

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ERCB INVESTIGATING SOUR GAS INCIDENT NEAR OLDS

Calgary, Alberta (December 2, 2009) The Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) is investigating a series of incidents that occurred on the morning of Wednesday, December 2, and led to low concentration sour gas being fed into distribution pipelines belonging to the Foothills Natural Gas Co-op.

At approximately 10 a.m., an incident at a well licensed to Anderson Energy Ltd. led to sour gas entering a sweet gas pipeline running into the Husky Energy Netook gas plant just north of Olds. This resulted in gas with an H₂S content of about 8 parts per million being fed into the transmission line to the Foothills Natural Gas Co-op, which serves approximately 240 rural residential clients around Olds.

Foothills Co-op monitoring equipment detected the sour gas and staff began purging their high-pressure lines that feed a number of regulator stations, which distribute the gas into low-pressure lines running directly to customers. Although the gas was purged from the high pressure distribution lines, trace amounts of the gas were detected in some low-pressure lines.

Foothills Co-op staff contacted each residential customer by phone to advise them that temporary shortages of natural gas service were possible due to the purge. One minor odour complaint was received and handled immediately by Foothills Co-op staff. No evacuations were necessary and there have been no injuries or illnesses reported. The well and the equipment which led to the failure have been shut in.

Customers who detect any odours or have concerns or questions are encouraged to call the Foothills Natural Gas Co-op at (403) 556-3007.

ERCB staff will conduct a thorough investigation into the causes of this incident, which is an unusual one in Alberta's regulatory history.

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