



THE COÖS COUNTY
DEMOCRAT

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PHOTO BY EDITH TUCKER

When Michel Bisson, right, president of Prima America Corporation showed off his nearly completed plastic-to-diesel recycling facility in Groveton on Monday, April 27, UNHCE regional dairy specialist Michal Lunak listened with interest, since now agricultural waste disposal is a difficult and costly part of farming.

Michel Bisson shows off Prima America plastics-to-diesel plant

BY EDITH TUCKER
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GROVETON — Michel Bisson, president of Prima America Corporation, led more than 20 farmers, transfer station supervisors and solid waste managers, and UNH Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) specialists, plus Coös County Commissioner Rick Samson on a tour of the nearly completed Prima America demonstration recycling plant on Route 3 North, designed to turn agricultural and some other plastic into diesel fuel.

UNHC Field Specialist for Food & Agriculture sent out an invitation to area farmers

to attend the Monday, April 27, tour, pointing out that the new facility could reduce their costs for disposing of ag plastics, including unwashed hay bale covers, maple tubing, and greenhouse film.

Bisson also invited area transfer station supervisors, who potentially will be able to divert no. 4 and no. 5 plastics from filling landfills at a price. No. 2 plastic could also be used, but most transfer stations already have outlets for it.

Lancaster Transfer Station Supervisor Dennis Patnoe said he is already setting aside plastic for the Groveton facility during this gearing up period, avoiding

a cost of \$84 a ton. His son, Littleton solid waste manager Brian Patnoe, was also on the tour.

Bisson already employs two full-time employees.
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Plant

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ployees: diesel mechanic Guy Turgeon of Clarksville and office manager Heather Singer of Stratford. Workers from Ray's Electric of Berlin and Bancroft Construction of South Paris, Me. are also hard at work in the building.

More jobs will be created when the plant is fully operational.

Much of the machinery has been tailored for use this specific plant, and Bisson said the process of turning plastic waste into diesel fuel is proprietary.

He explained that he anticipates being able to commission the facility, the first floor of which was originally built as a warehouse for Wausau Carriers, in July and to begin to run it 24/7 this fall for approximately 8,000 hours a year.

Prima America added a seven-story tower to the plant, outfitted with two metal staircases in order to meet state fire safety codes. The unexpected requirement for a second staircase cost \$1 million, Bisson complained.

The facility's roof is designed as a year-round water collection system.

An English-made 1.2-megawatt Ruston-GEC Diesels generator is expected to provide 90 percent of the

needed electrical power, and Chiptec Wood Energy Systems of Williston, Vt., has also installed biomass equipment in a nearby building.

The Prima America facility has been under construction in fits and starts for more than five years, explained Bisson, a citizen of Quebec, Canada, who is now spending the bulk of his time in New Hampshire. He and investors are self-financing the project — without going to banks, he explained. If the demonstration facility is as successful as hoped, a larger facility will be built, potentially on the former paper mill site.

Many details about collecting and storing plastics and selling the diesel fuel in bulk are still being worked out, Bisson said, noting that the day's tour was part of his information-gathering process. He expects to use agricultural and transfer-station plastic from a wide area, extending into Vermont, western Maine, and likely the Sherbrooke-Coaticook, Quebec, region and possibly New York state, he said.

Those interested in learning more about the demonstration facility can e-mail Heather Singer at HSINGER2005@gmail.com or phone 631-5699.

Farmers on the tour

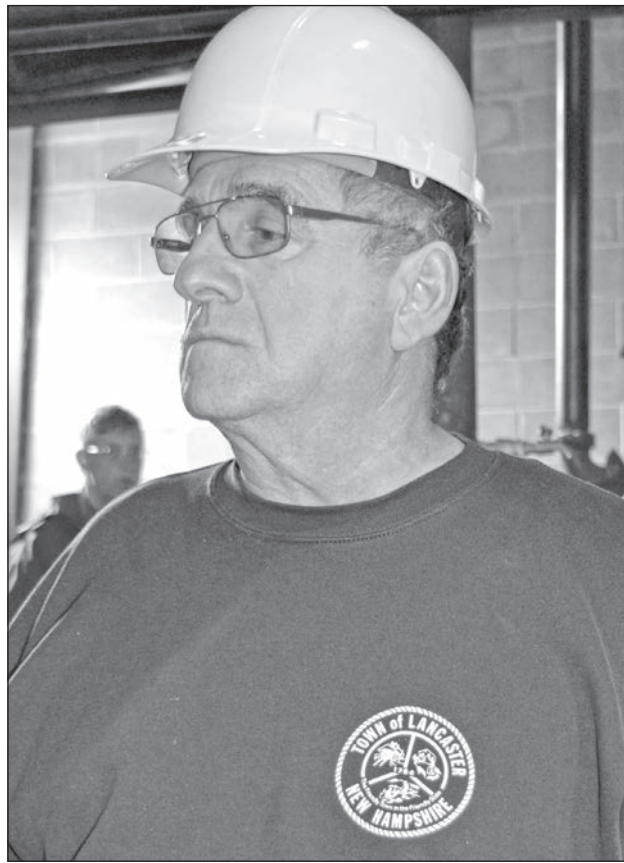


PHOTO BY EDITH TUCKER

Lancaster Transfer Station Supervisor Dennis Patnoe is already setting aside some plastic waste products that he cannot now recycle as he eagerly awaits the day the Prima America facility will be commissioned in July with the expectation of a 24/7 operation this fall. It costs \$84 a ton to send materials to a landfill.

included: Joyce Brady who with her husband Chris raises cattle in Columbia; dairy farmer Scott Forbes, maple syrup producer and retailer Dave Fuller and cattleman Stan Knecht of Lancaster; dairy farmer Gordon Gray of Groveton; and red deer rancher Henry Ahern of Bonnie Brae Farms in Plymouth.

UNH Extension specialists on the tour in-

cluded Turaj, his Belknap County counterpart Kelly McAdam, forester Brendan Prusick, and dairy specialist Michal Lunak, along with Regan Pride, waste management planner at North Country Council. rpride@nccouncil.org is one of two waste management planners at NCC working on waste management issues under a USDA grant. Dan Woods is the other one.