

Legislation allocates \$2.5 Million for Port of Warden Biodiesel Project

Washington State Legislature approved a capital budget that will allow the Port of Warden to borrow \$2.5 million towards an oil seed crushing facility or equipment.

Loan money for the Port came on the heels of an announcement that Washington Biodiesel intends to construct a facility in Warden and it looks like everything has come together to make a biodiesel project work.

“This is a very positive thing for Warden,” said Bob Whitaker, President of the Port of Warden Commissioners. “The leadership of our local legislators, Rep. Janea Holmquist and Sen. Joyce Mulliken made all the difference in getting this passed.”

“The money set aside by the legislature for the Port of Warden is just what is needed at this time,” said Terry Brewer, Executive Director of the Grant County Economic Development Council. “Having that money to work with can really speed up the process and make this project work.”

The announcement from Washington Biodiesel came Monday night at the port sponsored Warden Community Forum. Daniel Malarkey, President of Washington Biodiesel addressed the audience of over 150 people and said that they were planning on breaking ground for a biodiesel plant this fall.

Malarkey began his presentation by thanking the people he referred to as “key partners” in the biodiesel project. The key partners included Mike Conley from the Port of Warden, Brewer from the Grant County Economic Development Council (GCEDC), the Connell Grain Growers (CHS), and the Columbia Basin Railroad.

Malarkey made it clear that it was the “can do” attitude of these key partners that ultimately made Warden the place for the project.

He went on to explain that the plant will provide 35

family wage jobs for the local community. The jobs will include material handlers, maintenance workers, lab technicians, and operating controllers.

These workers will supply 35 million gallons of biodiesel and 200 thousand tons of canola meal to Washington State each year.

“Initially we will have to get our canola from Canada and North Dakota because that is where it is being grown,”

explained Malarkey.

“However, once the plant is operational, we hope that Washington growers will see that we are able to support a local crop and provide us with it.”

Malarkey said that if they can secure a locally grown crop the total economic output of the project to the region will approach \$250 million. He further explained that the Warden plant will be capable of supporting

an additional 2,000 jobs within the state. These jobs will include canola harvesting, processing, and transportation.

“Of all the biodiesel projects going on in the state, this one is the largest,” said Brewer. “In terms of investment, plant size, and output, no other project I am aware of matches this one.”

Washington Biodiesel began looking at Warden as a potential location for a plant in early October when the company first contacted Brewer and the GCEDC. Warden was chosen for the project because is close to a potential source of canola, has a strong workforce, good railroad access, and inexpensive power rates.

For more information call the Grant County EDC at 509-764-6579 or visit: www.grantedc.com

