

Chem Technologies CEO Outlines Expansion Plans

By Ann Wishart

Adding 40,000 square feet of warehouse will enable Chem Technologies Ltd. to increase production of its blended chemical products and capture a larger portion of the global market.

Chem Technologies CEO Jim Schill set out his plan for expansion of the Middlefield company Monday to more than half the plant's 72 employees as they consumed hamburgers, hot dogs and cookies.

The lunch was provided by CT in celebration of yet another record month, which Schill gave credit to his workers for before outlining his projections for the next six years.

"We've gotten the (Middlefield Village) planning and zoning approval on 250,000 square feet. That's three times the size of this building," Schill said. "Of course, we won't build it all in one fell swoop."

The plan is to put up 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of space at a time on the southeast corner of the intersection of state routes 87 and 528 over the next six years or so, he said.

The first structure will be started in late spring or early summer and, when finished, will serve primarily as warehouse space.

When materials are moved from the factory on Bonner Drive, there will be room for more manufacturing capacity, Schill said.

"I fully expect to double production," he said. "We need new jobs in the community. I fully expect that to happen here."

Schill predicted CT will have three more rubber-production lines and another larger blend mixer with more shifts within 10 years.

The company is a chemical dispersion and blend manufacturer that supplies blended chemicals in pre-weighted packages ready for the customers to add to their industrial mixes, according to the CT website.

Schill said he's confident in his projections.

"I think it's inevitable. We can't miss,



ANN WISHART/GCML

Chem Technologies Ltd. is adding office space to its manufacturing facility on Bonner Drive in Middlefield Village.

as long as we continue to do what we've been doing," he said.

The blending line has the best international sales potential because it is too expensive to ship CT's rubber products overseas, Schill said.

His announcement coincides with CT's acquisition of the 300 acres, which is in the process of being annexed from Middlefield Township into Middlefield Village.

The annexation, which has not been opposed by Middlefield Township trustees, will allow water and sewer connections to the village infrastructure, which has stopped at Route 528.

The village will not provide water and sewer outside its boundaries.

The village, township and Cardinal Schools will all benefit financially from the annexation in a deal proposed by Mayor Ben Garlich, who was present at the lunch announcement.

Schill said even when CT builds out to the 250,000 square feet and puts in additional blending lines to meet demand, there will still be plenty of room on the property for future growth.

"The beauty of it is that the (blending) market is huge," he said, adding CT doesn't need a very large

portion of it to continue to grow.

Another reason to have a nearby, but separate facility is in case of a natural disaster, such as a tornado, that might disable one plant. In that situation, the other could continue to meet the demands of CT's customers, Schill said.

The company is the sole supplier of a number of other facilities, so if the only plant was unable to produce, customers would be off line for some time as well, he said.

"I'm very optimistic about our future, but we can't ease up," he told the employees who lined the lunchroom. "Our quality, cleanliness and teamwork have to stay where it is."

January was the best month CT has seen other than last August, when the company had to pick up the slack from another facility that had a breakdown of production, Schill said.

He attributed CT's exceptional performance to its excellent employees.

"You can't make good products if your employees are unhappy," he said, adding the company had a no-nonsense environment workers understand.

They also understand they get to share in the bonus pool where one third of CT's profits are divvied up among the workforce.



ANN WISHART/GCML

Jim Schill, CEO of Chem Technologies Ltd. of Middlefield, told employees Monday about plans to expand the company.

"I fully expect to double production. We need new jobs in the community. I fully expect that to happen here."

- Jim Schill

Individuals receive bonuses depending on a formula that includes hours worked, seniority, attendance and evaluations, Schill said.

He read a comment from a customer who had toured the plant that complimented the employees, their pride in their work and the superior product CT turns out.

The visitor also commented on how clean the operation is and how well-maintained the equipment is. Schill noted employees spend the first six hours of every week cleaning the facility.

"I'm a big believer in image," he said, gesturing toward the new lobby and offices under construction on the west side of the building.

Alderside Resident Asks Burton Trustees to Apply For OMF Funds

By Ann Wishart

Burton Township Trustees agreed Monday to look into possible funding for demolition of two dilapidated houses on Alderside Drive.

Wayne Erickson, who owns a home and 33 acres on Alderside, brought pictures of the two structures to the trustees meeting and offered to help them go through paperwork to apply for Moving Ohio Forward funds to have the homes near his property torn down.

The blue house, owned by Robert and Mary Mussell, fell over last year, he said.

The yellow cottage, just a stone's throw away from Erickson's house, is owned by Tyrone Hornbuckle and has been abandoned for 10 years, Erickson said.

"It's kind of an eyesore," he said, adding he has tried to buy the property,

which is about 1/3 of an acre, but the owner priced it at \$40,000.

"It's not worth it," Erickson said.

Trustee Jim Dvorak said they are interested in applying for funds to have the old Lawrence house on Rapids Road demolished.

The farmhouse is in Burton Headlands Park and has not been inhabited in many years.

Karen Endres, zoning inspector for Bainbridge Township, is administering the OMF program for Geauga County, he said.

Trustee Ken Burnett said he understands it is up to the property owner to apply for the OMF grant.

Erickson said he has been studying the 30-page document explaining the program.

Since the Hornbuckle house has been abandoned for 10 years, there are no valuables inside and it is infested with

rodents, it meets the program guidelines, he said.

The Mussell house would qualify as an attractive nuisance, as well, and since there are 12 children on Alderside, there is justification for seeking a solution, he said.

"That grant is set up for properties like this. It's a godsend."

- Wayne Erickson

"That grant is set up for properties like this. It's a godsend," Erickson said.

The money in the OMF program comes from fines paid by banks charged with predatory lending practices, not from tax dollars.

"It would not cost you or me any money," Erickson said.

Trustee Dan Whiting asked if the county building department might take action to declare the structures as unsafe, unsound and unsanitary, as it is

difficult for a township to act on private property.

Erickson said Geauga County doesn't seem to ever condemn houses.

A possible complication is the fact Alderside is a private road and is maintained by those owning property along it.

The fire department refuses to take its heavier vehicles across the bridge on Alderside for firefighting, Burnett said.

Erickson said he has been considering allowing the fire department to install a dry hydrant near his pond for water supply in emergency situations.

Dvorak said the process for dealing with abandoned and dilapidated buildings is covered by the Ohio Revised Code and is very involved.

"Once you go off the road right-of-way, you really have to watch it," he said.

Burnett added, "Let us find out what we can and can't do, legally. There is a fine line between what we can and can't do."

Whiting asked Erickson to come to the March 4 meeting for further conversation.

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