

# a c r o s s t h e b o a r d



The EUB has committed to delivering 90 per cent of hearing decisions within 90 days of the end of a hearing. The EUB holds between 20 and 80 public hearings every year. (See story, right.)

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### About the EUB

*Our mission is to ensure that the discovery, development, and delivery of Alberta's resources take place in a manner that is fair, responsible, and in the public interest. We regulate oil, natural gas, oil sands, coal, hydro and electric energy, pipelines, and transmission line development. On the utilities side, we regulate investor-owned natural gas, electric, and water utilities to ensure that customers receive safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates. Regulation is done through four core functions: adjudication and regulation, applications, surveillance and enforcement, and information.*

## A Commitment to Timeliness

**I**n the past few years, public and industry stakeholders told us that hearing decisions were taking too long. In 1999, the EUB set a course to respond to this input. Starting in April 2000, the EUB committed to delivering 90 per cent of all hearing decisions within 90 days of the end of the hearing. This goal is to move to 95 per cent in 2001 and finally 100 per cent in 2002. Most important, the so-called 90/90 rule must maintain or enhance the current quality of decisions.

### Getting ready to deliver on the 90/90 rule

In the summer of 1999, the EUB reorganized its 650 staff into nine branches. One of the objectives of this reorganization was to build a structure that would align the many processes involved in hearings and decisions.

The Applications Branch, for example, now provides an integrated approach

could be improved. What became apparent was that there are no obvious "big hits" that would significantly reduce hearing time. Instead, we have to make smaller gains at every step, shaving hours and days off the entire process along the way.

For example, it is clear that booking panel members to serve on back-to-back hearings does not leave enough time for a panel to render a decision in the first hearing. To improve this situation, we may have to make better use of the EUB's 30 "examiners." These are experienced senior technical staff who can serve on hearing panels, with the Board then ratifying the examiners' report. In addition, we are striving to minimize assignment overlap for hearing coordinators and staff specialists, allowing them time to focus on assisting the panel in issuing its decision report before moving on to the next hearing.

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to processing more than 20 000 applications per year. Just over 100 staff handle the review of all above- and below-ground projects related to oil, gas, pipelines, oil sands, electricity, and coal. Even though fewer than 1 per cent of applications end up in a hearing, this consolidation was a significant first step in streamlining the process leading to quality, timely decisions. (For now, utility applications are handled in the Utilities Branch but are also subject to the 90/90 rule.)

### Understanding the details of the hearing and decision process

In 1999, EUB staff also began to analyze the hearing process in detail to see what

### A single focus for improvements

One of the most important results of the 1999 analysis was the creation of the Senior Applications Officer position to marshal the resources needed across the EUB to make 90/90 a reality. The priority for 2000 is to apply rigorous project management skills to all aspects of the hearing and decision process.

Another challenge is to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all involved, from the person booking a meeting hall to panel member, from legal counsel to decision report coordinator. The Senior Applications Officer has asked all staff to submit ideas for improvements, both large and small.

**For Your Information...****Recent EUB Publications****General Bulletins****GB 2000-18:** 2000 Abandonment Fund Levy**GB 2000-19:** A Summary of the 1998 and 1999 Annual Oilfield Waste Disposition Reports**Informational Letters****IL 2000-3:** Guide 7 - Revised Section

"S-4: Change of Well Status Statement," August 2000 Edition

**Publications****Guide 7:** Production Accounting Handbook, Revised Section S-4: Change of Well Status Statement (August 2000)**ST 2000-29:** Alberta Coal Industry Annual Statistics - 1999**Statistical Series 57:** Field Surveillance Provincial Summaries, April 1999/March 2000**ST 2000-60B:** Upstream Petroleum Industry Flaring Report for 1999**ST 2000-78:** Pipeline Location Plats (available on CD)

For information on how to obtain copies of these documents, see page 4.
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**Recent Decisions***July 25:* Denied EPCOR Generation Inc.'s (EGI) request for review and variance of Decision U99099. EGI requested to vary the levels of economic generation above maximum continuous rating (MCR). The Board denied EGI's application. (Decision 2000-53)*August 8:* Approved ATCO Electric Ltd.'s 2001 Interim Distribution Tariff, including rates and terms and conditions of service (T&C) effective January 1, 2001. The interim refundable rates approved by the Board were essentially ATCO's 2000 approved rates subject to three adjustments (removing energy component, scaling down transmission component to level of Transmission Administrator's interim 2001 rates, and scaling down ATCO's distribution component by amounts allocated to retail billing and retail and marketing costs, which will be captured in the Regulated Rate Option Tariff). Existing 2000 T&C were approved as interim 2001 T&C subject to some modifications relating to Distribution Service Connections necessary to make the T&C compatible with legislated changes to be effective January 1, 2001. (Decision 2000-55)*August 8:* Approved TransAlta Utilities Corporation's (TAU) 2001 Interim Distribution Tariff, including rates and terms and conditions of service (T&C), effective January 1, 2001. The

interim refundable rates approved by the Board reflect the method set out in Decision 2000-44, the approved treatment of Option B Credits set out in Decision 2000-48, and revised transmission costs based on the rate schedules in the Transmission Administrator's refiled 2001 interim tariff. Interim T&amp;C were approved as filed by TAU. (Decision 2000-56)

*August 8:* Approved ESBI Alberta Ltd.'s (EAL or TA) 2001 Interim Tariff, including rates and terms and conditions of service (T&C). The interim refundable rates approved by the Board reflect its direction in Decision 2000-37 that reallocation of 100 per cent of losses to supply customers not occur pending the main hearing of the TA tariff application in September and its direction to include \$1.3 million in farm transmission costs from TransAlta's 2001 Distribution Facility Owner Tariff in Decision 2000-48. Approved T&C; did not include Appendix E (System Support Services - Thermal Power Purchase Arrangements) in accordance with Decision 2000-46 or Appendix F (relating to Hydro PPAs). (Decision 2000-57)*August 15:* Approved two applications from Union Pacific Resources Inc. for a sour gas compressor station and associated pipelines in the Telfordville Field on the condition that Union Pacific meet all regulatory requirements and commitments made during the application and the hearing. (Decision 2000-58)*August 30:* Issued Decision 2000-61, dealing with a compliance filing which finalizes the Phase II portion of a General Rate Application (GRA) by ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd. The decision reduces ATCO's monthly fixed charge for residential customers to \$13 from \$14, and the energy charge to \$0.952/GJ from \$1.053/GJ; approves ATCO's revised Cost of Service study and finalizes the associated changes to ATCO's rates, tolls, and charges. (Decision 2000-61)*August 30:* Approved a negotiated settlement between ATCO Electric Ltd. (ATCO) and its customers respecting the final balance and disposition of all ATCO's 1999 deferral accounts. As part of the settlement, ATCO will implement an increased across-the-board rate rider of 4.13 per cent. The new rates take effect for billings rendered between September 1, 2000, and December 31, 2000. (Decision 2000-62)*August 31:* Approved an interim rate rider increase for all TransAlta Utilities Corporation (TransAlta) customers. The new rates take effect for billings commencing September 1, 2000. The average residential customer will pay approximately \$5.94 more per month. (Decision 2000-60)**A Commitment to Timeliness***continued from page 1***Revising the rules of practice for hearings**

The EUB Law Branch started to review the rules of practice for hearings for energy and utility matters in 1999. As a quasi-judicial body, the EUB must ensure that a hearing is governed by rules that are fair, up to date, and clear to everyone involved. In May 2000, the EUB issued Draft EUB Rules of Practice, seeking comments from stakeholders. We will be reviewing the comments received this fall. The new rules of practice should support the timeliness and quality of the hearing process.

*...staff agree that the timeliness and quality of our hearing decisions are two of the most important standards by which Albertans judge our performance in serving the public interest.*

In October 1999, the Law Branch also launched a review of the EUB's intervener cost recovery policies and procedures for both energy and utility proceedings before the Board. Intervener cost recovery is intended to ensure a level playing field for interested parties who want to participate in a hearing before the Board. It reimburses the public hearing costs incurred by those parties who may be directly affected by a decision of the Board.

The EUB requested and received written submissions from interested parties on various cost issues and then held two public workshops on June 21 and 22, 2000, in which those issues were further discussed. One of the primary goals of the cost review is to establish a more efficient and user-friendly system for filing and processing cost claims. The cost review committee intends to present its recommendations to the Board this fall.

The 90/90 target is challenging, but staff agree that the timeliness and quality of our hearing decisions are two of the most important standards by which Albertans judge our performance in serving the public interest. ❖

## Technology Initiatives at the EUB

It is common knowledge that if an organization, no matter in what industry, wants to stay successful, it must tackle the challenges of information technology and e-commerce head on. A goal of the EUB is to modernize its information management processes and business systems to deliver twenty-first-century service to our stakeholders. Our information management vision states:

- Outstandingly effective, efficient information management will be a cornerstone of a healthy Alberta economy and a competitive Canadian resource industry.
- Skilled, knowledgeable people will leverage information processes and technology to continually enhance business-driven information value.
- All stakeholders will have easy, centralized access to accurate, comprehensive, and timely information.

To achieve this vision, the EUB is entering a renewal period where we will be reinvesting in information management and business system redevelopment. Many of our major business systems operate on a mainframe system with a nonrelational database management system. Access to information is not as easy with these systems as we would like, limiting our day-to-day operational capability. As the first step to resolve this problem, the EUB will be moving all its mainframe data into a data warehouse, which can be accessed by modern business tools.

One significant goal is to integrate e-business capabilities into new and existing systems to create electronic interfaces with stakeholders. The result will be better, more accurate information as time lines

shrink between submitting a form and waiting for results. More timely and easier access to information enhances everyone's business processes.

"Everyone will be doing e-business, which to the EUB means everyday business. E-business will be integrated into our normal business practices and become the natural way of doing business," said James Wekel, EUB Chief Technology Officer.

Some of the major initiatives that support this direction are:

- Liability Management Process - with a Web interface, this new process will support retrospective licensing of facilities.
- Well Records System - in January 2001, well and drilling completion schedules will be submitted interactively on the Web (a copy of *Guide 59: Well Drilling and Completion Data Filing Requirements*, is available from EUB Information Services or at [www.eub.gov.ab.ca](http://www.eub.gov.ab.ca)).
- Integrated Applications - this multiyear redevelopment of business systems will support all application processes; the first phase will provide stakeholders with Web access to the current status of an application, with later phases allowing electronic submission of applications.
- Field Inspection System - will replace four existing mainframe systems.
- Board Order System - will provide interactive Web access to EUB field/pool orders and gas strike areas later this year.
- Volumetric and Infrastructure Petroleum Information Registry (VIPIR) - will provide an e-business volumetric reporting interface between industry and government. ❖

## Questions, Complaints, Problems? Who to contact...

**Utilities**—For general information or to file a consumer utility complaint, please contact us at:

EUB Utilities Branch  
10th floor, 10055 - 106 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2Y2  
Telephone: (780) 427-4901  
Fax: (780) 427-6970  
E-mail: [utilities.concerns@eub.gov.ab.ca](mailto:utilities.concerns@eub.gov.ab.ca)

**Oil and Gas**—For information or complaints about new or existing oil and gas developments and facilities, we recommend contacting the operating company first. If the company doesn't respond appropriately, you can contact the nearest EUB field centre (see list), all of which provide 24-hour on-call service.

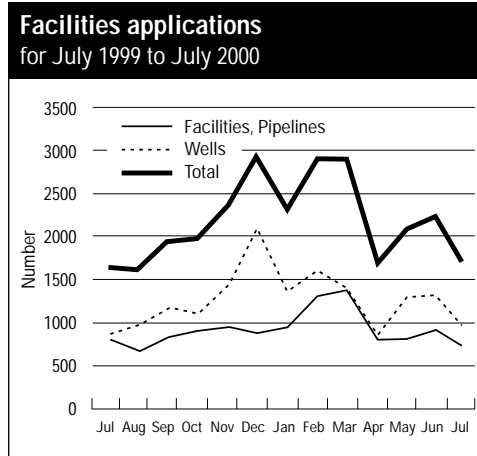
### EUB Field Centres (24-hour on call)

Bonnyville	(780) 826-5352*
Drayton Valley	(780) 542-5182*
Grande Prairie	(780) 538-5138*
Medicine Hat	(403) 527-3385*
Midnapore	(403) 297-8303*
Red Deer	(403) 340-5454*
St. Albert	(780) 460-3800*
Wainwright	(780) 842-7570*

\* To call toll free from anywhere in Alberta, dial 310-0000 and enter the 7-digit local number to connect, or press zero for a RITE operator.

## Application Summary

Facilities applications for July 2000	
Production facilities	139
Pipelines	585
Wells	983
Total received	1707
Total completed/approved	1457
Closed	12
Withdrawn	41



Resource applications for July 2000	
Equity (rateable take, common carrier, common purchaser, common processor, compulsory pooling, special spacing)	43
Conservation (resources – oil, gas, and in situ bitumen; gas removal, enhanced recovery, water disposal, concurrent production, underground storage, commingled production, reserves)	77
Depletion administration (good production practice, penalty relief)	13
Corporate (transfer)	6
Mining (coal and mineable oil sands)	0
Total received	139
Total completed/approved	195

Utilities applications for July 2000	
Electric	1
Gas	4
Facilities	5
Franchises and others	6
Total received	16
Total completed/approved	17

Corporate transfers and name changes for July 2000	
Well licence transfers	650
Well licence name changes	543
Pipeline licence transfers	115
Total received	1308
Total completed	1285

## Upcoming Public Hearings: Fall 2000

Please note: Due to space constraints, this list only covers hearings scheduled for the next two months, and some company names have been abbreviated. For information on hearings scheduled later in the year, call (403) 297-8259. Actual hearing durations can vary significantly. Unless otherwise noted, hearings begin at 9:00 a.m. and are open to the public. If you are interested in attending one, please call the above number to reconfirm the date, time, and place.

Scheduled Start Date	Application No.	Applicant	Hearing Purpose	Location
September 7 Prehearing	1060529, 1061622 1062380	Canadian Natural Resources Limited, Renaissance Energy Ltd.	Reduced interwell spacing - Brintnell field. Request for CNR to apply for gas production - Brintnell and Sandy fields	Govier Hall, 2nd floor, 640-5 Avenue SW, Calgary
September 21	2000266	TransAlta Utilities Corporation	2001 Transmission Facility Owner (TFO) Tariff Negotiated Settlement Agreement	Govier Hall, 2nd floor, 640-5 Avenue SW, Calgary
	2000132, 2000133 2000134, 2000135	ATCO Electric Ltd., EPCOR Transmission Inc., TransAlta Utilities Corporation, EAL	2001-200X TFO & TA Rate Applications (Final)	
September 26	1048341, 1060562	Nycan Energy Corp. & Sphere Energy Corp.	Section 43 Review - Off Target Penalty - Forty Mile field	West Hall, 2nd floor, 640-5 Avenue SW, Calgary
October 5	1069525	Canadian Hunter Exploration Ltd.	Compulsory pooling application - Peacock area	West Hall, 2nd floor, 640-5 Avenue SW, Calgary
October 5	1065384, 1065389 1065390, 1065391 1065394	Burlington Resources Canada Energy Ltd.	Application to construct and operate a gas gathering system-compressor station, water disposal, sales and fuel gas pipelines. Gregg Lake area	EUB Office - 30 Sir Winston Churchill Avenue, St. Albert
October 12 Prehearing	1067422	Surmont Compensation	Proceeding pursuant to OC 196/2000-direction to the EUB to prepare a scheme for compensation to persons who suffer injury or loss as a result of Board Decision 2000-22	National Energy Board Building 444-7 Avenue SW, Calgary
October 17	990289, 1055407	EPCOR Power Development Corporation & EPCOR Generation Inc., ATCO Pipelines	Rossdale Power Plant Unit 11 - Application for a 406.4mm high-pressure natural gas pipeline to supply the Rossdale plant	EUB Utility Branch Office, 12 Floor, 10055-106 Street, Edmonton
October 23	1068005	Bears paw Petroleum Ltd.	Compulsory pooling application - Ewing Lake field	Govier Hall, 2nd floor, 640-5 Avenue SW, Calgary
October 24	1067696	Benson Petroleum Ltd.	Compulsory pooling application - Lloydminster field	Govier Hall, 2nd floor, 640-5 Avenue SW, Calgary
October 30	2000094	Northern Western Utilities Limited operating as ATCO Gas North	2000 Summer GCRR: Cost of Gas Supply: to address concerns expressed by NCC about optimum levels of production from NULS company-owned wells - Viking field	EUB Utility Branch Office, 12 Floor, 10055-106 Street, Edmonton
November 7	1042932	Shell Canada Limited	Well licence application - Level-4 critical sour gas well - Ferrier field	Dovercourt Community Hall, 16 km south of Highway 11 and 22 intersection near Rocky Mountain House
November 20 Prehearing	2000138 2000139	ATCO Electric Ltd., Utilicorp Networks Canada (Alberta) Ltd.	2001-200X - Regulated Rate Option Tariff	EUB Utility Branch Office, 12 Floor, 10055-106 Street, Edmonton
November 20	2000136 2000137 2000138 2000139	ATCO Electric Ltd., Utilicorp Networks Canada (Alberta) Ltd.	2001-200X DT - Distribution Tariff (Final) and Regulated Rate Option Tariff (Interim & Final)	EUB Utility Branch Office, 12 Floor, 10055-106 Street, Edmonton

## Pending Decisions

Application No.	Applicant	Hearing Purpose	Hearing Date(s)	Actual Hearing Days
990005	ESBI Alberta Ltd.	Application for R&V by the City of Medicine Hat of Decision 2000-34 issued May 31, 2000 (dealt with EAL's second refilling of its 1999/2000 GTA). Customer-owned substation credit and dual-use customer investment credit.	(written proceeding)	
960313, 960314	Cardinal River Coals Ltd.	Joint Review Panel hearing for Cheviot Coal Mine Project - Mountain Park area. EUB/Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency	March 1-10 April 25-27	11

### across the board

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