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\$2.5B coal-to-diesel plant proposed for Dale

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By CANDY NEAL
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DALE — A plant that will convert coal into diesel fuel is being planned for land on the north side of Dale.

Delaware company Riverview Energy is planning to use \$2.5 billion to build a direct coal-hydrogenation plant on land between County Roads 2000 North and 2100 North and the old U.S. 231 and County Road 500 East.

“Dale was a prime location due to its proximity to the exact type of coal needed, and the logistical routes to move the end product northeast or to the gulf,” Riverview Energy President Greg Merle said. “Indiana, as well, is an excellent location because it is a pro-business, pro-jobs and pro-development state.”

Company officials do not yet have a timeline on when the plant will be built. But the company sent in a construction permit request to the state at the end of January. Since the project is in the town limits, it will have to comply with Dale’s zoning rules.

Speculation about a project coming to Dale has been circulating since April, after the town council annexed more than 500 acres of land north of the town into the town limits.

Once built, the plant will convert coal into diesel fuel and other products like Naphtha, which is used to produce products like plastics and gasoline. The plant is expected to use 1.6 million tons of coal and produce 4.8 million barrels of clean diesel and 2.5 million barrels of Naphtha each year.

According to information released by the company, the process does not burn or gasify coal.

“Coal particles are hydrogenated at high pressure and temperature,” according to a release about the project. “Therefore, the plant will have a significantly lower carbon footprint than other technologies.” The process is compliant with state and federal regulations, officials wrote in the release.

Riverview officials said the development will generate “225 permanent high-skilled, good-paying jobs with competitive benefits to operate the facility.” More than 2,000 construction jobs will be available to build the plant. The company plans to hire locally.

Merle said that the Lincolnland Economic Development Corporation is part of the reason why he pursued the Dale site. The economic development agency “has done a tremendous job in representing those characteristics for Indiana,” Merle said, “and supporting the full gamut of innovative energy options to grow the Spencer County area and this region of the state.”

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