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Ethanol plant backs out

By Nathan Greenhalgh
Times-Press

REEDSBURG—Reedsburg will not be the site of a new ethanol plant after all.

NexGen Biofuels, the multinational parent company of Reedsburg Biofuels, informed City Attorney Jim Gerlach this week that the company will not take up the option to purchase city-owned land in Reedsburg's industrial park. The city offered the company this option in January 2007, and some city officials were gung-ho about the proposal, citing its positive economic impact.

"We did receive a letter that Reedsburg Biofuels is no longer interested in continuing the option," Don Lichte, chair of the Reedsburg Industrial Development Commission (RIDC), said. "We thought at the time it would be a nice viable industry but with economic conditions ... things have changed considerably."

As of press time, NexGen had not responded to requests for comment on the issue. The company's decision reverses previous statements that it was still planning on building an ethanol plant in Reedsburg despite the amount of time elapsed since the city gave NexGen the purchase option. The project was initially delayed after the company was forced to alter the construction site because negotiations to purchase property belonging to the Laukant family, who own adjacent land, fell through.

Meanwhile RIDC will continue to look for new businesses to fill the freed-up acreage. Lichte said no prospective businesses were turned away during the year and a half NexGen was given the option to purchase the land.

"We did not lose any time, land or money because of this," Lichte said.

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