

Stimulus funds sought for project

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CADIZ, OH — State Sen. Jason Wilson, D-Columbiana, is leading efforts to obtain federal stimulus package funding for the Harrison Ethanol project.

Wilson, the Senate assistant minority whip, is hosting a session for area input and discussing plans for the facility's future and coordinating efforts to obtain funds. The meeting is set for Friday at 1:30 in Harrison Community Hospital at 951 E. Market St., Cadiz.

He said he's been working on the project for more than two years.

"We're going to work hard to see that it's built and successful," he said, adding the project is ideal for all intents of the stimulus package.

"Harrison County needs all the jobs it can get," he said. "The facility will prompt construction of the sewer and water infrastructure that the stimulus is focused on. It will open that area for another whole level of development. Also, we can never forget our dependence on foreign oil. That in itself is a strategic initiative that increased ethanol production will help."

As the ranking member on the Senate Agriculture Committee, Wilson supports more animal agriculture in the state.

Marion Gilliland, a managing member and partner in the venture, said plans announced in March 2007 remain the same.

Although the actual cost may vary somewhat from it being a \$73 million investment, it will employ 107 people on site; use 9 million bushels of corn annually to produce 20 million gallons of ethanol; and house 10,000 beef cattle and 2,000 dairy cattle when the project is completed.

She called the project shovel ready and estimated that once construction begins it will take a little over a year for it to be completed.

Wilson said Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland personally told him he supports the project. Wilson met Wednesday with Ohio Department of Development officials, telling them "we need to think creatively on how to get this project done."

The project also is being supported by elected state and federal representatives from the region, he added.

Wilson said that "First Energy's R.E. Burger plant at Shadyside, once on the verge of being shut down, will now be operating as a green, state-of-the-art, biomass-powered plant. There were some who did not think this would happen, but in the end, our collaborative efforts paid off. I am confident that with the same dedication and determination, Harrison Ethanol will become a reality."

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