

March 11, 2005

## Official fields questions on refinery plan

### Local News

Arizona Clean Fuels Chief Executive Officer Glenn McGinnis on Thursday fielded hard questions about the controversial oil refinery his company wants to build in Yuma County.

The meeting, hosted by the Yuma Chapter of People for the U.S.A, attracted just over 30 people, half in support of the planned refinery and half opposed. Supporters had sheets of paper stating "I Support the Arizona Clean Fuels Refinery." Opponents wore buttons with a red circle with a slash over the word "Refinery" or bearing the name of the grassroots group opposing the refinery, Yuma County Citizens for Clean Air.

The question and answer session came days before federal environmental regulators are slated to render their opinion of the draft air permit which ACF needs in order to operate the proposed refinery.

At issue is a \$2.5 billion oil refinery which the Phoenix-based ACF wants to build on vacant desert land 40 miles east of Yuma near Tacna. Supporters said the refinery is needed to generate more property tax revenue, add another pillar to the county's economic base and provide new, higher paying jobs.

Opponents say pollution from the refinery will pose health risks, have a detrimental effect on the environment and is not worth the monetary trade off or the estimated 650 jobs it would create.

McGinnis reiterated what his company and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials have said — the new refinery, if approved and built, would be the cleanest operating one of its kind owing to strict emissions standards and new emissions control technology.

No new oil refineries have been built in the U.S. since the mid-1970s and demand for fuel is on the rise, McGinnis said.

When asked about pollution, McGinnis said: "There is pollution from this facility, but it is managed. It's less than a small power plant."

According to the ADEQ documents, the maximum allowable emissions from the refinery would total 1,891 tons of pollutants per year, an amount that is "less than one-twentieth the emissions from some older (but still operating) refineries."

Roy Harrison, a member of the citizens group, raised questions about other emissions and the quantities of those emissions that the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is not requiring ACF to monitor.

According to the ADEQ Fact Sheet about the draft air permit, the planned site for the refinery "has been designated as attainment or unclassifiable for all criteria pollutants under the Clean Air Act."

McGinnis said: "I'm assuming in the long term, there are some (emissions) we don't have to monitor because either they won't be present or in such low quantities."

McGinnis said the planned refinery would have to comply with the Clean Air Act and with both national and state air quality standards. McGinnis said the cleaner fuels the refinery would produce would reduce emissions from vehicles.

McGinnis said he has not seen the revised version of the ADEQ draft permit yet. ADEQ officials have said they added more reporting and emissions measuring requirements since they first held public hearings on the draft permit in November.

The permit sets the maximum allowable emissions standards and compliance rules for the refinery.

The Environmental Protection Agency on March 21 will make public their decision on the draft permit which was written by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

If the EPA objects to the draft permit, ADEQ can address those objections or the EPA can take over jurisdiction, meaning the EPA would then have the authority to issue or not issue the permit.

ADEQ spokesman Courtland Coleman said: "We have no reason to believe they will object to the permit."

Coleman said: "It is highly unlikely they would object because we have spent so much time working with them and showing them — they are aware of the details. They have been kept abreast of the process over several months of writing the draft permit."

A Tucson-based conservation group, the Center for Biological Diversity, said they may make an appeal if ADEQ grants ACF the permit.

ACF officials have estimated construction of the proposed refinery could begin in 2006 and be completed in 2009.

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