

PORTAGE DAILY REGISTER



Columbia County's Daily Newspaper

Thursday May 25, 2006

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Some area farmers support new ethanol plant in county

By Jen McCoy

Questions at the ethanol open house informational meeting held Tuesday at Dino's Restaurant were on topics ranging from well water to air quality.

"It's an opportunity for people to ask questions and then get that answer. It's been a nice pace (of people attending)," said Mary Claire Lanser of Lanser Public Affairs.

The meeting ran from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Lanser said that 40 people had walked through the venue and asked questions by 6 p.m.

Didion Milling, an ethanol plant in Cambria, is proposing a 40-million-gallon plant in the town of Courtland.

In 2002, Didion was denied a zoning permit for its Cambria ethanol plant proposal. Opponents of the plant, most notably Cambrians For Thoughtful Development, had concerns about heavier traffic, environmental issues and proximity to school areas.

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The new proposal area is south of Cambria and over the village line into Courtland.

"I can't say that everyone has been in favor of the proposal, but people are impressed with the information available. We're hearing people respect the outcome," Lanser said.

Cambria resident Donna Kohnke said that she attended the meeting because she supports the use of ethanol. Kohnke farms cash crops such as beans and corn, and received a letter from Didion Milling about the meeting.

"We were for it to begin with because Cambria needs

something," Kohnke said.

Joann Wingers is on the town board of Courtland, and said that she attended the meeting to gather information about the proposed project.

"The town board is in favor of agricultural business — it's in our comprehensive plan to support agricultural businesses in our township because we're basically an agricultural business town. Just look at the numbers," Wingers said, pointing to a hand-out about economic implications of the plant. Wingers has been farming dairy, corn and soybeans since 1960.



Poll

Do you plan to see the controversial new movie "The Da Vinci Code," starring Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou?

- Yes, I want to see it
- No, I think the premise is an affront to Christians
- No, I'm just not interested

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"The town board of Courtland voted unanimously on May 2 for ethanol," Lanser said.

Linda and Randy Link, of Cambria, maintain a farm of livestock and cash crops.

"We're here to support ethanol. It is really good for the environment and the future for our kids. Farming is a tough business," Linda said.

"(We support ethanol) so our boys don't have to go to Iraq," Randy said.

The couple have two sons, 22 and 20.

"I have one son that would like to work at an ethanol plant. He's done a lot of research on it," Linda said.

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