

BILLINGS COUNTY TURNS OUT TO SUPPORT DAVIS REFINERY

MERIDIAN'S PERSONAL NETWORKING



Meridian Energy officials continued their personal networking with residents of southwest North Dakota on Monday night. Company reps working on the Davis Refinery mingled with 100 farmers, ranchers, landowners and business people at an open house on the Arrow K farms west of Belfield.

“We just want to show our appreciation to the people of Billings County and Belfield – our thank you to them,” said Adam Williams, Meridian’s Director of Communications.

People from several counties turned out to the evening event to share their enthusiasm for the Davis Refinery including Anita K. who comes

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from a multi-generational ranch family between Fairfield and

Grassy Butte. While she is excited about the jobs the refinery will produce, she’s equally upset with what she called “a lot of people from the east” who are trying to derail the project. Her support and her frustration seemed to be shared by many of those in attendance at the informal supper. Many visited one on one with company officials or went over plans and drawings of the refinery.



Natalie Muruato, Belfield City Auditor, is an enthusiastic cheerleader for the project. She said she sees it as exactly what Belfield needs and deserves. “Belfield is such a great little town,” she said. “It has a great community spirit and something like this will add (direct and indirect) jobs to the town. We’re set to grow!”



Meridian executives thanked the area residents personally and in group comments. They encouraged people to keep speaking up and sharing their enthusiasm for the refinery.

MISCONCEPTIONS

Much of the opposition to the refinery comes from those who earlier claimed the refinery would be seen from the extreme southeast corner of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park South Unit. That has become less of an issue since it was shown the tallest stack of the refinery would not be visible from the highest point in the park. The opposition also claimed trucks and trains would be disrupting the sights and sounds of the park, even though I-94 with its heavy truck traffic passes through the park as it has for more than 50 years.

Some environmentalists also claim the refinery will add pollution to the environment. Thomas Johnson, the Chief Operations Officer for Meridian Energy Group, Inc. said, “Environmentalists should be very supportive of this refinery because every barrel of the low sulfur crude from the Bakken that we refine here, replaces crude oil that has higher sulfur content.”

Williams also said another misconception is that the refinery would occupy the entire 700 acres Meridian bought for the refinery. He said only about 100 acres will be used. The other 600 acres will be trees, prairie grasses and wildlife habitat, something environmentalists should support.

FEBRUARY

In February, Meridian will once again host an informal meeting with residents of southwest North Dakota. The date, time and location have not been determined.

Bill Prentice, the Chairman and CEO of Meridian, will be the keynote speaker at February's meeting of the Stark County Business Development Corporation.