

\$500,000 grant will aid Morgan County biodiesel project

By DAN BARKER, Times Staff Writer
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A \$500,000 grant from the USDA will help build a new biodiesel plant in Morgan County.

Officials gathered at the USDA service center in Fort Morgan on Tuesday morning to celebrate the grant, which is a significant fraction of the approximately \$4 million cost to build a plant that will turn used cooking oil into usable diesel fuel for vehicles, said Aaron Perry, chief executive officer of Rocky Mountain Sustainable Enterprises.

Officials from all over came to celebrate a \$500,000 grant to help build a new biodiesel plant in Morgan County near Morgan County Roads Q and 13.

“Based on the strength and security of their established and growing biodiesel feedstock recycling business, RMSE has chosen (Morgan County) as the proposed site for a biodiesel refinery with a 4.5 million-gallon per year capacity,” said Mike Bennett, director of Colorado Rural Development.



RMSE serves more than 2,000 commercial and government customers in Colorado and Wyoming, taking away their liquid oil waste, Perry said.

The company searched for the right place to put the factory for 2-1/2 years, he said. One of the main factors in choosing Morgan County was the synergy from other companies wanting to build renewable energy plants in the county.

Multimedia
\$500,000 Grant for new Biodiesel plant in Morgan County [Watch »](#)

High Plains Renewable Energy has plans to build an ethanol plant and Teague Diversified produces usable methane. Another ethanol plant is also planned. Those ethanol plants would be near the same site as the biodiesel plant, said Kari Linker, executive director of the Morgan County Economic Development Corp., which helped get the grant started.

Another factor in bringing the biodiesel plant to Morgan County was the “pro-business atmosphere,” Perry said.

He said RMSE plans to break ground for construction of the plant in about 90 days, with a prospective opening in the middle of 2009.

The factory will be near Morgan County Road Q and MCR 13, Perry said.

The Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements program, from which this grant came, provides financial assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to support renewable energy projects across a wide range of technologies, encompassing wind, solar, hydrogen, geothermal and biomass energy, said USDA spokeswoman Amy Mund.



USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents.

The biodiesel plant is expected to add six to 10 new jobs to Morgan County, it was announced when the plant was approved by the Board of Morgan County Commissioners in August.

For more information about the programs, call the Wray USDA office at 970-332-3107, ext. 4, or visit the Web site at www.rurdev.usda.gov.

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