

SNF chemical company gets praised at permit hearing

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Public officials and residents testifying at a hearing on environmental permits for Flopam Inc (SNF) last Thursday had nothing but praise for the company and the jobs it will bring to the area.

Among them were residents of the Ella Community, which the company bought out, appeared to support the project. Daryl Mitchell said Flopam project manager Brian Soucy made sure it was a "win/win situation for the people of that community."

"We need it. We need more industry for the children coming up," said Dorothy Williams, who had lived at Ella.

The state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which has Flopam's permits on a fast track, held the hearing on the company's application for an air emissions permit for the \$350 million plant it is building south of Plaquemine.

"Flopam's top priority is a safe and environmentally sound facility," said project manager Brian Soucy. "Our future employees and neighbors deserve nothing less."

Since this is an ozone non-attainment area, Flopam has to provide offsets for the additional VOCs and NOX the plant will produce, Soucy said.

The permit application shows that the plant will emit some 131 tons a year of NOX and 127 tons of VOCs, requir-

ing 170.5 tons of NOX offsets and 165.5 tons of VOC offsets. The offsets are coming from DSM Copolymer, Formosa Plastics Corporation and Terra Mississippi Nitrogen Inc.

Parish officials appearing in support of the permit application included Parish President J. Mitchell Ourso Jr.; Iberville Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Hank Grace; White Castle Mayor Maurice Brown, School Superintendent P. Edward Cancienne Jr.; School Board members Yolanda Laws of Plaquemine and Albertha Hasten of White Castle (representing the Louisiana Environmental Justice Community Organization Coalition), Iberville Parish Council members Salaris Butler Seymourville, Warraen "T-Notchie" Taylor of White Castle and Henry "Bucket" Scott of Bayou Goula, Pat Ishmael, vice chairman of the Iberville Parish Planning Commission, and John Marque, chief of the White Castle and Bayou Goula fire departments.

Marque and a number of Iberville Parish officials had visited the company's facility at Riceboro, Georgia.

"All the questions I had from an emergency response perspective, they answered," the fire chief said. Marque said he was impressed by the cleanliness of the facility and the company's commitment to safety.

"When I first got there, I didn't realize it was a chemical plant," Scott said. He said

he talked to the mayor and former mayor of Riceboro, who endorsed the company.

Largely, it was the jobs and

See SNF HEAR, pg. 2A

SNF HEAR, continued from 1A

the economic benefit the company will have that dominated the hearing.

Grace, who worked with the parish president to bring the SNF here, said the project would create 250 construction jobs. Once the plant is fully operational (in about five years), it will provide 512 permanent full-time jobs with average salaries of \$57,000 plus benefits, he said.

"SNF operations will pro-

vide an injection of \$386 million in Louisiana earnings by the end of 2025, and the state can expect more than \$3.7 billion in new output from 2010 to 2025," Grace said.

The figures are from an LSU economic analysis that estimates the project will produce some \$107 million in new state tax revenue and nearly \$30 million in local tax revenue over the next 15 years.

Parish President Ourso said

the company has committed to hiring, buying and living locally.

Nawieta Hamilton of Bayou Goula supported the plant on behalf of college students who want jobs closer to home. She said she commutes daily to a job in New Orleans.

"We need a change," said Barbara O'Bear of White Castle. "We need growth."