Fertilizer Plant Operator Defends Safety

ROCKPORT, Ind. (AP) — The developer of a proposed southern Indiana fertilizer plant said Wednesday the project will be safe and not handle explosive materials like a Texas plant where a deadly explosion occurred last month.

All of the products made at the Ohio Valley Resources LLC proposed for the Ohio River city of Rockport will be liquid, non-flammable and non-explosive, Fairfield, Ill.-based developer Doug Wilson said.

"Ohio Valley Resources LLC is not manufacturing dry fertilizer product" like that at the Texas plant, Wilson said in email to The Associated Press.

John Blair, leader of the Evansville-based environmental group Valley Watch, said the proposed Rockport plant would manufacture 3,600 tons per day of ammonium nitrate, while the Texas plant produced about 4,800 tons a year.

"By scale alone, the proposals for southwest Indiana are giant compared to the plant that blew up in Texas," Blair told the Evansville Courier & Press for a story Wednesday.

Wilson said Blair was mistaken.

"Unlike the products apparently stored at the agricultural retail facility in Texas, everything made at OVR's new plant in Spencer County will be in liquid form. ... None of these products are highly flammable or explosive," Wilson said in an April 19 news release that was reissued Wednesday.

Plans announced in December call for the $950 million plant to produce agriculture fertilizer and ammonia for use in emissions control at coal-fired power plants and factories.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management is considering an air pollution permit for the plant site about 30 miles east of Evansville.

Authorities haven't yet determined what caused the April 17 blast in Texas that killed 14 people.

Indiana currently has no fertilizer plants, but about 1,000 locations, including agricultural cooperatives and farms, store or mix enough fertilizer to require state inspections.

Those inspections are handled not by the Department of Environmental Management, but by the state chemist's office at Purdue University and the state fire marshal's office.

Source URL (retrieved on *10/09/2015 - 6:40am*):
http://www.chem.info/news/2013/05/fertilizer-plant-operator-defends-safety