

Construction complete, commissioning well underway at Sturgeon Refinery

As the last of the Sturgeon Refinery's ten units recently completed construction, all focus now shifts to a planned staggered approach to a safe and reliable commissioning and start up. Reaching this important milestone is the result of millions of dedicated hours from our construction and operations workforce to build Canada's newest refinery.

It's built – now what?

The refinery is made up of ten large units, each one with a specialized function in the bitumen refining process. All ten units are now constructed, with some completed last year and the final unit completed just these past few weeks.

As units are completed, the commissioning process begins for that unit. Commissioning involves checking, inspecting, and testing all components and making any necessary adjustments. Motors are started, temperature and pressure gauges are calibrated, gases such as nitrogen and oxygen are brought in, and final cleaning is completed, among hundreds of other activities.

Just like the staggered construction schedule, commissioning is at various stages throughout the refinery. Some units are finished commissioning while others have just begun.

Over 2.2 million barrels of diesel produced to date

Since December 2017 the refinery has been processing synthetic crude oil into diesel and has produced over 2.2 million barrels. This was possible, despite just having recently completed construction, as only two thirds of the refinery's units are needed to produce diesel using synthetic crude oil as a feedstock. Because synthetic crude is a partially upgraded feedstock, it has already undergone some processing. The Sturgeon Refinery has used this partially upgraded feedstock as part of the commissioning and start up process for the majority of the units, resulting in a steady production of diesel for our customers for the past several months.

Next in: Bitumen

The Sturgeon Refinery is designed to use bitumen from Alberta's oil sands as a feedstock to produce ultra low sulphur diesel. Now that construction is complete, and commissioning is well underway, the refinery will be switched over from synthetic crude to bitumen feedstock in the coming months. This will be the next major milestone – refining Alberta's low value bitumen into much higher value diesel.

For more information on the Sturgeon Refinery, visit www.nwrsturgeonrefinery.com.



Above photos: With much fewer cranes, scaffolding, and workers, the Sturgeon Refinery has taken on a different look now that construction is complete. The focus of the ~1,400 people still working on site has shifted to commissioning and start up to prepare for bitumen feedstock in the coming months.