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\$43 million Chin plant progressing

Written by Ric Swihart Lethbridge Herald
 Wednesday, 04 March 2009

BFuel Canada Corp. expects to file its environmental impact assessment and development permit with the County of Lethbridge within two weeks, and approval will dictate start of construction of its \$43-million biodiesel plant at Chin.

Just back from a biodiesel processing equipment purchasing trip in Germany, BFuel president Glenn Collick, who has moved from Vancouver to Lethbridge, said a major plus is an agreement with two major European banks who have agreed to hedge up to 95 per cent of the company's financing with five or six local lending institutions and banks. A public hearing is set for March 19 at the county offices to rezone the area from rural fringe to rural grouped industrial to showcase the project. It will be the opportunity for anybody to support or oppose the project. Once land is rezoned the firm can seek its permits and approvals.

The BFuel plant will employ 30 in receiving and processing, buy canola from farmers on about 125,000 acres a year and produce in excess of five million gallons of biodiesel a year for five years for one shipping firm.

The wheels are already rolling heading to construction.

Collick has signed an agreement with the UFA Construction division to do the final engineering, planning and procurement costing to come up with a firmer project cost.

Bill Hutchings of Red Deer, construction sales manager for the United Farmers of Alberta division, said it is too early to talk about his company's involvement, but it will play a role in the final decision.

Collick, in a BFuel booth inside the larger UFA floor plan at Ag Expo at Lethbridge's Exhibition Park, said Crown Iron Works of Minneapolis, Minn., will take receipt of the canola crushing and pressing equipment from Germany and retrofit it to Canadian Safety Association electrical standards and resize the piping.

Alfa Laval of Sweden will supply the processing equipment to turn crude canola oil into biodiesel.

Agar Technik will do the processing design work.

Collick said the project would be built with \$21.5 million in debt financing. BFuel is also eligible for up to \$18 million in federal and provincial grants.

Company attorneys are working on an offering of memorandum aimed at potential farmer investors. Collick said BFuel must attract a minimum of \$4 million of producer investment funding to qualify for the maximum government grants.

"There will be no waste from this plant," said Collick.

The plant will produce several by-products from the daily crush of 370 tonnes of canola, all designed to improve the bottom line.


It will produce 200 tonnes of canola meal each of the expected 340 days a year of operation. The meal will be sold for livestock feed.

The rest of the year's down time will be to accommodate staff holidays and plant maintenance.

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