

Calgary company 'Flexes' revolutionary pipes

By Danielle Suchet
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In a never-ending sea of innovation and new technologies, one Calgary company has managed to stand out from the rest and take home not one but two major innovation awards last year.

Last year, Flexpipe Systems Inc. won the CME Innovative Business of the Year award and the NRC-IRAP 2006 Regional Innovation Award for New Technology development for patenting a high pressure, corrosion-resistant pipeline system.

The system's revolutionary design is modernizing the oil and gas pipeline industry in Canada, says Flexpipe's CEO Regan Davis.

The pipeline product, which uses a dry, or unbonded, fibre design is a new way of using traditional fibre reinforcements and in turn, decreases material and manufacturing costs, something that Davis says sets them apart from anyone else.

"The advantage that we have is we are able to source the basic raw materials and fully convert them into our finished product and by doing so, we have much better control over material delivery, much better control over quality, and obviously some significant price advantages because of it," Davis says.

Since its start five years ago, the company has expanded from humble roots at the University of Calgary campus to a state-of-the-art facility and more than 120 employees. Because of its efficient installation, Flexpipe reduces the environmental footprint of pipelining projects. It is also easily installed on rocky terrains due to the tough outer jacket and



Photo courtesy of Flexpipe Systems Inc.

Flexpipe Systems Inc. has patented a high pressure, corrosion-resistant pipeline system, which uses a dry fibre design and in turn decreases material and manufacturing costs.

tough, durable exterior.

Flexpipe also reduces pipeline construction costs, and eliminates corrosion concerns, getting production started quickly and cost-effectively, he adds.

The concept got its start in the low-pressure gas business where high-density poly-ethylene was being used for gathering low-pressure gas wells.

Davis says there was a belief that if you could increase the pressure capacity of the low-pressure pipe into high-pressure applications, it would be an exciting innovation with great demand. Aware that there were products that had been developed for the market previously, by improving the concept, Flexpipe knew they would have something big on their hands.

"Being familiar with those prod-

ucts (and) believing that there was a way to improve on them was sort of the early days' vision for the company," Davis says.

But Davis says the biggest honour he has had is watching the company grow since his involvement in the R&D stages until now.

"It has been fantastic to look back at the short period that we have been around and see what we have achieved...It has been enjoyable watching the company grow and particularly, the people inside the organization advance and grow their careers because of that," he says.

While still continuing to expand their business in North America, Flexpipe is now setting their sights on the international markets and plans to invest resources in the next 24 to 36 months, adds Davis.