

## Field of Dreams

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EARTH WILL soon be moving for the Harrison Ethanol LLC biorefinery after company representatives joined local and state officials for a site dedication on Monday.

The biorefinery will be on 276 acres along Dickerson Church Road near Cadiz, also known as Cadiz Township Road 93. Site preparation work will take place for the balance of the winter months, and it is anticipated that construction will begin in April. It will take approximately 14 months to erect the facility, bringing 400 construction jobs plus another 107 on-site and 60 contracted trucking posts after its completion.



**Left to right: Gary Wilson, Brent Porteus, Rhoda Crown, Ohio Gov. Bob Taft, Marion Gilliland, Wendel Dreve, Phil Cunningham, Mark Shanahan, Dir. Fred Dailey, Sen. Larry Mumper.**

The project, which is a \$73 million investment in the community, will consist of an ethanol distillation facility to convert about 9 million bushels of corn annually to ethanol. The refinery is estimated to produce 20 million gallons of fuel-grade ethanol per year, as well as animal feed and goods for human consumption, such as corn oil. The ethanol will be used as a fuel additive for vehicles, while 12,000 heads of beef and dairy cattle will be on-site to consume distiller's grains. The cattle will be housed in barns at all times and animal waste will be processed in an anaerobic digester. Byproducts range from liquid fertilizer to methane gas, among others. The methane will also help generate "green" electricity at the facility.

Monday's ceremony culminates five years of shoring up financing and permits, acquiring land and meeting other requirements.

Gov. Bob Taft estimated the plant would pump \$85 million into eastern Ohio on a yearly basis.

"Today's groundbreaking confirms Ohio's position as a leading farm and agri-business state and reaffirms our commitment to renewable energy sources," Taft said. "I am delighted that the State of Ohio could be a major part of this project."

He recognized Harrison Ethanol managers for their vision, drive and determination to make the project happen. Taft also commended everyone involved in the process. Through the state, Harrison Ethanol obtained a competitive incentive package, such as a state Job Creation Tax Credit, while legislation also benefited it and similar operations with the formation of an Ethanol Board and eligibility for Ohio Air Quality Development Authority funding.

"Today is an important day for me because advancing the biofuel industry in Ohio has been a primary goal for me for a long time. As our energy needs grow, we must focus on curtailing dependence on foreign oil and developing our own clean, affordable sources of energy."

He said 40,000 farmers statewide grow roughly a half-billion bushels of corn annually, creating an abundant supply to fuel the new market.

"Today we take a big step forward in making Ohio a major ethanol-producing state as well."

U.S. Rep. Bob Ney (R-Ohio) echoed those sentiments, adding that the biorefinery would be a major benefit. Ney added that ethanol provisions were included in Congress's energy bill to help the environment and reduce foreign oil dependence. He noted that being an area resident, he had seen many jobs go away; now it was good to see them come in.

"This region didn't say we're gonna die. This region didn't say we're gonna go away. This is life, this is jobs and a future for children in our area."

Fred Dailey, state director of agriculture, said the company representatives made state officials believers in the prospect of alternative fuel production.

"These people came to us with an idea. They believed in what they were doing and they have a deep and abiding love for the Appalachian region. They made believers out of us and did everything right. This project will have a tremendous economic impact on Harrison County and eastern Ohio."

It marked the second dedication of such a plant in 10 days and is one of six planned for the state. A current ethanol plant centered in Medina utilizes beer and beverages to create its product.

"Ethanol's time has come," said Dailey, holding up a corncob as a symbol of the state's future. "Everytime I hear (a leader of an oil-producing nation) talk about how they destabilized our U.S. dollar, I realize the time has come for renewable energy. The time has come for us to rely on renewable resources and displace our unhealthy dependence on foreign oil."

"We're very proud of the ground dedication and very pleased the governor, congressman and all of the officials assisted us on this important day," chimed Wendel Dreve, who along with Marion Gilliland is a manager for Harrison Ethanol. "We'll be working with local folks to make sure local people are used (as workers)."

County Commission President Dennis Watson spoke on behalf of local leaders and lauded state, federal and other officials for their efforts to bring the biorefinery into fruition.

"We're very excited to be holding this event today. The project has been a long process," said Watson. "This project is a \$73-million capital investment in Harrison County. Thank you for joining us as we begin a new era for development in Harrison County."

He also recognized Phil Cunningham, county native and member of Harrison Ethanol's parent company, Farmer's Ethanol, for creating the business in the area. Watson later told the News-Herald that he saw the operation as a boost for the community.

"It's certainly a great day for the county, and certainly our agricultural community and members that make up the community. It will be a great boost to people growing grass and corn and it will be a big boost to our economic condition. We're so excited and wish Harrison Ethanol the best. We will do what we can to assist them in the future."

Commissioner Phil Madzia summed up the banner occasion as a field of dreams.

"It's exciting. It's been a long time. I feel this is going to be Harrison County's field of dreams. If you build it, they will come."

Commissioner Bill Host concurred that it may have a positive effect on the area.

"I hope it's the beginning for new things for the county and turns (our economy) the other way. It's been so bad over the last 20 years."

Cadiz Mayor Don Bethel sees the new business as a wonderful opportunity for the whole community. "I believe it will be a great service to the entire county. It's a breath of fresh air," he said. "Hopefully it will spur additional growth throughout the county."

Scott Blackburn, director of the county Department of Job and Family Services, said inquiries and resumes have been trickling in since the agency's Connections One-Stop Center was assisting with employment. Blackburn said he expected Monday's ceremony to make the number of job queries jump even higher.

County Engineer Robert Sterling mentioned that the biorefinery not only meant an economic surge, but it also increased potential for infrastructure.

"I think the technology's time has come, certainly in keeping with the national (need for fuel). That's a tremendous shot in the arm to the local agriculture. It's a tribute to folks like Wendel Dreve and Marion Gilliland who put efforts into this," said Sterling. "It's a tremendous day for the county. We've already worked on the water and sewage on the facility. We'll also extend them out to the county and help Cadiz (extend its service). I think it just helps everybody."

Dale Arbaugh, chairman of the county Community Improvement Corp., which worked with the county and Harrison Ethanol on the local development, said the business could potentially attract more opportunities to the area.

"I'm happy to see it's coming into fruition," he said of the firm. "To me, it's a win-win situation for everybody. I would think the potential is there for a spin-off or other types of things that can benefit because of it. I think the potential's there (for growth)."

Meanwhile, Congressional candidate Joe Sulzer, the current mayor of Chillicothe, said he believed in the biofuel concept.

"In Chillicothe we had a soy-fuel mixture we used in the past," he said, adding that although it was more efficient, there were few participants in the alternative fuel project and expenses skyrocketed. Sulzer now sees a need in today's market and hopes more people take advantage of it.

"I think with what's going on today with high oil prices, we have to be very serious about finding alternative sources. This is a good step in the right direction."

Mike Wagner, of the Ohio Corn Growers Association, said it was a significant resource.

"At one time we were the largest ethanol user than any other state. Now we are still in the top five," said Wagner. "We congratulate not only Harrison Ethanol, but also the county of Harrison. Harrison Ethanol is the first plant in Ohio that has all of its permits to operate."



**Gov. Bob Taft (R-Ohio) delivers his Harrison Ethanol ground dedication speech at the Harrison County Community Hospital in Cadiz, Ohio**

Randall C. Hunt, state director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, continued that the state was geographically positioned to fill a growing ethanol market on the eastern U.S.

"We're perfectly positioned. We're an ideal location for ethanol development. There are a half dozen plants under development and Harrison County's was the second one announced. Our role has been with the Renewable Energy Grant Program. It is to help renewable resources domestically. This is what Congress and the President intended to provide capital into these ventures. Ohio ranks in the top five for state consumption. There's already a market here in Ohio and great opportunities for marketing on the East Coast.

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