

## UWGP Moves Forward with Plans for Ethanol Plant in Randolph Township

The United Wisconsin Grain Producers LLC (UWGP), a group of farmers and investors, primarily from the Fall River and Beaver Dam areas, is moving along with its plan to build a 40-million gallon dry mill ethanol plant in Randolph township near the Village of Friesland. According to UWGP spokesperson, Bill Herrmann of Columbus the group is currently contracting soil borings on several sites in the area. Soil borings are necessary to locate a site that can support the construction of the ethanol production facilities. After this a site will be selected and the specific facility plan will be developed. After plans have been drawn up UWGP needs to obtain a number of permits from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) covering issues

such as air quality, water discharge, and storm water run-off before construction and operations can begin. Randolph township does not require any permitting because the town is not zoned.

Herrmann also explained that UWGP currently has a proposal into the Securities and Exchange Commission that must be approved in order for the group to sell stock to raise funds for the ethanol plant. This is potentially a long process and Herrmann could not predict when it would be complete. The plan is that no one investor can hold more than 30% of the company and UWGP predicts that it will need to raise from \$21-\$27 million dollars to go ahead with the planned ethanol plant.

### Ethanol Production: Is It Worth the Risk?

- by Amy Wiersma

Ethanol production and use is both beneficial to some and potentially dangerous to the surrounding community. Currently, there are sixty-four ethanol plants in use in the United States. United Wisconsin Grain Producers (UWGP), LLC is planning to build the sixty-fifth plant in the Township of Randolph, near Friesland, and Didion Milling Inc. is planning to build the sixty-sixth in Cambria.

Ethanol production uses corn to produce fuel. Ethanol is seen by many policy makers as a way to reduce air pollution caused in large part by automobile emissions. These automobile emissions are most severe in the urban areas. Ethanol plants burn fossil fuels to produce ethanol and a number of by-products including, Distillers Dried Grains (DDGs), which can be used to feed livestock.

If an ethanol plant was constructed in the Township of Randolph or in Cambria it has the potential to provide several benefits for residents in the local communities. The construction of each plant would create one to two hundred jobs during construction and twenty to thirty-five employees would be hired

after the plant was completed. It is predicted that corn producers would receive an additional \$.05 to \$.15 per bushel of corn due to the demand for corn at the ethanol plants.

But are these benefits worth the risk? Ethanol production requires the storage of potentially harmful chemicals such as sulfuric acid, anhydrous ammonia, and sodium hydroxide. In addition, studies have shown that ethanol plants release harmful substances into the atmosphere, such as carbon monoxide, methanol, and carcinogens. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs), such as formaldehyde and acetic acid (both of which are considered carcinogens), are produced when the DDGs are being dried for future sales. A recent technology, known as a thermal oxidizer, is being required on plants to burn off these dangerous gases. However, a study conducted at the Gopher State ethanol plant in St. Paul, MN showed that the most harmful substances produced by the plant were in the form of particulates. The thermal oxidizers used at Gopher State were designed to eliminate only those

-Risk continued on page 3

### Meetings Set to Discuss Didion's Proposed Ethanol Plant

Didion Milling Inc. has announced plans to expand its Cambria facility to include ethanol production. Didion plans to construct a 20 million gallon a year ethanol plant on its existing site with plans to increase capacity to 40 million gallons.

In order to comply with existing Village zoning ordinances Didion will need to obtain a number of permits and variances from the Village as well as the necessary DNR permits.

Currently there are several meetings scheduled as part of this process. Citizens will need to follow the proceedings of each meeting for decisions on the need for other meetings and hearings:

Public Information Meeting convened by the Cambria Village Board and Cambria Plan Commission,

**Monday, December 16th - 7pm**

CF Elementary School Gym

(see page 4 for list of invited speakers)

Cambria Zoning Board of Appeals to discuss Didion's height variance request,

**Thursday, December 19th - 6pm**

Cambria Planning Commission to discuss zoning permit request from Didion

**Thursday, December 19th - 7pm**

## Letter from the Editor

If you have not noticed already, this edition of the *Cambria Muse* has a very clear focus on ethanol. In a matter of just over a month there are suddenly two ethanol plants proposed in our area. There are many questions that need to be answered regarding ethanol in general and regarding the ethanol plants being proposed by the United Wisconsin Grain Producers and Didion Milling. I hope that residents and decision makers will use all the resources and processes available to them to make informed, thoughtful decisions regarding these proposed plants.

Ethanol has been lauded by some as a renewable energy source and an answer to the air pollution problems we see in many urban areas caused in part by automobile emissions. The technology of ethanol production is an evolving science. It is not foolproof and it is not perfect. Many communities have experienced problems with their own air quality and general quality of life from ethanol plants built in their villages and towns. As high school student Amy Wiersma points out in her article, are the potential benefits of ethanol production worth the risks?

Should the residents of this area be asked to support a reduction of automobile emissions in Milwaukee or Chicago with potential health risks and a reduced quality of life in our communities? If the government can subsidize ethanol production could it not subsidize farmers transporting their grain into these urban centers for processing into ethanol at the site of its greatest benefit to air quality?

Some people argue that the farmers were here first and the community should put up with some smell and discomfort to benefit the farmer. Yes the farmer was here first. But when that farmer came and when that farmer started farming, the system of agriculture was supporting families and supporting communities. The current system of industrial agriculture is not doing a good job of supporting farm families and the rural communities. Ethanol production as it is in this country and as it is subsidized at the state and federal level favors a continuation of this system of industrial agriculture that has brought us to the place we are today, with fewer family farms and struggling rural communities.

I will step down from my soap box and hopefully not all readers have thrown this issue directly in the trash. I obviously can not hide the fact that I am skeptical about ethanol plants as they are planned now and the government policies of supporting ethanol production. A group of citizens has come together under the name *Cambrians for Thoughtful Development*. If you are interested in finding information about ethanol and specifically the proposed Didion plan I would encourage you to go to the website, <http://homepage.mac.com/oscura/ctd/ctd.html>. For those of you who do not have access to the internet contact the *Cambria Muse* and I would be happy to help you find answers to any questions.

Sarah Lloyd

Send comments and suggestions to:  
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## The Nature of Junque

An interesting discussion took place at the November Cambria Village Board meeting. An ordinance revision was on the agenda regarding the storage of equipment and machinery on residential property. The Village is considering a change to the existing ordinance that would limit the number of pieces of equipment and machinery allowed on residential property within the village limits.

One woman's gazing ball is another woman's kitsch. One man's antique farm equipment is another man's junk. As one citizen attending the meeting asked, "who gets to decide?" If we outlaw antique farm machinery in one person's yard today because someone does not find it pleasing do we need to then ban pink flamingoes in another when someone else protests tomorrow?

The issue has still not been decided. The Administration Committee had been asked to consider the matter and make a recommendation to the full Board. Because of some confusion due to the absence of two members of the Committee it was not clear what that recommendation to the Board was and the issue was tabled until the next meeting. Stay tuned....

## Historic News

Printed in the Cambria News,  
January 27, 1911

### School Notes

*The senior class took an excursion trip to the garage and the flour mill where they applied their physics knowledge in looking over the engines. At the mill they were weighed and to their great surprise, the young ladies out weighed the young men by 200lbs. This being due to the amount of "gray matter" in their craniums and not to the size of their feet.*

*Those that (who?) will entertain next week are as follows: Monday: Book Report -Hazel E. Jones; Declamation - Magdalene Andrew; Male Quartette - Will Davies, Mr. Cady, Irvin Abendroth, Myra Williams; Declamation - Newton Jones, Friday; Book Report - Mable Jones; Declamation - Mary Williams; Piano Solo-Sarah Jones*

## **Didion Given Notice for Violations by the DNR**

Didion Milling Inc. has received several notices of violation at its Cambria facility as well as a fine of more than \$100,000 for violations at its Prairie du Chien facility. In a Notice of Violation issued by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) dated July 23, 2002, Didion Milling Inc was given notice that it was in violation of maximum allowable grain storage. According to the DNR notice signed by Environmental Enforcement Specialist, Pamela Kober, Didion had exceeded the 1 million-bushel threshold allowed by Wisconsin Administrative Codes.

The notice also classifies Didion as a major air source for particulate matter stating that Didion had exceeded the average monthly allowable emissions levels over a period from 1998 to 2002. Didion was also asked in the notice to explain why it had constructed 11 silos when its permit exemption was for 7 silos.

A letter from David S. Edwards, DNR Waste Management Specialist, to Didion dated February 18, 2002 reports of a discharge of oil that was not properly reported to the DNR. Company representatives estimated the spill to be 20 to 50 gallons. DNR implied in the letter that the spill was in the magnitude of 100 to 150 gallons.

A separate Notice of Violation dated May 11, 2001 calls Didion's attention to apparent violations of the Wisconsin Statutes governing navigable waters at their Cambria facility. The DNR cites grading of the banks of the North Branch of Duck Creek as well as the removal of all vegetation along the banks. Both grading and vegetation removal are not allowed under Wisconsin law. Didion was given 15 days to provide the DNR with information on why and when the grading and vegetation removal occurred and if proper permits were obtained. As of press time Didion's responses to the notices detailed above were not available.

In March 2000 Didion was ordered to pay a fine of \$107,500 to the State for failure to obtain permits, exceeding particulate emissions and failure to comply with permits at its Prairie du Chien facility. These violations took place from 1995 to 1997.

## **DDGs - "Co product" of Ethanol production**

Dried distillers' grains (DDGs) are a by-product (or co product) of ethanol production. DDGs have the potential to provide a high protein feed for farmers in the area. At the recent tour of the Badger State Ethanol plant in Monroe, WI, attended by a number of Cambria residents, the large piles of DDGs were viewed as the first stop on the tour. Gary Kramer, President of Badger State Ethanol, and retired large animal veterinarian, stated that the DDGs produced in Monroe are running around 30% protein or more. The current pricing of the DDGs is around \$80-\$90 per ton. The Monroe plant is also producing a wet distiller's grain which is selling for about \$41 per ton.

Both Didion and the UWGP have discussed DDGs as an important product of the ethanol processing system. The UWGP has presented figures that a 40 million gallon/year ethanol plant would produce 128,000 tons of DDGs annually.

## **Is it Worth the Risk? continued**

toxic substances that were in their vapor phase. This means that thermal oxidizers do not fully address the particulate emissions. The same design for thermal oxidizers are being proposed for the plants near Friesland and in Cambria. Although thermal oxidizers are estimated to be from 80-99% effective in destroying vapor phase molecules, there is no human safety limit set for many of the components being released by ethanol plants. Are higher corn prices for area farmers and a few job opportunities worth the entire community's health?

Ethanol plants are considered by some to be an excellent way to obtain energy, burn fewer fossil fuels, and reduce pollution from automobile emissions. We must consider how many fossil fuels are needed to produce the corn and to fuel the production of ethanol itself. And who is going to tell these potential benefits to the citizens living near the Lavern MN ethanol plant, where people complained of foul odors, choking, and eye irritation? Or perhaps someone should explain to residents living near the smaller ethanol plant in St. Paul, MN why the plant was forced to install approximately \$1 million in pollution control equipment to prevent the emissions of VOCs. Tests conducted at some ethanol plants showed that in some cases VOC emissions ranged from 120 to 150 tons annually. Facilities that produce over 100 tons of VOCs annually are labeled as major sources of pollution according to the Clean Air Act.

The economics of ethanol production are also problematic. The profitability of ethanol plants is directly related to state and Federal subsidies. The proposed Wisconsin State subsidy for ethanol producers is twenty cents per gallon and the federal subsidy for ethanol blenders is fifty-four cents per gallon. A Minnesota Legislative Audit of ethanol concludes: "programs have largely succeeded, although they carry a significant price tag that includes not only the cost of public subsidies but higher consumer prices for gasoline...The ethanol industry depends on continuation of the federal ethanol subsidy of fifty-four cents per gallon. Without this subsidy, ethanol production would fall to near zero in Minnesota and the nation."

An ethanol plant located in the Township of Randolph or in Cambria would provide some local residents and farmers with excellent benefits. Ethanol used as an additive to gasoline may also reduce the air pollution problems in urban centers. However, for these benefits the entire community could be at risk of several serious health hazards.

## Caucus Dates Set in Townships and Villages

On a recent trip to Washington DC for a meeting regarding forest management, the issue of who decides over land use came up. The participants in the meeting, many career federal government workers, were brainstorming to list those authorities and organizations that have power over land management decisions. One participant said, "we should list local government as a decision maker or stakeholder." This silly rural Wisconsin resident said, "If we are listing local governments then we should list county governments since they oversee zoning in many cases." There was a slight pause and several people said at once, "local government is county government." Well not if the towns and villages have anything to say about it.

Caucus dates have been set for the villages and towns in the area. The caucus takes place generally in the beginning of January to decide who will be on the ballot in the April elections. Anyone wishing to be nominated to be placed on the April ballot should be present at the caucus in their municipality. Any registered voter within the municipality wishing to vote to ensure his or her candidate gets on the ballot should attend the caucus. The caucus dates and present incumbents up for re-election are listed below.

Village of Cambria	Town of Springvale	Town of Courtland
January 7 <sup>th</sup> , 6pm	January 11 <sup>th</sup> , 1pm**	January 7 <sup>th</sup> , 9am
Chet Stringfield	John Healy	Glenn Smits
James Ebert	Edward Fischer	JoAnn Wingers
Zane Neal	Timothy Ashley	Charles Sytsma
Sherri Stringfield	Scot Link	Jeanne Radke
	Jean Williamson	Joan Waterworth
Village of Friesland	Town of Scott	Town of Randolph
January 6 <sup>th</sup> , 6:45pm	date not yet set	date not yet set
Charlotte Holtan	William Berger	David J. Hughes
Douglas Lambert	Stewart Deakin	Jerry Heidt
	Donald Jerred	James Sanderson
	Lee Barden	Rodney Kok
	Iva Breneman	Marie Vossekuil

\*\*tentative date, watch Rio Shopper for posting

## "No Comment" on Seneca Interest in Chiquita Plant

Word on the street in Cambria over the past weeks has been that Seneca Foods Corporation was interested in buying the Chiquita canning factory in town. A call to Cambria plant manager Ken Roth and Bob Brill, Corporate Attorney for Chiquita Processed Foods LLC yielded only the responses "no comment". Over the years this factory has operated under several names. Chiquita Processed Foods LLC acquired the factory from the Friday Canning Company in the early 1990s and only changed the name to Chiquita three or four years ago. Chiquita employs 200-250 workers seasonally and around 50 people year round.

## Panel of Experts Called

A joint session of the Cambria Village Board and the Cambria Plan Commission will meet on Monday, December 16th at 7pm in the Cambria-Friesland Elementary School Gym at 410 East Edgewater St. to discuss the Didion Milling proposed ethanol plant.

The Village has invited a number of speakers to sit on a panel as part of an open forum of questions and answers for the public, Village Board Members and Plan Commission members.

Guest speakers will include:

- Tim Carlin -Columbia Cty  
Emergency Management
- Gordon Stevenson - DNR Water  
Management
- Mike Sloat - DNR Air  
Management
- Clem Safranek - Village Engineer
- Bill Gardener - WI and Southern  
Railroad
- Jeff Roskamp - ICM Engineering  
(Didion's engineering firm)
- Dean Tillema - Village Accountant
- Vytas Salna - Village Attorney
- Rowland Hawk - DOT Hwy 146  
Project Manager  
(unconfirmed)
- Joe Tregonning - Department of  
Agriculture (invited by Didion,  
unconfirmed)
- Phyllis Reed - EPA Region V  
Agriculture Liaison (invited by  
Didion, unconfirmed)

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