

Media Release

Ardrossan Air Quality Monitoring Station Unveiled

SIA and Strathcona County Celebrate Collaborative Partnership

June 3, 2015 – Across the country, annual Clean Air Day events are being held to raise awareness and encourage action that will improve the air we breathe and the health of our communities. This year in Ardrossan, locals are celebrating a partnership initiative between the Strathcona Industrial Association (SIA) and Strathcona County that promises to keep air quality on the radar for many years to come.

“Today we are proud to open our Ardrossan Air Quality Monitoring Station,” said John Prusakowski, SIA Board President and Vice President of the Suncor Edmonton Refinery. “This state-of-the-art facility allows us to monitor air quality in the region as well as long-term trends.”

The new station is an initiative of the SIA and Strathcona County to address an identified gap in monitoring for the growing population in the County, east of Sherwood Park. Strathcona County contributed use of the land and \$50,000 toward the station, which cost approximately \$250,000. The County is also contributing half of the estimated \$60,000 per year operating costs.

“A guiding theme in the County’s Environmental Sustainability Framework is Air Emissions,” said Strathcona County Mayor Roxanne Carr. “Air quality in Strathcona County must support the health and well-being of our citizens. This partnership is a great example of industry voluntarily expanding important measuring and monitoring systems. The Ardrossan community monitoring station incorporates some of the most advanced technology to date and represents a new standard for air quality monitoring excellence in the province.”

Over the last four decades, SIA has built a robust ambient air quality monitoring network in the region. The new Ardrossan site will complement SIA’s existing stations located in Sherwood Park, Gold Bar and Beverly. These stations are responsible for gathering scientifically valid air quality information that is shared on the Alberta Capital Airshed website and used to inform the region’s Air Quality Health Index (AQHI). For more information about SIA’s Air Quality Monitoring Network, visit www.sia.ab.ca

“The AQHI is a useful tool that provides a snapshot of outside air quality in the area and the relative health risk presented by a mixture of common air pollutants,” explains Prusakowski. “Thanks to our data and the province’s AQHI app, local community members now have even more up to date air quality and health information at their fingertips.”

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Background

The new Ardrossan station is a welcome addition to Strathcona County and to the Strathcona Industrial Association's (SIA) existing air quality monitoring network. Commissioned following a 2012 assessment study that identified room for improvement in existing data collection sources, the Ardrossan facility has been made possible by a collaborative partnership between SIA and Strathcona County. The state-of-the-art station, which celebrated its grand opening on Clean Air Day (June 3) in 2015, incorporates leading-edge technology and is poised to gather valuable information pertaining to voluntary air quality monitoring and measurement in the region.

Strathcona County's Environmental Sustainability Framework

Strathcona County is a specialized municipality and diverse in its makeup, with a major industrial base, and also a portion of the Beaver Hills area – a stagnant ice moraine also known as the Cooking Lake Moraine. The urban and rural interface is reflected in the Environmental Sustainability Framework, a tool for decision making as it relates to the natural environment. Air Emissions is one of the Framework guiding themes. The Air Emissions Goal is to have zero occurrences of exceedance of the Canada-wide standard for particle matter and ozone. Success is also measured through indicators such as total greenhouse gas emissions reduced through County initiatives, total urban tree inventory and total annual transit ridership. The entire Environmental Sustainability Framework is available at <http://www.strathcona.ca/>

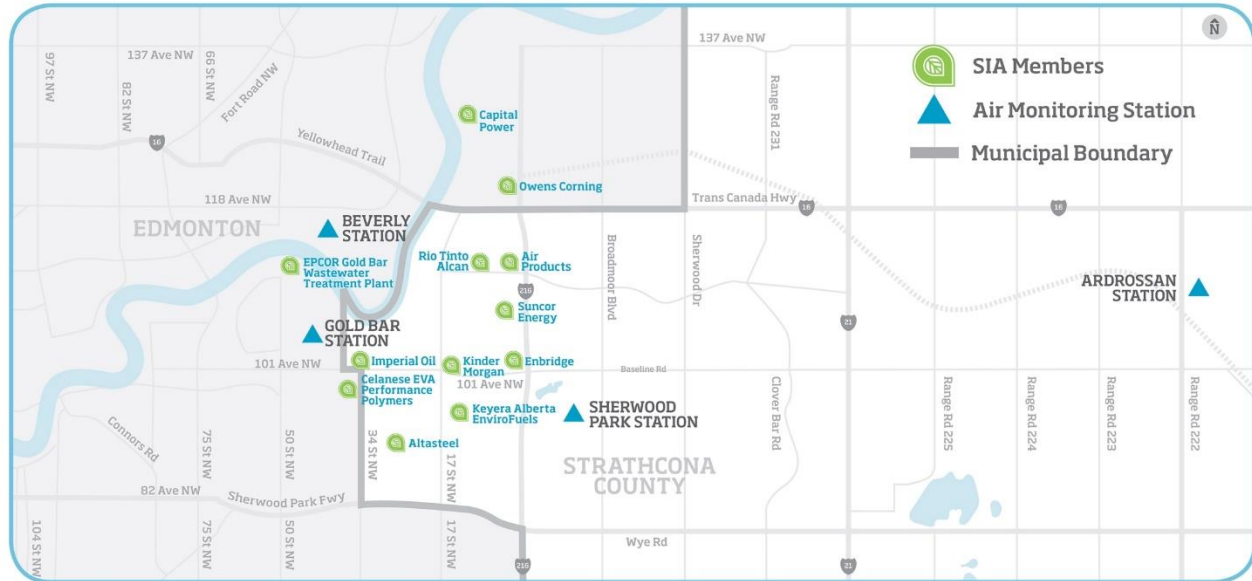
SIA's Role

Since its inception nearly four decades ago, SIA has been actively contributing to improved environmental performance and monitoring in east Edmonton and Strathcona County. The association is comprised of 12 member companies that share a commitment to environmental performance, safety and the wellbeing of the communities in which they operate as responsible industrial neighbours. SIA's focus on responsible air quality management dates back to 1976 when multi-stakeholder monitoring was first endorsed and adopted by local industry and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resources Development (ESRD).

Not long after, four continuous air monitoring stations were commissioned and in the years that have followed, a robust ambient air quality monitoring network has been successfully established.

Air Quality Monitoring Today

SIA's comprehensive air quality monitoring network was one of the first of its kind in Alberta and continues to set the bar for air monitoring excellence across the province. The stations, which are located in Sherwood Park, Gold Bar, Beverley and now Ardrossan, are responsible for gathering scientifically valid data about current local air quality as well as long-term trends.



Using continuous monitoring (readings taken every second, 365 days/year) and intermittent monitoring (sensors exposed for 24 hours every six days), these stations collect information pertaining to Hydrogen Sulphide, Sulphur Dioxide, Oxides of Nitrogen, Total Hydrocarbons and Particulate Matter levels in the air as well as wind speed, direction and temperature. This data provides reliable real-time information and is readily available to the public via the Alberta Capital Airshed website (www.capitalairshed.ca).

Air Quality Partners

In addition to working with Strathcona County to establish the new Ardrossan station, SIA is proud to be a part of the Alberta Capital Airshed (ACA), alongside municipalities, environmental and health agencies and other industries. The ACA is responsible for developing air quality management and monitoring recommendations and relies on air quality data from SIA's monitoring network and other locations to report on air quality in the region). The ACA promotes the AQHI, which is a useful tool that provides a snapshot of outside air quality in the region and relative health risk presented by a mixture of common air pollutants.

Air Quality

The quality of the air we breathe is influenced by a number of factors. Air pollutants originate from a combination of 'area sources' such as home and commercial operations, 'point sources' from industry and 'non-point sources' from vehicle emissions. Local topography, wind speed and direction, temperature and turbulence also play a key role in the rate at which these air contaminants will eventually disperse.

For more information about SIA's Air Quality Monitoring Network, please visit www.sia.ab.ca.