LAPLACE TO GET
DUPONT FACILITY

$20 Million Neoprene Plant Proposed

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By JOSEPH A. LUCIA

LAPLACE, La. — Du Pont will build a $20 million neoprene (synthetic rubber) plant at its Pontchartrain Works here, Manning W. Riser, works manager, announced Wednesday.

Riser said construction will start in mid-1968 and the plant is scheduled to be completed in late 1969.

Approximately 600 persons will be employed at the peak of construction, Riser said, and the plant will provide 160 new jobs in the area when it goes into operation.

PLANT INVESTMENT

The neoprene facility will increase Du Pont's total plant investment at its Laplace site to $49 million.

The plant Du Pont firm first moved into Laplace six years ago when it constructed its $24 million Pontchartrain Works to manufacture adiponitrile, an intermediate in the production of nylon. The company subsequently spent $5 million to expand its adiponitrile capacity.

Riser said the neoprene plant will represent the first entrance of Du Pont's Elastomer Chemicals Department into Louisiana. That department manufactures a diversified line of synthetic rubbers, of which neoprene is the most extensively used.

ADEQUATE FACILITIES

Initially, Riser said, the most widely used types of neoprene will be produced at Laplace but the facilities will be sufficiently flexible to make other types as well.

He said adequate waste disposal and treatment facilities will be incorporated in the new plant, using a system which has been approved by the Louisiana Stream Control Commission.

Riser said the decision to expand total Du Pont neoprene capacity "is based upon a growing demand for neoprene throughout the world."

THIRD SUCH PLANT

The Laplace facility will be the company's third neoprene plant in the United States. The other two are in Louisville, Ky., and Montague, Mich.

Du Pont Company (United Kingdom) Limited operates a neoprene plant at Londonderry, Northern Ireland, and Showa Neoprene K.K., a Du Pont partnership with Showa Denko K.K., has a plant at Kawasaki, Japan.

Neoprene, one of the first synthetic rubbers produced on a commercial scale, was introduced by Du Pont in 1931. Riser said "Neoprene's superior oil resistance compared to natural rubber led to early acceptance in hose and molded parts for the petroleum industry."

Since then, neoprene's markets have broadened because of its ability to resist deterioration from ozone, weathering, heat and most acids, as well as oils and grease.

This balanced combination of properties, Riser said, "accounts for neoprene's widespread use throughout industry today in such products as conveyor and transmission belts, building gaskets, wire and cable jackets, adhesives and a variety of extruded and molded parts for the automotive market."

MANNING RISER, works manager at Du Pont's Pontchartrain Works, Laplace, points to the area where the new $20 million Du Pont neoprene plant will be built at Laplace.