

Fayette County Monitor

Published by LASER, Inc.

Can you believe the ethanol industry? The half-truths about air pollution

While ethanol has been produced for decades, there is a new breed of inexperienced ethanol speculators that have spread out across the Midwest in the last several years. Their half-truths have blind-sided communities and environmental agencies. In the 1990s, the ethanol speculators told communities and regula-

tors that ethanol refineries were environmentally friendly and would only emit a few plumes of steam.

But in 2002, several state and federal environmental agencies actually monitored air pollution from ethanol plants. They found

that the air pollution was up to 500% higher than what the ethanol industry claimed. Minnesota, the federal EPA, and other states had to sue the ethanol plants to force them to reduce their air pollution. Many

Half-truths cont'd on pg 3

The ASA Bloomingburg ethanol plant

This ethanol refinery will be built at 4201 State Route 238 NE, just south of Bloomingburg. Unless proper air pollution control equipment is installed, it will produce hundreds of tons of toxic air pollution every year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The ethanol industry and ASA's troubling silence about odors, wastewater and water use at the ASA/Bloomingburg plant

Ethanol plants handle and process millions of tons of corn and thousands of gallons of toxic and pungent chemicals, including ammonia and sulfuric acid. Simply put, ethanol plants smell, as recently newspaper articles reveal. Why hasn't the ASA company been open with the community about the smells that will likely come from its plant? Here is what has happened elsewhere.

Illinois issued six air pollution violations against the Atkins ethanol plant in Lena, Illinois, after the plant's

neighbors complained of a "navy blue smoke plume" from the plant that "rolled like a western tumbleweed" through their yards, with a pungent stench.

At the Gopher State Ethanol plant near St. Paul, Minnesota, neighbors had many noise and odor complaints. There have been two fires, and two ammonia releases.

In Iowa, a state inspector reported that a creek next to an ethanol plant was milky and smelled like sewage.

The New Energy Ethanol plant in South Bend, Indiana is producing a "stench" that is sickening its neighbors according to a Nov.



In the Fayette County Monitor

Troubling silence cont'd.2-3
Tanker truck traffic.2
Half-truths cont'd.3

Fires cont'd.3
LASER information.3

*Troubling silence cont'd
on pg 2*

Troubling silence

Cont'd from page 1

10, 2005 article.

At High Plains Ethanol in York, Nebraska, many residents complained about the overwhelming and potentially toxic hydrogen sulfide smells from the sewer system that carried the ethanol process wastewater. The environmental agency eventually forced the company to change its process methods.

When will ASA hold a public town hall meeting and let people know what sort of odors to expect?

Is ASA being candid about its water use and wastewater discharges?

How much water will it use?

Ethanol speculators typically claim their plants will have “zero” discharge of wastewater, and

remain quiet about how much water they will use. The facts are that most ethanol plants use over one million gallons of water every day.

LASER, through the state public records act, obtained a secret review of ASA’s proposed plant in Ohio. In that document, ASA admits it will pump about 1.3 million gallons of water per day for its ethanol plant (1,004 gallons per minute) and will discharge 290 gallons of polluted water a minute (about 432,000 gallons a day). Does the Bloomingburg area really have almost 500 million gallons of water to spare every year?

Where will the polluted water go?

And where will the polluted waste water from the ASA ethanol

plant in Bloomingburg go? Will local residents have to pay increased taxes to upgrade the local sewer treatment plant to handle the ethanol wastewater?

In Iowa, ethanol speculators told state regulators that their plants would not discharge any wastewater. But when the environmental agency went on inspections, they discovered that four of the five largest Iowa ethanol plants had significant wastewater violations.

In Nebraska, the Nebraska Energy ethanol plant sent wastewater to the City of Aurora sewer plant. The ethanol wastewater was so polluted, that it “upset” the sewer plant and caused more odor problems.

At Chief Ethanol, the Nebraska State Police raided the plant with a search warrant. The plant had been

Troubling silence cont'd on pg 3

New tanker truck traffic

There will be hundreds of truck trips per day to and from the refinery, to haul away a highly flammable ethanol/gasoline mix and to haul other products to and from the plant over local roads. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, there were 265 ethanol tanker truck accidents and spills during 2003.

An ethanol tanker truck overturned just west of Champaign, Illinois, in August 2005, spilling nearly 8,000 gallons of ethanol. Interstate highways I-57 and I-74 were shut down for hours. “We had to close it down, said fire district



Chief John Jay, “ We wanted to prevent ... something from causing a spark.”

In September 2005, three hundred residents in a four square block area were evacuated from their homes in Brentwood, California after an ethanol truck overturned, spilling 2,000 gallons.

An ethanol tanker truck accident and spill of 6,500 gallons in Liberty Township, Indiana south of Richmond, caused the closing of a highway on July 6, 1999.

These are just a few of the hundreds of ethanol truck spills that happen ev-

ery year. What will happen if a tanker truck overturns near downtown Linden and the ethanol catches fire?

A recent study of the ethanol industry concluded that an ethanol tanker truck accident could spew out a cloud of toxic fumes for 150 yards from the accident. How many homes, schools and businesses are within 150 yards of potential truck routes to and from the Bloomingburg ethanol refinery?

Bloomingburg and Fayette County emergency response teams have many brave men and women working for them. But do they have the training, expertise, and equipment, including special fire fighting foam and foam application equipment, to battle these kinds of fires?

Troubling silence

Cont'd from page 2

falsifying wastewater records, secretly dumping untreated wastewater from a wastewater lagoon into the Big Blue River and diluting wastewater samples with tap water.

Where will the wastewater from the ASA ethanol plant go? Into a fetid wastewater lagoon? Into a sewer treatment plant that will have to be upgraded with tax dollars? Into nearby rivers? When is ASA going to tell the community where the wastewater is going?

Half-truths

Cont'd from page 1

of the Minnesota plants that violated air pollution laws were built by Fagen, who is a partner in the ASA plant.

In 2005, the federal EPA sued Cargill, who is another of the partners in the ASA ethanol plant planned for Linden. The EPA suit charged that Cargill needed to reduce its air pollution at 27 of its plants. Cargill paid a \$1.6 million penalty and was forced to spend \$130 million to update its air pollution controls.

Can the community trust developers with this type of track record to obey the air pollution laws at the Bloomingburg plant?

Fires

Cont'd from page 4

Death, fire and explosion at Chippewa Ethanol Plant

In October 2003, a tank holding 40,000 gallons of corn mash exploded with a "whoosh and a flash" at the Chippewa Valley Ethanol company in Benson, Minnesota. The explosion killed one worker and severely injured another. The blast "was a massive explosion" said Steve Kellen, a fire investigator. Part of the exploded tank flew 75 feet, and caused a tanker truck to explode into flames. Sulfuric acid was also released. Ten fire agencies responded to the blaze.

Million gallon ethanol spill at the Indiana ADM ethanol facility

A catastrophic storage tank failure produced a million-gallon ethanol flood at the Archer-Daniels-Midland's plant in Decatur, Illinois on May 23, 2000. An ethanol leak sparked the mishap.

"It wasn't so much an explosion as it was a concussion of the metal, which split from top to bottom and released all that fluid," said Lt. Todd McKenzie of the Decatur Fire Department, "The

sheer force of that was enough to make things shake."

Fire and explosion at the Midwest Grain Ethanol facility

On September 13, 2002, a major fire and explosion tore through the Midwest Grain alcohol refinery. The building's roof and part of its wall were blown off. A one-block area near the plant was littered with pieces of brick, steel, and broken glass.

It took the local fire department over six hours to quench the 30-foot-high flames from the resulting fire, because the equipment that supplies alcohol could not be shut off. The local police department created a three-block buffer zone because of fears of a second explosion.

"We had a fairly severe explosion," conceded the company's vice-president in a press account, "It was a loud rumble. There was a lot of shaking and vibrating. I could see flames." The explosion blasted glass and steel across the Main Street of Atkinson, Kansas and closed the facility for two months.



LASER, INC.

LEGAL AND SAFETY EMPLOYER RESEARCH

654 Kentucky Street, Gridley, California 95948 Ph. 530-846-6352

This is a public service provided by LASER, Inc., a non-profit public interest organization. For more information, please contact James Wilson at (530)846-6352 or online at laserinc@laser-inc.com. Visit LASER's website at www.laser-inc.com

Attention residents of Bloomingburg & Fayette County, Ohio

A mammoth ethanol refinery is about to be built near Bloomingburg 4201 State Route 238 NE

Similar ethanol plants have blown up, released toxic gasses, and caused large fires

The proposed ethanol plant near Bloomingburg will store massive amounts of highly explosive and flammable chemicals on site, including ethanol and pure gasoline. It will handle thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals. The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board's web site provides recent examples of accidents at ethanol refineries. For more information on these examples, *see page 3*.



January 29, 2004 - An ethanol plant in Port Kembla, New South Wales, Australia explodes, rocking areas over 15 miles away and sparked a huge fire that sent flames and black smoke shooting 328 feet into the sky. (Photo below from the *Cambrians for Thoughtful Development Ethanol Plant Incident* website at: <http://homepage.mac.com/oscura/ctd/incidents.html>)

LASER, INC.
LEGAL & SAFETY EMPLOYER RESEARCH
654 KENTUCKY ST.
GRIDLEY, CA 95948

STD PRST AUTO US POSTAGE PD NONPROFIT GRIDLEY CA PERMIT #175
--