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## Tire reclamation biz vows to use 'clean' tech

By Dave Taylor Tribune-Star

A proposed tire reclamation facility in Terre Haute's Fort Harrison Business Park would utilize clean technology and become a valuable partner for the plastics industry, a local economic development official and a company executive said Monday.

"There will be no tires on site and no burning. This will be a high-technology manufacturing operation," said Steve Witt, president of the Terre Haute Economic Development Corp. "Pyrolyx USA will be creating valuable inputs for the rubber and plastics industries. The company will be working with many different plastics manufacturers."

Tires will be shredded at other locations in Indiana and Illinois and shipped to Terre Haute by truck or rail, said Tom Redd, chief executive officer of Pyrolyx.

"We provide environmentally sustainable and economically sustainable recycling. It's true recycling for tire rubber," he said.

The plant would use a process called pyrolysis, subjecting materials to very high temperatures to break them down without the presence of oxygen. Carbon black, oil and metal would be harvested for use in new products. Carbon black is the substance that helps tires wear longer, Redd said. It makes up about 25 percent of every tire. The product is in demand not only for new tires but also in plastics.

Pyrolyx is a German-American company, and the 50,000-square-foot plant at 4150 E. Steelton Ave would be identical to an existing one in Germany, only larger, Redd said.

Re-using carbon black from scrap tires means less reliance on crude oil, said Luanne Tilstra, professor of chemistry at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.

The proposed Pyrolyx plant "has the potential to be a really cool thing," Tilstra said. "If done properly it can be very clean. Every time you do a manufacturing process, you have the potential for something to go wrong, but this one seems to be well-structured."

Tilstra has experience working with Europeans in biodegradable polymers and said, "They're not going to let it happen if it's not good."

ASTM International has launched plans to develop standards for the growing field of carbon black recovery, enabling the industry to "self-monitor" quality control, Tilstra said.

"When ASTM gets into stuff, it's done right. Any time we can get industry to regulate because it's in the best interest of both their company and the nation, it's a cool thing," she said.

Tilstra said she is "excited but also cautiously optimistic" about the proposed plant.

"There are a lot of good things about Terre Haute that attracted us," Redd said, citing a concentration of plastics manufacturers in the city, a strong network of road and rail transportation and the presence of Indiana State University.

The Pyrolyx plant would generate 55 full-time jobs paying \$19 per hour, he said, expressing confidence Terre Haute has a sufficient work force to staff the plant.

Company officials researched the area job market and plan to offer wages above the local average. "We want to make sure we're paying good wages and can attract good workers," he said.

Pyrolyx is asking the city to issue economic development solid waste bonds, a financing tool under Internal Revenue Service rules, but officials stress only the company, not the city, would be liable for repaying the bonds.

A proposed ordinance authorizing the bonds on file with the City Clerk's Office says the Terre Haute Economic Development Commission has approved the bonds, but Witt said Monday that has actually not yet happened. The commission does plan to act, however, before a vote by the council, which will discuss the matter at its March 2 sunshine meeting, with action possible on March 9.

The company is also expected to seek real and personal property tax abatement, Witt said. "Also, while the Fort Harrison Business Park is already in good stead in regard to infrastructure, we anticipate some rail improvements will need to be made, though this aspect of the project is still being defined."

Once all necessary approvals are granted, Pyrolyx expects to break ground in June and have the project up and running in summer 2018, Redd said.

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