

Grant County Monitor

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The proposed Central Indiana Ethanol plant

This ethanol refinery will be built just west of Marion, along Indiana Highway 18. Unless proper air pollution control equipment is installed and carefully maintained, it could produce almost 4 tons of toxic air pollution every day, according to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). IDEM issued the plant a permit in August, which limits the plant to emitting about one ton of pollution every day.

The plant is also allowed to emit 15,000 pounds annually of extremely hazardous air pollutants that can cause cancer, birth defects, and other serious health risks. IDEM will require the plant to test its air pollution when the facility first starts up, but after that they won't have to test the pollution for another five years.

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 regulators 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.

The ethanol industry's troubling silence about odors, wastewater discharge and water use

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 recent newspaper articles reveal. Why hasn't Central Indiana Ethanol, LLC 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 at least 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 November 10, 2005 article.

At High Plains Ethanol in York, Nebraska, many residents complained about the overwhelming and potentially toxic hydrogen sulfide, rotten egg smells

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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. The U.S. Department of Transportation reported 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 etha-

nol 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 every year. What will happen if a tanker truck overturns near downtown Marion and the ethanol catches fire?

A recent study of the ethanol industry concluded that an ethanol tanker truck

The City of Marion and Grant County's fire department/emergency response teams have many brave and qualified men and women working for them. But do these departments have adequate supplies of fire fighting foam and the specialized foam application equipment they need to battle a large ethanol/gasoline fire?

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 every year. What will happen if a

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 the potential truck routes to and from the Marion ethanol refinery?

Troubling silence

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from the sewer system that carried the ethanol process wastewater. The environmental agency eventually forced the company to change its processing methods.

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

How much water will the plant use? Where will the polluted water go?

Ethanol speculators frequently claim they will operate a "zero" discharge plant that will produce no wastewater. Later, after the plant is built, local residents find out they must pay higher taxes to upgrade a local sewer treatment plant to handle the ethanol plant's polluted waste water. In other cases, the plant actually discharges millions of gallons of highly

polluted wastewater into creeks and rivers.

For instance in Iowa, according to state environmental officers, ethanol speculators claimed their ethanol plants wouldn't discharge any wastewater. "They do," said Wayne Gieselman, the Iowa environmental protection chief. His agency discovered that four of the five largest ethanol plants in Iowa had significant wastewater violations. The plants had dumped sewage that contained chloride, copper, and other wastes. The pollution was strong enough to kill fish at times, according to a September 11, 2005 article in the *De Moines Register* titled "Ethanol Plants Among Iowa's Polluters."

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

Nebraska Energy ethanol wastewater was almost as caustic as Drano. The plant ended up having to treat the wastewater with sulfuric acid.

LASER could not find any news article or press release where Central Indiana Ethanol admitted that they could need vast amounts of water every day for their plant, and that they will probably discharge hundreds of thousands of gallons of polluted wastewater every day – to somewhere.

Ethanol plants often use and discharge large amounts of water. The proposed Demeter Ethanol plant in Ohio admits it will use 1,004 gallons/minute (about 1,200,000 gallons a day) and will discharge 300 gallons of polluted water a minute (432,000 gallons a day). While the Demeter plant will be larger than the Marion ethanol plant, the citizens of Marion and Grant County still deserve to be informed about the ethanol plant's

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Ethanol tax giveaways and no new tax revenue for schools

The main reason that most communities want new businesses is for the new tax revenue, so local citizens can improve their roads and schools. But Central Indiana Ethanol already said they don't want to pay for the renovation of Oak Hill High School. The School had to cut its renovation plans by two-thirds after that announcement. And the City of Marion is going to have to spend almost \$330,000 of taxpayer money to for road, sewer, and water improvements that will benefit the ethanol company.

Local and state government are planning to give away millions to the ethanol plant, and change the rules so that the plant's taxes will be vastly reduced or redirected. The State Economic Development Corporation has already offered the company almost \$1.8 million in tax credits and training assistance. The City of Marion said it will approve a "TIF" (tax increment

financing) district for the ethanol plant. This could mean that millions of dollars in "new" taxes paid by the plant will not be

spent on schools, but will be spent within this special district, for project such as new roads for the ethanol plant.

Troubling silence

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water use, and to be told where the waste water will go, and who will pay for its handling. Will local residents have to pay increased taxes to upgrade the local sewer treatment plant to handle the ethanol wastewater? Will the ethanol plant dump its polluted wastewater into local creeks or rivers? Will the fetid wastewater simmer in an on-site waste pit and produce odors?

Fires

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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.



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Attention residents of Marion & Grant County, Indiana

A mammoth ethanol refinery is about to be built west of Marion, along Highway 18

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

The proposed ethanol plant near Marion 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>)

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