

we are **technical experts**

THE CORE RESEARCH CENTRE: A ONE-OF-A-KIND FACILITY

THE ERCB'S CORE RESEARCH CENTRE (CRC) is unique in function and scope.

One of the ERCB's legislated mandates is to collect, process, and preserve core samples, drill cuttings, and drilling and completion information from oil and gas wells in Alberta. The ERCB requires well licensees to submit these data sets to the CRC. It is also our responsibility to provide the public with access to this material, while maintaining strict rules to safeguard confidential information.

Housed in a massive 18 000-square-metre building in Calgary's University Research Park, the CRC offers a modern facility to geologists, geoscientists, oilfield service companies, academics, and anyone else with an interest in core samples, drill cuttings, or drilling and completion records (known as tour reports) from Alberta wells. The core and drill cutting/tour report "library" provides the opportunity to collect specialized information for exploration, production, and enhanced recovery. The CRC is wholly funded by fees charged to the customers that use its facilities and services.

The facility is considered the best of its kind in the world, so much so that companies bring core samples and drill cuttings from other provinces and occasionally from other countries to the CRC for examination. This is because most of the equipment used for viewing material housed on site has been specially designed for the CRC, such as the core examination tables and the microscope tables, while other equipment has been modified to suit specific requirements. In fact, the CRC



Core/drill cuttings repositories **14 600 m²**

Core research tables **58**

Oldest well represented by drill cuttings **November 1911**

Oldest well with core **October 1925**

Meterage represented - core (estimated) **1 651 862**

Meterage represented - drill cuttings (estimated) **78 113 208**

is so popular that each year dozens of international delegations visit the facility to learn about its scope and capabilities.

The core repository occupies three-quarters of the CRC's total floor space, and the core-handling system consists of six electric vertical lift trucks, each of which can handle up to 500 boxes of core per day.

The CRC first opened its doors in 1962 on the present site with a 3500-square-metre facility, which in 1983 was expanded to its current size. Today the centre houses an estimated 78 000 kilometres of drill cuttings contained in 18.5 million vials, as well as 1650 kilometres of core samples stored in more than 1.3 million boxes on hundreds of racks that stretch up to 8.5 metres high. Some samples stored in the vast collection have historical significance: for example, cuttings from a well drilled in 1911 and core from a 1925 well can be found at the centre.

In 2008, the CRC received a record amount of core sample receipts totalling 68 000 boxes, of which about 90 per cent came from oil sands areas. The average yearly core receipts are about 42 000 boxes.

The ERCB believes that making energy resource data available at an early stage leads to better decisions by everyone involved in resource development. Sharing information allows large and small companies alike to compete on more equal terms, avoid past mistakes, and ultimately produce energy in the most orderly, safe, and efficient way possible. The CRC helps to fulfill this goal. ↗