

**Gratiot County Herald-2**<http://gcherald.com/news/glerp-still-a-go-despite-hold-up-in-lansing.shtml>**GLERP still a go; despite hold-up in Lansing**

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By Phyllis McCrossin

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It seems many in mid-Michigan are holding their collective breath waiting to find out what is going to happen with an energy bill currently in Conference Committee to determine the details of the legislation. Vote on the bill has been postponed several times with the latest postponement set for today (Aug.21).

Simply stated, the wide-ranging energy legislation has been debated by the committee since earlier this summer as lawmakers still disagree over details such as making customers pay for more green power. Under discussion is a requirement that a certain percentage of Michigan's power come from renewable sources. The Democratic-led House wants a higher requirement than the Republican-led Senate.

The package includes a measure limiting competition for electric customers to help utilities build new coal-fired power plants. Critics of the plan say parts of it would raise rates significantly, while those who defend the plan say the increases would be higher if the Legislature does nothing.

In the meantime the rumors and speculation continue to circulate.

While businessmen in the Gratiot County area are ready to move forward with several renewable energy plants or other energy business ventures, many are finding the wait painfully difficult.

Mike Sawruk, president of M & M Energy is one of those businessmen.

Sawruk, who along with his partner Mike Muckleroy, have proposed building an energy park on land owned by the former Total Petroleum plant in Alma, has been waiting to see if legislation will be passed which will enable him to meet his goal. The partners have been working closely with state legislators, including Senator Roger Kahn and Representative Paul Opsommer to establish

the legislative framework necessary to support the project.

“I have been encouraged by the work in Lansing by some of the state lawmakers: Roger Kahn, Mike Bishop and Paul Opsommer,” Sawruk said.

What is needed is legislation that will allow the developers to sell captured electricity to utility companies.

The proposed park is a multi-billion dollar development centered around an Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC) power plant.

An IGCC takes coal, separates it molecularly, producing a cleaner burning synthetic gas. By utilizing IGCC, pollutants such as mercury and sulfur can be substantially reduced compared to traditional coal-burning methods. In addition, carbon dioxide – a greenhouse gas – can be captured and used to recover billions of barrels of oil still underground through a method that utilizes high-pressured carbon dioxide injected into abandoned oil wells.

The carbon dioxide works as a solvent to free stranded oil otherwise trapped within crevasses of rock and sediment breaking the bond between the oil and rock. Most of the injected carbon dioxide replaces the oil, remaining underground for thousands of years.

Sawruk and Muckleroy are interested in obtaining the oil stranded underground throughout the mid-Michigan area. Through the processing of the coal to capture the carbon dioxide needed to recover the trapped oil, synthetic gas is then available to burn to turn turbines to make electricity and/or more liquid fuels. It is this electricity that Sawruk and Muckleroy would like to sell to utility companies. However, if the legislation is not passed soon, Sawruk said he would continue with his plans for the gasification plant regardless of the outcome of the legislation.

“It was always our intention to build the plant for capturing the carbon dioxide to go after the stranded oil,” Sawruk said. “We saw the electricity as an added benefit.”

Through the conversion process Sawruk said the plant would produce about 250 mega-watts of electricity. The plant will need 100 of those mega-watts and it was the remaining 150 mega-watts Sawruk was going to make available for sale within the energy park itself for companies that need synthetic gas or electricity.

“As a comparison, municipalities in the tri-county area use about 20 mega-watts,” Sawruk said.

While waiting for the legislation, some of the purchase options on property surrounding the former refinery site have expired, but Sawruk said the option

with the city for the purchase of the property has been renewed and he is still negotiating with property owners in the surrounding area. He noted he had invested almost \$1 million to date.

“We will be making an announcement for our final plans for the plant soon,” Sawruk said. “We can’t wait (for the legislation) forever.”

In the meantime Sawruk noted that the construction for the plant will take about four years to complete and will bring an additional 800 full-time jobs to the area.

“It is a really big construction job,” he said.