with a woman from Equatorial Guinea who constructs schools in impoverished communities using her own hard-earned money. "Yet when she introduced me to the rest of the group, she commended the work I do on top of being a single mother," McDonald says. "It was empowering to have a total stranger recognize me for my accomplishments." The experience helped her realize that one woman can make a difference. "It was something I took back to my community to share with other women."

As part of GWIM, McDonald is tackling a year-long coaching program in which she regularly checks in with a "mentor" on the progress of the goals she has set. One of them involves establishing a women's organization in her northside community, "I see a difference in the way my eighty-year-old daughter, Julianne, views herself as a member of the community. Most important for her, she says, McDonald's perspective, is the "valuable global view she gained of issues facing developing regions. It made her realize that Aboriginal people in Canada are very fortunate. Treaties and agreements are a trade-off and we have to make compromises," she says. "But in the Third World, they have nothing to lose, no safety net. In Canada, some Aboriginal people may live in poverty, but we do have a place at the table. We are ahead of the game."

"Women need access to programs that encourage them to go beyond what they think they can do," says McDonald. "Then they need to take that message back to their communities to inspire others to make a difference."

In June 2009, McDonald became the first Aboriginal woman from Canada to be nominated by the Imperial Oil Foundation to attend GWIM in Washington, DC. Although the 45-year-old had an often difficult childhood in the tiny northern community of Pinaykotchit, she achieved a degree in native studies at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, with an emphasis on economic development, and has worked with oil and gas companies as an adviser dealing with Aboriginal affairs on development projects.
October 2009, Imperial's wholly owned heavy oil operation near Cold Lake, Alberta, joined one of this country's most exclusive lists of milestones when it became just the fourth project or oil field in Canadian history to produce one billion barrels of oil. (The others, if you're curious, are the Syncrude and Suncor oil sands plants near Fort McMurray in northeastern Alberta and the Pembina conventional oil field in central Alberta, discovered in 1953 by Mobil Oil.)

The story of Cold Lake's billionth barrel began more than a half-century ago when Imperial purchased rights to heavy oil deposits near the community of Cold Lake in northeastern Alberta. The purchase demonstrated not only foresight but optimism, because no one at the time had any idea whether the deposits could ever be put to commercial use. Unlike conventional oil reservoirs and some heavy oil (otherwise known as bitumen) deposits in other parts of the world, including Venezuela, the Cold Lake deposits have a consistency that is thicker than molasses at normal reservoir temperature and without induction would not flow to a wellbore drilled into them. Unlike the near-surface deposits in the vicinity
of Fort McMurray, the Cold Lake bitumen was too deeply buried (on average, about 450 metres underground) for surface mining.

Those known drawbacks were counterbal-
anced by one large positive—the immense size of the reservoir. According to Alberta’s Energy Resources and Conservation Board, total bitumen deposits in the Cold Lake region are estimated at about 47 billion barrels, just part of Alberta’s total of 103 billion barrels, which are conservatively estimated at 7.17 trillion barrels.

Of that total by 1970, 40 percent of the oil must be recovered, leaving 60 percent, including the huge deposits in the Cold Lake region, in situ, meaning that the oil must somehow be recovered from 50 percent of the oil stored in the earth’s crust needs to be recovered, leaving 50 percent of the oil stored in the earth’s crust.

Imperial began working almost immedi-
ately to find the key to unlock the value of Cold Lake's bitumen deposits. In the early 1960s, the first major pilot projects to put it to work were launched.

The late 1970s were a time of tremendous optimism about the prospects for growth, particularly in Alberta, according to Imperial’s chairman and CEO in 2002. “By 1976, the pilot was producing at such high rates as expected, and the company’s management began to think that Cold Lake could be a really big deal.”

Despite early obstacles, the Cold Lake project was a significant role in Canada’s future energy supply. and research. “As we moved toward scale-

And so it was back to the drawing board, and what emerged were not simply plans for a new commercial project at Cold Lake but an entirely new approach to development of the Cold Lake area. Instead of a megaproject, the company would proceed in phases. This phased approach would allow Imperial to learn as it went, continuously investing in research, steadily reducing the environmental footprint of its operations, and systematically overcoming the challenges associated with producing, shipping and marketing steadily increasing volumes of a commodity that was by no means the darling of the crude oil marketplace because of the labour and expertise involved in upgrading it.

The modern start of the first phases of commercial production in 1985, Cold Lake’s growth has been driven by the largest thermal, in situ heavy oil production in North America, producing an average of 124,000 barrels a day—nearly five percent of Canada’s total oil output in 2008. In addition to creating significant value for Imperial’s shareholders, the operations’ average output has made a valuable contribution to the country’s balance of payments and, during one recent year, generated $50.5 billion in federal and provincial tax revenue and another $50.5 billion in provincial royalties.

Like many success stories, the positive outcome at Cold Lake seems inevitable in hindsight. But, in fact, there were many major hurdles to overcome along the road from the first pilot projects (Imperial spent $250 million on research before commercial development began) to one billion barrels of production. One of the most daunting issues was water use.

“Back in the days of the early pilot plants, it took more than four barrels of fresh water to recover one barrel of bitumen,” says Eddie Liu, vice-president of oil sands development and research at Imperial Oil’s Calgary Research Centre.
For Randy Broiles, reaching a billion barrels of production at Cold Lake is not simply about technology and persistence. It’s about human imagination.

reducing overall provincial GHG emissions. A second 170-megawatt plant is proposed for the Nalview project.

Looking to the future, Imperial’s research effort at Cold Lake continues with pilot operations that are testing several methods to further enhance the efficiency of bitumen recovery.

“We have a field pilot testing a process we call continuous steam flooding, which uses dedicated wells to inject steam and recover bitumen, rather than the current method of having each well perform both operations,” says Lui. “We are also experimenting with adding solvents to steam to enhance recovery. Both approaches look promising.”

According to Randy Broiles, Imperial’s senior vice-president of resources, the company has also made dramatic strides in increasing recovery rates from the Cold Lake bitumen deposits. In the early pilot projects, about 13 percent of the total bitumen in place was being recovered.

“That percentage has now increased to about 30 percent as a result of our growing knowledge and experience with steam and production cycles,” says Broiles. “And with the research now being conducted, future recovery rates of 50 percent may be possible. In addition, steam injection could eventually be replaced with solvent injection, reducing our GHG intensity.”

But for Broiles, reaching a billion barrels of production at Cold Lake is not simply about technology and persistence. It’s about human imagination overcoming a series of seemingly intractable problems and unlocking a resource that could provide significant benefits to the country’s future well-being.

“I think the biggest contribution that our success at Cold Lake has made to the Canadian energy scene is to give people confidence—people in government, the general public and our neighbours in the local communities—that the huge national resource represented by Canada’s in situ oil sands can be developed in an environmentally responsible and economically sound manner.”
IMPERIAL’S ORIGINAL PITCHMAN

Murray Westgate, our friendly neighbourhood Imperial Esso dealer, reminisces about his days on Hockey Night in Canada. By Jon Harding

The cap with the gleaming bill came off for good more than four decades ago – its best known location a display case at an Esso retail outlet. There was no mistaking the friendly face of Murray Westgate, however, one of many Canadians over the age of 45 still linked with Imperial Oil.

It was the late, legendary Foster Hewitt's usual, tenor-building trademark "Hello, Canada–and hockey fans in the United States" that introduced Hockey Night in Canada (HNC).

But it was Westgate's gravelly tone that soothed frayed nerves between periods. His 90-second plugs for Imperial Esso, shot live in a studio across from Maple Leaf Gardens, ended with his own special lines "Happy motoring. Always look to Imperial for the best." Or years later: "Put a tiger in your tank… Now it's time to go back to the Gardens."

A quirky auto dealer, the friendly neighborhood Imperial Esso dealer began with a sense of nostalgia to Sally Put, the helpful communications adviser at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto.

"He knew what he was talking about," wrote Hall of Fame goalie and hockey historian Ken Dryden back in 2000 in an essay that appeared in the Imperial Oil Review. "He wanted what was good for us."

Even after all these years, Westgate remains somewhat uncomfortable with the renown that still persists, the possibility someone might tap him on the shoulder and offer that standard, familiar line: "Aren't you…?"

"I was crossing Yonge Street not that many years ago and there was a businessman all dressed up and carrying a cell phone," Westgate recalled. "And he shouts at me, 'Hey, you! Come here!' I'm saying to myself, 'Oeet, what have I done, jaywalked?' But he calls me over and says, 'Listen, I'm talking to my wife. Would you be so kind and say "Happy motoring?" to her over the phone?"

Westgate played a key role alongside Hewitt as the CBC and Imperial (HNC) primary sponsor dating back to the birth of the radio broadcasts in 1936 took a calculated step and moved to the space-age new medium known as television in 1952.

Born and raised on Regina's east side, Westgate was Canada's original television pitchman, working along with its French-speaking counterpart Philippe Robert, who played the same friendly Esso dealer on the CBC teletexts in Quebec. In the early days of broadcasting, the live Esso spots were mandatory for anyone wanting to get airtime. Westgate said: He earned $75 for each HNC episode in 1952.

"No one had a clue what they were doing, including the actors and directors. So over the years, yes, there were a few booboos. Remember a fellow actor, who was also a good friend, come on as a guest to pitch Esso Marlboro motor oil, and for the life of him, he just couldn't get 'Marlboro' out of his mouth. 'There weren't that many mucous but they certainly did happen from time to time.' It was worse in those days to have a hookup plan.

"We did get a teleprompter in later years but it kept breaking down, so I would take the script and tape it to the back of an oil can that sat on seat."

Eventually, after the arrival of videotape, Imperial's HNC spots were pre-recorded at CBC studios nearby on Jarvis Street in Toronto. The only live-to-air broadcast remained Westgate's introduction of the Hot Stove League segments between periods. Long-time Leafs owner Conn Smythe, a frequent Hot Stove League guest, used to give Westgate the goods.

"Connie Smythe would come in," recalled Westgate, "not use the proper entrance and walk right across the set, goling the whole picture. Then he'd say, 'Uh-oh, here comes the gas man. That means we've gotta go, doesn't it?"

Westgate's HNC career ended in 1968. He later appeared on stage and in dozens of made-for-TV movies in Canada, receiving an Acadia Award in 1979 for playing the role of a lawyer in a CBC movie called The Ladle.

Westgate's longevity and the soaring success of HNC left him typewriter at a time when serious actors shunned commercial work. Still, "Imperial was very good to me. But it did prevent me from getting work as an actor. It wouldn't have nowadays because [many actors do commercials, but back then, it was shameful for an actor to do a commercial."

"I have no idea what it was about me that Imperial liked. I just went out and read the lines and did my bit."

Westgate even made a comeback for Imperial in a television commercial that aired in the early 1970s—the trademark cap and hoe tie replaced with a baseball-style cap and jacket.

From his collection of memorabilia, including photos alongside former Imperial Chairman Bill Twats with the likes of Hewitt, Westgate dons a newspaper clipping, a half page from a 1987 Globe and Mail. It's the paper's crossword puzzle: the theme of the day is the CBC and one of the clues is: "What Murray Westgate plugged on Hockey Night in Canada?" Four letters.

DRINK CANADA DRY

As a foreign correspondent for the CBC, Joe Schlesinger developed a strong love for Canada by spending nearly half of his career elsewhere.

It was an inspirational welcome, such as "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses." Nothing like that. The message was direct and businesses. It read "Drink Canada Dry."
WAR BROUGHT WOMEN TO IMPERIAL
The women who worked during World War II had a significant impact on today's workforce

For the first time since World War II, women make up more than half of Canada's workforce. According to Statistics Canada, women now represent nearly 51 percent of the country's 14 million waged or salaried workers.

In this issue of The Review, we're pleased to profile a number of accomplished women who have achieved work-life balance while growing their careers at Imperial. Today, women make up a third of Imperial's managerial, professional and technical workforce, an increase from slightly less than 20 percent in 1990. But we wouldn't be where we are today if it wasn't for the women who set the stage for these accomplishments 70 years ago.

Interestingly, the role of women in the workforce really didn't start to change until World War II. In the decade prior, during the Great Depression, women sought out wage labour in order to help their families survive. At first they were hired because companies could pay them less than men. However, it wasn't long before there was a backlash and women were criticized for taking jobs from unemployed men.

According to early issues of The Imperial Oil Review, employment of women at Imperial before 1939 was restricted to clerical positions, service station attendants, the "delicate art of packing candles" in the paraffin works, and product and chemical testing in the laboratories, where "it has been found that girls possess the qualities required by the work" even in a greater degree than the men.

But when war broke out and men went off to fight on the European front, the earlier backlash was forgotten. Women were encouraged, even more so than in WWI, to enter the workplace in large numbers. They were needed to fill positions formerly occupied by men as well as new ones dedicated to the production of war materials.

At Imperial, more than 1,500 women were hired to replace the men who went to serve overseas. Much of the company's work then was devoted to the service of war, and for the first time women were employed in every aspect of the business from welding in the refineries to scientific research. It was during this war that women were first elected to Imperial's Joint Industrial Councils, the labour relations organizations within the company.

When the war ended, however, many women chose to return to their homes or were asked to free up positions for the returning men. But for some, it was this experience that would motivate them to reenter the workforce years later and provide a path for future generations of working women. — Catherine Trudell

“I remember the days when no woman could work at Imperial when she became married. ... It was all right to be engaged, but once you got married, out you went. The war changed everything. They took married women in. They took anybody they could get.”

— Miss Ailie Mitchell, who retired from Imperial as an executive secretary in 1955 after 36 years of service, in a 1989 interview

Pictured here are some of the women who worked for Imperial during World War II.