

# Solvay plans for new plant

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GREEN RIVER -- A leading southwest Wyoming soda ash producer is expanding its product line to include a new sodium bicarbonate product aimed specifically for use in air pollution control.

Solvay Chemicals Inc. officials said the new product, Select 300, will be used in the treatment of sulfur dioxide emissions for power plant air pollution control applications, including flue gas desulfurization and scrubbing of stack gases.

Solvay spokeswoman Rosemary Dunn said in a phone interview that Select 300 is an expansion of the company's SOLVAir Products portfolio.

The SOLVAir product line provides products and technologies needed to efficiently and cost-effectively remove sulfur oxides and other heavy metals from sulfur emissions.

Dunn said a patent has been filed for the "innovative process" that will produce the product.

She said Select 300 will be produced at Solvay's trona mine and soda ash plant located about 20 miles west of Green River in Sweetwater County.

Dunn said a small production facility will be built within the company's existing plant to produce the sodium bicarbonate product. Officials estimated the expansion will produce a few additional jobs at the facility.

Solvay is the fifth largest employer in Sweetwater County, with 426 workers, according to Sweetwater County Economic Development Association figures.

The company is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, and employs more than 30,000 people in 50 countries.

Dunn said production of Select 300 will have no impact on the plant's soda ash production capacity, which is about 1.8 million short tons per year.

Christine Tahon, managing director of Solvay Group's Soda Ash SBU, said the product development aims to mitigate environmental impacts of air emissions and to improve the "efficiency" of the Green River plant.

She said initial production capacity for Select 300 will be about 125,000 tons per year. Tahon said the new plant will be designed to expand capacity if necessary to accommodate anticipated growth from "tightening air pollution regulations."

Start-up production of the new product is expected to begin sometime in 2010.

More than 90 percent of the soda ash produced in the United States and about 35 percent of the world's supply of natural soda ash comes from the five producers in the Green River Basin.

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