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East Coast Ethanol to build plant

Facility to add \$100M to the local economy

By Charles D. Perry · & 2008 The Herald

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CHESTER -- A \$230 million ethanol plant and more than 40 jobs are coming to Chester County, according to the company building the plant.

This morning, East Coast Ethanol officials are expected to discuss their plans to construct a corn-based ethanol production facility near Chester, a news release from the Columbia-based company stated.

The new plant is expected to annually produce 110 million gallons of ethanol, a fuel alternative that can be made from corn, wood chips and other renewable products.

The plant will generate more than \$100 million for the local economy, the release stated. A 10 a.m. news conference is scheduled to be held at the Chester County War Memorial Building on Main Street.

John Long, project manager and the company's chief financial officer, declined to discuss the company's plans Monday, saying information will be released at today's news conference.

"We're going to lay out all the details there," he said.

Likewise, Chester County Councilman Alex Oliphant and Economic Development Director Karlisa Parker refused to comment on the ethanol plant until after the news conference.

East Coast Ethanol's goal is to build four, 110-million gallon corn ethanol plants in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, according to the company's Web site.

"We expect to become one of the foremost suppliers of ethanol to the southeast U.S. market," the Web site states. "The company will use its strategic locations to provide fuel ethanol to terminals along the eastern seaboard while providing distillers grains and carbon dioxide for farms and industry. The company will also work cooperatively with local communities to assure an environmentally sound and profitable business utilizing the latest technology to assure a clean, efficient and dependable source of ethanol to assist our country in reducing its dependence on foreign oil."

Last year, four ethanol companies merged to form East Coast

Ethanol, according to a news release on the company's Web site. Before the merger, each company was developing a 110-million gallon per year ethanol facility.

Ethanol has been a buzzword in Chester County for more than a year. County officials said last year that two companies were interested in building ethanol plants there, but neither company was publicly named before now.

One company was considering a 330-acre Beltline Road site for a plant that would initially produce corn ethanol, but could eventually produce what's called cellulosic ethanol, a fuel made from non-food plants.

A second company was eyeing a 206-acre site on Lancaster Highway between Chester and Interstate 77 for a plant to produce ethanol from waste wood, such as the debris left behind from logging.

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