



Media Release

For Immediate Release

July 28, 2015

SaskEnergy begins next phase of investigation into Prud'homme Cavern Fire

SaskEnergy has started the next phase of its investigation into the October 2014 gas release and fire at its Prud'homme natural gas storage facility east of Saskatoon.

No one was hurt in the nine-day incident that began on October 11th at one of the seven underground caverns and no service was lost to any residential, business or industrial customer. The remaining caverns were not impacted and provided natural gas service to meet the region's peak 2014/15 winter load. The gas release was safely contained on October 17th with the installation of a new wellhead; safety testing and site clearance were completed two days later.

A full investigation was immediately launched to determine the exact cause of the incident and the extent of damage at the site. The original wellhead, which controls the flow of gas into and out of the cavern, was tested at an engineering lab in Calgary and determined the unit was not a contributing factor to the gas release.

SaskEnergy, with the assistance of specialized contractors, also began temporary repair work immediately after the incident to assess the heat damage and ensure the facility was back in operation before peak winter months. Permanent above ground repair work, which included thoroughly inspecting and analyzing the affected equipment at the site, began in March 2015 at the beginning of spring thaw with all above ground repairs and replacements now completed.

SaskEnergy is currently preparing for an internal investigation within the affected cavern well. Preliminary investigative work had discovered an obstruction 3.5 metres below the surface in the steel well casing, which is the pipe that links the surface with the cavern located a kilometre underground in a deep salt formation. SaskEnergy will now use a process of injecting water to remove the remaining gas and transfer it to another cavern at the facility. This injection process maintains the correct internal pressure to preserve the integrity of the cavern. Once the gas is removed, closer inspection of this obstruction will be conducted, with the potential of removing a portion of the well casing for further analysis.

This project is expected to take 30 weeks. Pending the results of this work, the cavern will either be repaired and returned to service, or retired from use by utilizing established protocols and safety procedures.

SaskEnergy continues to add additional pipeline capacity to its natural gas system which, together with its remaining 25 storage caverns, is able to meet Saskatchewan's growing energy requirements.

A USB containing Prud'Homme video and photograph footage is available for media use at the Saskatoon Service Centre, 408 - 36th Street East. Media are welcome to use the Employee & Delivery Entrance Door at the southeast area of the building. Press buzzer at second door for access and ask for Carol Denis or Joanne Buratenski.

For further information, please contact:

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