

# Working together with local Indigenous businesses



WORKING TOGETHER

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Canadian Natural operates two world class oil sands mining sites that employ thousands of people. One of the keys to running these complex worksites safely, effectively and efficiently is building and maintaining strong relationships with hundreds of contractor companies. These businesses, many of which are local to the Wood Buffalo region, provide important services, support and expertise covering everything from engineering and construction to food and beverage services.

Rimfire Solutions is just one example of the many Wood Buffalo businesses that provide goods and services to our oil sands operations. It is a member of the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA) and its owner, Peter Hansen, is a proud member of both the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 1, and Fort McMurray Métis Local 1935. His company, which specializes in the provision of vending machine and coffee services, was incorporated in early 2015 and started up with three employees.

The business relationship between Rimfire and Canadian Natural began in late 2015 when Rimfire was awarded the contract as the sole provider of soft drink machine 'free-vend' services, as well as coffee and tea services, at Horizon Oil Sands. In the summer of 2017, Canadian Natural assumed operatorship of the nearby Albian Sands site, and on July 1, 2018, the Rimfire contract scope was expanded to serve Canadian Natural employees there as well. This extension of services was a direct reflection of the reliability and professionalism Rimfire has demonstrated since it first became a business partner with Canadian Natural almost three years ago.

As Canadian Natural continues to grow, we want our contractors to develop along with us. In its relatively short history thus far, Rimfire has increased its workforce to nine employees and significantly expanded its client list in the region.

"Canadian Natural is currently our largest partner and by partnering with them Rimfire was able to create transparent programs through technologies, as well as improved controls, which has led to our success and expansion to other partners," says Peter. "Our relationship with Canadian Natural has been extremely successful — our team works closely with their Office Services team on a daily basis to deliver a quality service to all the employees and contractors on site."

Rimfire's management knows that providing reliable, high

quality service will continue to improve its fortunes, but since the company was created, it has also benefitted significantly from its association with NAABA.

"Being a recognized NAABA full member has continuously opened doors and brought other opportunities," says Peter. "NAABA has been very supportive in assisting our management team with business planning and suggestions on how to move our business forward."

Canadian Natural believes that working together productively with local stakeholders creates shared value and we're proud to be associated with Rimfire Solutions and many other NAABA members.

"Our work with stakeholders is an important means of supporting and strengthening the communities near our operations, which many of our employees call home," says Jay Froc, Senior Vice-President, Oil Sands, Canadian Natural. "Maintaining strong and mutually beneficial relationships with local, Indigenous-owned companies is one of the important ways we're able to do this."

Our ability to work productively with NAABA is key. It works as an advocacy group on behalf of its members, generating opportunities to interface with crude oil and natural gas companies that work in the region. By maintaining a positive relationship with NAABA, we are able to gain a better understanding of the benefits members can provide to our Company through contractual agreements.

Essentially, NAABA has provided a stronger voice for Indigenous businesses in the region. It's work has helped raise awareness for the strength of its member businesses, assisting in opening up opportunities for them to prove themselves and their capacity to work in the oil sands industry. NAABA was established 25 years ago and original founding members have gone on to tremendous success in the oil sands, building competitive companies to meet the needs of major oil sands operators. Canadian Natural, along with most of the industry, works with NAABA regularly as a key resource to help identify strong, local Indigenous businesses.

Knowing that Indigenous companies, such as Rimfire Solutions, are NAABA members plays a significant role in validating their potential to contribute positively to Canadian Natural and is one of the considerations when we evaluate contracts.



Peter Hansen, Owner of Rimfire Solutions, which is one of many Indigenous-owned companies with whom Canadian Natural has contracts.