Kaiser Enters Plastics Field with Gramercy Plant Opening

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Will Be Sixth Product Made at La. Site

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(The Times-Picayune Upper Bureau)

GRAMERCY, La. — Kaiser Chemicals Wednesday entered the field of plastics for the first time with the start of production at its new isocyanates plant here.

The new product brings to six the number of industrial chemicals now being manufactured by Kaiser at its Gramercy location, which, company officials said, has become the firm's major production center for chemicals.

By manufacturing isocyanates, Kaiser now produces two of the major ingredients of urethane foams, both of which are Louisiana produced, officials said. For several years, the company has produced fluorocarbon blowing agents and other major constituents.

The new facility—described as a "continuous process isocyanates plant"—has an annual capacity of 20 million pounds, and was designed by Kaiser Chemicals, a division of Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corp.

Company officials said the continuous process represents a major advance in processing technology for the chemical, which is an essential component for urethane plastics.

They said urethane plastics are used as insulation, coatings and adhesives by the transportation, construction, building, refrigeration and appliance industries.

Kaiser is also producing a range of polyisocyanates and MDI at its St. John the Baptist plant. The polymeric isocyanates are used in rigid and semi-rigid urethane foam applications and for adhesives. MDI is used in the production of elastomers, coatings and fibers.

The five other industrial chemicals manufactured here by Kaiser are aluminum fluoride, anhydrous hydrogen fluoride, caustic soda, chlorine and fluorochemicals.