

U of C Opens New Oilsands Facility

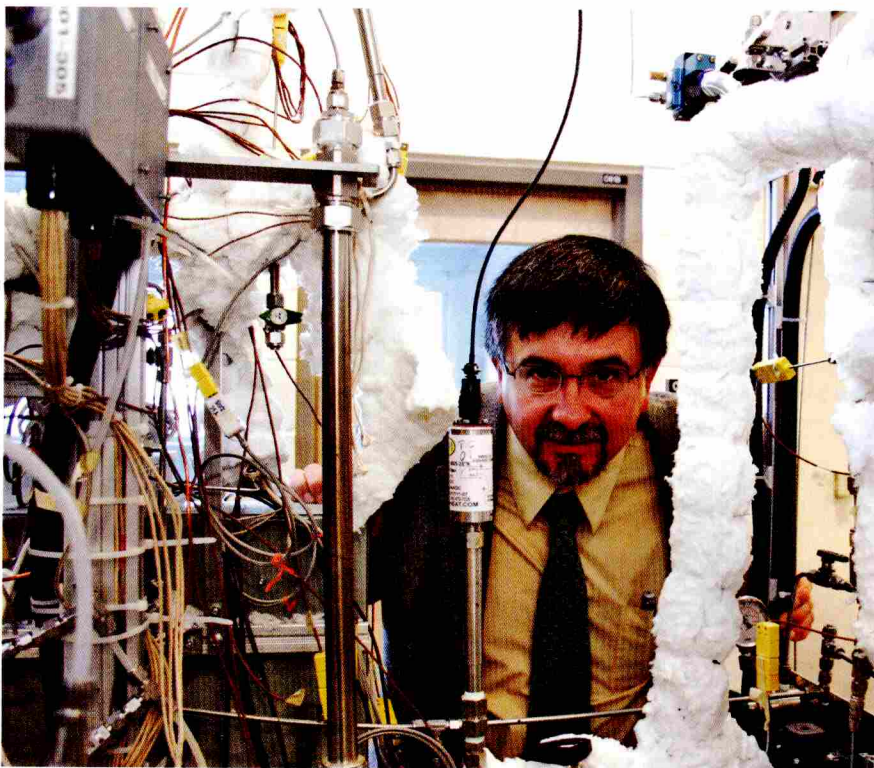
In-situ upgrading of oilsands will be the focus of a new research facility consisting of nine “mini-refineries” at the University of Calgary, which was officially opened in early February.

The idea behind the In Situ Energy Centre is to inject a chemical catalyst in the form of nano-sized particles directly into the reservoir and ensure this nano-catalyst is thoroughly dispersed into complex oilsands deposits. In essence, the process enables the extraction and partial upgrading of the bitumen to take place underground.

The U of C, through a joint initiative led by the Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy (ISEEE) and the Schulich School of Engineering, received more than \$9.3 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation for the new multidisciplinary research facility.

The In Situ Energy Centre has also received significant funding from the provincial government, through Alberta Innovates, and from ISEEE.

In addition to federal and provincial funding, the U of C’s in-situ upgrading research program has attracted support from industry, including Shell Canada, Total Canada, Nexen Inc., Repsol and ConocoPhillips.



“Our research is focused on reducing the environmental footprint of oilsands production by enhancing the upgrading of bitumen directly in the reservoir,” says Pedro Pereira Almas, Professor in the Schulich School of Engineering and Director of the In Situ Energy Centre. Photo by Ken Bendiktsen.