BASF expansion to span five years

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SENECA — A $60 million expansion of BASF's Seneca plant, recently made public by company and county economic development officials, is expected to play itself out over five years, but the bulk of the 25 new jobs being created will likely be filled next year.

"Going forward, we are committed to expanding our presence in Seneca because we think it's a great place to do business," plant manager Lamson Scribner said. "We currently have a number of expansion projects in various stages of development and approval that will increase our local operating footprint, creating a win-win for both our company and our community."

Scribner said the expansion projects are being planned over the next five years and are in various stages of development and funding approval.

While the fee-in-lieu-of-tax agreement being approved by Oconee County is for $60 million, roughly half of that investment is believed to have been approved by BASF corporate at this time.

The projects already funded will expand the Seneca plant operations in 2012, while others are being considered for the longer term and remain subject to internal funding and approval.

"We expect to create up to 25 jobs as a result of these planned and potential projects," Scribner said. "The majority of these jobs are associated with the projects that have already been funded and will be filled in 2012."

The agreement is projected to bring Oconee County about $7 million in fees over the next 24 years.

"BASF has a sizeable operating presence in Seneca, which has grown significantly during the past 25 years," Scribner said. "During that time, we have developed a strong and positive relationship with the community, and we have been very pleased with the quality of the local work force."

The plant, at 554 Engelhard Drive, employs about 350 people.

The BASF plant in Seneca began as a chemical catalyst plant of the Engelhard Corporation in April 1985.

Construction of the $25 million facility began in mid-1985 and was completed by late1986. Ground was broken Dec. 18, 1985.

At the time of its construction, the Oconee County Engelhard plant was the largest of the company's catalyst plants in the world, employing about 200 people.

In February 1987, Engelhard announced that it would add a multi-million dollar expansion to meet growing market demands.

Engelhard was acquired by the BASF Corporation in 2006.



BASF employee John Jackovetty speaks with a group during the firm's Environmental, Health, Safety and Security Event at the plant. BASF recently announced a five-year expansion plan for the Seneca operation.

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