

Ethanol plant to open in mid-July

140,000 gallons to be made daily

From staff reports

With 400,000 bushels of corn received, Central Indiana Ethanol officials say they'll be ready to start the process of turning grain into ethanol by mid-July.

The 45-acre site, 2955 W. Delphi Pike, has been under construction since November 2005. General Manager Mitch Miller said workers are filling the 250,000-gallon fire protection tank at the plant and are preparing to fill the fermentation tanks with water.

Central Indiana Ethanol has been taking shipments of corn since June, testing systems for its first run at full production.

The corn-based grain alcohol is used as an additive for gasoline, making it burn cleaner and generally costing less at the pump.

While work was slow at first, as the framework was built, the number of construction workers increased from 65 people to more than 200 this year as work began on piping and electrical systems. Now, the 120-foot silos dominate the site, and vehicles and workers buzz around the plant, putting finishing touches on the \$60 million investment.

When it's at full capacity, the plant will produce 140,000 gallons of ethanol a day, taking corn from farmers in about a 50-mile radius. Some will be sold to 20 companies that will blend it into gasoline, some will stay at the plant and be blended into E85 then sold directly to gas stations.

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