

Sun Coke set for expansion

By Mark Shaffer/The Ironton Tribune

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It's official: The Sun Coke Company in Haverhill will be expanding its operations — bringing with it nearly 50 jobs.

The announcement was made in February that the plant would begin construction on a second set of 100 ovens and now a private bricklaying ceremony is set for May 21.

Besides local officials, Sun Coke President Mike Dingus and other dignitaries, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland will be attending the ceremony before speaking to the Portsmouth Area Chamber of Commerce on Monday evening.

Strickland has been a strong supporter of the Haverhill coke plant since Sun Coke started talking about building in the area in the late 1990s.

Strickland said it was a matter of cooperation brought the plant here.

“I think the Sun Coke expansion is testament to the cooperative efforts of the many county and regional officials and community advocates who have worked toward this goal for so long,” he said. “The Sun Coke expansion builds on one of southern Ohio’s regional strengths, energy production, and will result in new jobs, a stronger economy for southern Ohio and will bolster the state’s standing as a national energy producer.”

The Sun Coke Haverhill plant was completed in 2005 with 100 ovens that produce approximately 550,000 tons of screened blast furnace coke per year and steam, a by-product of the coke ovens is sold to the adjacent Sunoco phenol manufacturing facility.

With the additional 100 ovens, the plant will produce more than one thousand tons of blast furnace coke annually.

Construction is already underway.

The project will 49 permanent jobs and 700 construction jobs.

Gerald T. Davis, a spokesperson for the Sun Coke’s parent company, Sunoco, inc. said that the total cost of the project is estimated at approximately \$230 million and full production is expected in the second half of 2008. Two companies have already signed agreements to purchase the coke produced at the plant for the next 15 years.

The facility is designed to capture waste heat from the ovens to produce and supply steam to a 67-megawatt turbine that will provide a net average of 46 megawatts of power into the regional power market.

Strickland said that that is unique about this expansion is the use of waste product now being harnessed to create energy.

“While this may not have a direct effect on local prices, it will contribute to the energy grid and to the region’s standing as an energy producer,” he said. “The more energy we produce in Ohio will continue to ensure greater stability and predictability in our energy market.”

Strickland added that one of southern Ohio’s regional strengths is its energy infrastructure.

“As governor, I am committed to making Ohio the nation’s epicenter of energy production, distribution and innovation,” he said. “If, as I believe, energy can be the basis of Ohio’s economic turnaround, electricity will be a dominant force.”