

**LEVEL OF DESCRIPTION:**

Series

**No.:**

AU023.020S

**FORMS PART OF:**

AU023 Martha Kostuch fonds

**TITLE:**

Lodgepole blowout series

**CREATOR:**

Kostuch, Martha

**DATE RANGE:**

1936-2002, predominantly 1981-1984

**EXTENT:**

2.03 meters of textual records and other material

**ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY/ BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

In the fall of 1982, Amoco Canada Petroleum Company Ltd. hired Nabors Drilling Ltd. to drill a sour gas well near Lodgepole, Alberta. On October 16, the well exploded and began spewing hydrogen sulphide gas which was carried by prevailing winds over the towns of Lodgepole, Cynthia, Drayton Valley, Red Deer and onward as far east as Edmonton. Even though the well was on fire for about half the time, it was estimated that the blowout dumped 32,500 tons of hydrogen sulphide on 1400 square kilometres of forest, farmland, towns and cities in west central Alberta before it was capped on December 23, 1982. The blowout lasted for an unprecedented 68 days and two men were killed trying to cap the well.

As the blowout continued, people were continually subjected to the rotten egg smell of sulphur and a yellow haze, and they became concerned for their health and the health of their animals. Along with the media and environmental organizations, the public demanded the well be capped immediately and they wanted answers as to how this could happen, answers regarding their health concerns and assurances that it wouldn't happen again.

The Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board called a public inquiry into the Lodgepole Blowout, called Proceeding No. 830007. The inquiry started November 1, 1983 and Martha Kostuch sat on the panel representing the Environmental Council of Alberta. The inquiry became the longest and most expensive inquiry to date when it ended on February 14, 1984.

The final report of the inquiry was released November 15, 1984, and concluded that the blowout occurred due to a series of errors, equipment failures, and lack of adequate regulations. Among its many recommendations was the call for tougher regulations for drilling potentially dangerous sour gas wells, called critical wells, and a quick and fair triage system to compensate members of the public who could prove they had incurred expenses and/or suffered health problems during the blowout.

**CUSTODIAL HISTORY:**

In April 2008, Martha Kostuch signed an agreement with Athabasca University to have her records digitized but she passed away before this work could be started. After her death on April 23, 2008, her records went into the custody of her son Edward and in July 2008, he donated the records to Athabasca University, Athabasca, Alberta.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

The series consists of materials pertaining to the Amoco Canada Petroleum Company Ltd. sour gas well explosion and blowout near Lodgepole, Alberta and the public inquiry which followed.

Textual records in this series consist of briefs, reports and maps submitted to the public inquiry, transcripts of the inquiry, correspondence, notes and newspaper clippings. As well, much of the material has been annotated by Martha Kostuch.

The graphic material depicts aerial views of the Lodgepole blowout site.

**SOURCE OF TITLE:**

Title taken from the contents of the fonds.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Series also includes 55 maps. - 25 transparencies. -7 photographs.

**CONSERVATION:**

Conservation copies have been made of some of the newspaper clippings, thermal fax paper and mimeograph paper.

**ARRANGEMENT NOTE:**

Series have been based on the major topics identified from the creator's arrangement, though some records may pertain to a number of series.

**LANGUAGE NOTE:**

The material is in English.

**ACCESS CONDITIONS:**

None.

**USE CONDITIONS:**

Permission for use required. Subject to *The Copyright Act*.

**FINDING AIDS:**

Box list and file list are available. Some of the material is available in electronic form.

**INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ACCESSIONS:**

2008.015

Further accruals are not expected.

**ASSOCIATED MATERIAL:**

Other records pertaining to Amoco Canada Petroleum Company Ltd. may be found in the Marjorie Budd fonds and the Alsands Project press clippings collection at Glenbow Archives in Calgary, Alberta.

**GENERAL NOTE:**

Information for the administrative history was obtained from the records and from *The Edmonton Journal*, *Calgary Herald* and *Red Deer Advocate* newspapers.

**SUBJECT HEADINGS:**

Environmental impact analysis

Acid rain

Sulphur

Air - - Pollution

Industrial laws and legislation

Industrial policy

Natural gas - - Leases

Gas wells