

Tire life at Albian up 20 per cent

The tires on Albian's Caterpillar 797B heavy hauler trucks are lasting longer and performing better thanks to an extensive tire care awareness program at the site and the concerted effort of all employees.

"Our tire life has increased significantly since the fall of 2003," says Bob Riggle, Manager, Mine Operations and Ore Prep at Albian. "And that's fantastic news coming at a time when world-wide availability of heavy hauler tires is at an all-time low."

The global tire shortage is being driven by a surging demand for coal, minerals and oil sands, and consequently, the machinery used to extract them.

"What's remarkable right now is that all industries in the mining sector - coal, copper, diamond, gold, and oil sands - have all peaked at the same time," says Riggle.

"With all these industries going full out with respect to production and growth, it has put a strain on the availability of mining equipment, like the big heavy hauler tires, as suppliers struggle to meet the demand."



When rubber like this reaches the end of its useful life you can't just replace it at your local tire store. Albian Sands saw the tire crunch coming and has invested in tire care training for mine team members. As a result, tire life is up dramatically.

The cost of replacement tires runs upwards of \$50,000, but the costs run even higher if tires are simply not available and a truck must sit idle, a situation that Albian is eager to prevent.

The company's strategy to ensure an adequate supply has been two-pronged.

First, about a year ago, recognizing early that a tire shortage was looming for the industry, Albian's senior leadership proactively secured an adequate supply of tires to meet the needs of the operation moving forward.

"Albian is in a good position with respect to having an adequate stock of tires," affirms Riggle.

Secondly, Albian implemented an aggressive employee awareness program under the leadership of Dean Gillingham, Mine Operations Manager, a cornerstone of which was the

development of a new Computer Based Learning (CBL) module on tire care last fall.

The tire care module is not just for mechanics and heavy hauler operators. Proper tire stewardship is based on the philosophy that everyone who operates equipment in the mine can have a role to play in tire care, for example by being vigilant for hazards on the roads and notifying the proper authorities.

"We are proud of our accomplishments to date. Having enough tires and improving how long we have them has been a real success story for Albian and we have the commitment and engagement of our employees to thank for that," says Riggle.

"The longest tire life in the industry on record is 10,000 hours and our ultimate goal is to beat that."

Hwy 15 traffic lights re-installed

Shell Canada is working with provincial authorities to have traffic lights re-installed at a key intersection south of its Scotford Upgrader – but remains committed to finding a long-term solution for increased traffic in the area.

The lights were erected at the intersection of Highway 15 and Range Road 214 in late March and, after turning lanes are re-painted and minor asphalt repairs completed, will be fully operational by mid-April.

Installation of the lights was timed so completion would be in advance of the Shell Scotford Upgrader spring maintenance turnaround, which begins at the end of April. The contractor workforce will peak at nearly 2,000 during the turnaround, so with the added traffic Shell recognized the need to bring back the lights.

“The primary driver of this work is the increased traffic and safety needs of our employees, contractors and neighbours,” said Mike Saretsky, Regulatory Affairs Coordinator.

“We took it upon ourselves to re-establish the traffic lights at that important intersection, while we continue to pursue a more permanent solution.”

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, Strathcona County and Shell have worked collectively on this project for several months. Even with the lights in place, this is “the first step of a much more comprehensive plan for this intersection,” Saretsky said.

During the turnaround, when traffic volume is higher than normal, the design of the interchange will be reviewed and traffic counts will be conducted. The goal: to develop a plan that takes into consideration future industrial growth in the area – including Shell’s planned Upgrader expansion over the next decade – while meeting the needs of those who live and work in the region.

“What we’re trying to do is get some hard evidence for traffic modelling

purposes... to see how that intersection is functioning and what it can accommodate in terms of traffic volume,” said Saretsky.

Traffic lights were put in place during construction of the Upgrader, but dismantled in July 2003, a few months after crude oil production started at the new facility.



Workers re-install traffic lights on Highway 15 south of the Scotford Upgrader. Installation of the lights will be completed in advance of the Shell Scotford Upgrader spring maintenance turnaround.

Shell sponsors blue bag program

Shell Scotford has partnered with the City of Fort Saskatchewan on a new curbside recycling program that is expected to have an immediate environmental impact.

As part of their \$100,000 sponsorship over the next three years, Shell will provide the blue bags – or “Shell Recycling Sacks” – free of charge to each and every home in the city. Fort Saskatchewan Scouts members will deliver the 20-pack bags later this month, and the first recycling pick-up date is set at May 1.

“We are excited to be partnering with the City of Fort Saskatchewan on a worthwhile program like curbside recycling,” said Peter St. George, Scotford Upgrader general manager.

“We believe the city is taking a big step forward by introducing this program, and in doing so will become a model for other communities that pursue recycling options. We’re proud to help facilitate the process by making it easier for residents to participate in the program.” Residents who use up their first package of



Shell Recycling Sacks may pick up additional bags at city facilities including City Hall, Community and Protective Services, Planning and Public Works or the Dow Centennial Centre. With the help of the blue bag program, city

Shell Scotford Upgrader general manager Peter St. George, centre, was on hand to help City of Fort Saskatchewan Mayor Jim Sheasgreen, right, and Coun. Ed Marler announce Shell’s sponsorship of the city’s blue bag recycling program. The three-year agreement will see Shell Scotford provide the bags for all Fort Saskatchewan residents, and is expected to help boost participation in the new curbside recycling program.

officials aim to bring their residential recycling participation up to the 60 to 80 per cent range. Currently, an estimated 20 to 30 per cent use the city’s drop-off recycling depots.

Fort Saskatchewan Mayor Jim Sheasgreen is confident that Shell’s involvement will give the Recycling Program that huge boost.

“I’m not aware of another company anywhere that has done this and I want to extend our thanks to Shell for sponsoring the blue bag portion of our recycling program,” said Sheasgreen.

“Shell is a wonderful corporate citizen and has

Work gloves' value is proven on the job

Unlike all other tools, the human hand can perform an almost limitless number of tasks – which is why protecting it so important when on the job.

As part of its on-going safety research, Shell Canada is looking at ways to reduce hand injuries, including increased use of safety gloves.

As we noted in a previous Connections article, dangers to hands are a major concern at Albion and Shell Canada. About one out of every three injuries among Shell's workforce involve hands. Hand injuries, in fact, account for the biggest proportion of incidents, totalling 32 per cent. Slipping/tripping incidents account for 24 per cent of injuries, and 22 per cent result from being struck by an object.

“There's not only the physical protection that gloves give you. Just wearing them makes you aware of the dangers.”

About two years ago, the Shell plants in central Alberta – Caroline, Burnt Timber and Shantz – adopted a mandatory glove policy in an effort to reduce hand injuries.

“It seems to be working, because those sites haven't had any hand injuries since the policy was put in place,” says Shell's Dave Patterson, Manager, HSE Management Systems. “It's not the magic solution, but it's a step that could get us partway to our goal.”

While wearing gloves can prevent minor injuries such as pinches and small cuts, in theory they wouldn't be of much help if your fingers or knuckles get in the way of a sledge hammer, grinder or power-saw blade. Yet there seems to be a benefit that goes beyond the resilience of leather, canvas or rubber.

“There's not only the physical protection that gloves give you,” Patterson says. “Just wearing them makes you aware of the dangers.”

For this reason, E&P promotes the mandatory use of gloves at all its sites unless the task requires bare hands after examining the risks.

“We would want them to do a risk assessment first. That should not only lower the risk of injury in each instance, it would also reinforce the idea



A wide variety of gloves is available to protect workers from hazards such as heat, chemicals and abrasion. Shell is researching the market to match the best gloves to every application at its sites.

that the normal procedure is to be wearing gloves, and not wearing them would be the exception – not the other way round.”

As for which types of gloves, that would likely be a choice made at the front lines, so employees and supervisors can match the right glove to each task.

Shell continues to research the glove market to identify which designs are suitable for which activities. This is something like the current drive to locate the ideal boots for slippery surfaces, described in a previous Connections article. However, it's tough to find any one form of hand covering that works universally. Gloves can be purchased specifically for protection against cuts, heat, chemicals, vibrations and many other hazards.

“I'd say we're not as far along in this as the search for the right boots for ice and snow,” Patterson says, “but we are making progress with gloves, especially considering the work at Caroline, Burnt Timber and Shantz.”

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made so many contributions to Fort Saskatchewan over the years, not the least of which was sponsoring the Shell Theatre at the Dow Centennial Centre.

“It's obvious that Shell is committed to our community and our environment, and thanks to

this most recent sponsorship, residents really have no reason not to recycle. We've tailored our program to make recycling as easy as possible and now that residents will have one free bag to use each week, we're confident the program will be a huge success.”

In the coming weeks, additional information on the program will be available in the city's print and electronic advertising, at several city facilities, and at the Fort Saskatchewan Trade Show, April 21-23.

AOSP Connections

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