

Community concerns addressed through industry collaboration

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The Aurora community will see reductions in dust and other issues following a unique project that saw seven oil and gas companies work with Clearwater County and the community during recent months.

The project grew out of rising concerns in the community when oil and gas activity in that region increased significantly.

Safety and quality of life were the primary concerns resulting from increased traffic and the amount of dust in particular created last summer. After a couple of collisions and mounting frustration, said resident Darcy Hollingsworth, a community meeting was held.

More than 50 people turned out at the Aurora Hall last fall looking for a way to express their concerns and get questions answered. Hollingsworth, along with neighbour Rodney Hollingsworth, contacted West Central Stakeholders group.

The Aurora Energy Working Group was quickly formed with the WCS companies active in the Aurora area.

“Through West Central we got contacts for all the companies. Knowing who to call has been very helpful,” said Darcy.

The group then discussed an issue of particular concern- dust on Hwy 761 where the provincial highway becomes gravel. The stretch of road does not fall under Clearwater County road use regulations and was a major problem in the area.

The seven companies (Bonavista, Apache, Penn West, ConocoPhillips, Imperial Oil, Talisman and TAQA North) eventually agreed to cost share a better approach to addressing the safety and quality of life issues presented by the dust and traffic on that portion of road.

It’s a unique approach to a one-of-a-kind situation.

The project wrapped up May 21st with a community appreciation BBQ at Aurora Hall. It was attended by about 80 community and industry people.

The Aurora Energy Working Group will meet again in the fall to follow up on the summer months and check for any outstanding issues. Communication will continue amongst all the stakeholders through West Central Stakeholders as well as the Rimby Regional Synergy Group to the east.