

## **Plasma plant could power Port Hope: council**

*By Cassin, Joyce*

April 16, 2008

A proposed plasma gasification facility for Wesleyville Road and Highway 401 is expected to generate enough power to supply every household and business in Port Hope and then some, says Sunbay Energy Corporation's Jordan Oxley, who spoke at an information presentation to Port Hope council Tuesday night.

When up to full capacity, the facility could take in about 400 tonnes of solid municipal waste and industrial packaging waste and generate 20 to 30 megawatts of power that is enough to provide electricity to 20,000 to 30,000 homes, said Mr. Oxley, a managing director with the Canadian company.

Sunbay and France's Europlasma are behind the project.

Kris Mahabir, also a managing director with Sunbay, said the environmentally friendly plant would not only divert solid municipal waste from landfill and complement Northumberland County's recycle-clean program, but it would also likely generate 50 full-time jobs of various skill levels.

An additional 50 auxiliary jobs would be created outside the plant and up to 1,200 jobs would be made available to local contractors and labourers during the 12- to 18-month construction phase, should the project be approved, Mr. Mahabir said.

"We plan to use local labour and companies wherever possible," he said.

Feedstock for plasma facilities has been an issue in the past, but Europlasma chairman and CEO Didier Pineau said he has been involved in the plasma gasification field since the 1960s and built the first Europlasma plant in 1992. This technology, he said, has even been proven in the space industry.

"The research and development legacy traces its roots back to space projects in EADS, the European version of NASA," Mr. Oxley added. "These types of facilities are being built all over the world now." Mr. Pineau said Europlasma currently has seven plants in France, Korea and Japan and was pleased to expand into Canada.

The secret to a uniform feedstock is in the front-end sorting. This is where waste is separated - metals, plastics and other recyclables are removed - and the actual waste is processed, Mr. Oxley said.

The proposed location is also perfect, he said. The 23-acre piece of land is right off the 401 and near both CNR and CPR rail lines plus close to high voltage lines that can be fed the energy created.

"Essentially, it's not going to generate any more traffic, and it won't be going through any residential community," Mr. Oxley said.

The plant, he said, would be completely enclosed with no more than three days of waste accumulated in an air-tight facility so no odours would be detected.

"This is not an incinerator," Mr. Oxley said. "Although we could process bottom ash from incinerators."

He added that plasma gasification gets double the amount of energy from the same type and amount of waste than an incineration plant.

The end result is a solid black substance that is completely non-hazardous and often used to complement road aggregate in France. It can also be shaped into other products, Mr. Pineau said.

"I had some made into earrings for my wife," said Mr. Pineau. "It's completely harmless."

Mr. Oxley said they chose Port Hope for a reason other than the proximity to the 401, the GTA and the eastern part of Ontario they hope to serve. It's the people.

"Caroll Nichols' enthusiasm made us think that others in the community would give us a fair shot," Mr. Oxley said. "A vocal community for us is a positive."

"It's nothing but positive," said Mr. Nichols, the Lakeshore resident who has been working to have a plasma gasification facility located in the Wesleyville area for the past 10 years.

Another positive is the tipping fee. Mr. Mahabir says they expect the tipping fee to be less than that charged by the local landfill and transfer sites.

"We're obviously excited about it," said Mr. Oxley. "We really think we have the answer."

Beginning in mid-may, a storefront office at 35 Walton Street will be opened for members of the public to view the proposed plans and pose questions.

"We know we'll be getting a lot of questions because a lot of people think this is like incineration," said Mr. Oxley.

The screening process and approvals are expected to take six to nine months, says Mr. Oxley. Construction would be another 12 months and six months to ramp up to capacity.

"Two years from now we hope to be holding ribbon cutting at the plant," said Mr. Oxley. "From our view, we anticipate a successful project."

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*Article ID# 988189*

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