CEO: $500M Plastics Plant Coming To WV

The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A formal announcement could be made by month's end about plans for a $500 million plastics plant near Wheeling, the CEO of Texas-based Appalachian Resins said.

James Cutler told the State Journal (http://bit.ly/VSUiB1) the plan includes a small ethane cracker, a plant that extracts some liquids from wet natural gas to make the chemical feedstock ethylene.

Another operation would use that to produce polyethylene resins, starting in 2015. They're the HDPE plastics used for grocery and garbage bags, and the LLDPE plastics used to make cling wrap.

Cutler said the year-round operations will produce 500 million pounds of ethylene and 500 million pounds of polyethylene per year.

Most polyethylene is made along the Gulf Coast and shipped nationwide. Cutler said being closer to the consumers gives his company an advantage.

"Simplicity and a regional market outlook are the factors that support our business model," Cutler said. "In addition to good economics, we believe that the Appalachian resins business model — regional sized petrochemical production facilities — supports a resilient supply chain."

Last year, West Virginia lost a bid to attract a multibillion-dollar cracker plant that Shell hopes to build. Shell said its first choice was a site about 35 miles north of Pittsburgh but that extensive evaluations had to be done.

West Virginia Commerce Secretary Keith Burdette said the pursuit of ethane cracker plants and related manufacturing businesses remains a priority of Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's administration.

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