PCI ammonia plant plans are revealed

(Reprinted from the March 8, 1956, Lake Charles American Press)

Construction will start within the next few weeks on the new $12,500,000 Lake Charles Ammonia plant.

The plans for early construction were included today in a Petroleum Chemicals, Inc., announcement originally scheduled for release Sunday. However, PCI plans to build the plant were revealed in Baton Rouge yesterday when the Louisiana Board of Commerce and Industry granted the company a tax exemption for the new industry.

The $12½ million petrochemical plant will produce anhydrous ammonia for use primarily as a fertilizer.

Today's announcement quoted F. M. Simpson, vice president and general manager of Petroleum Chemicals, which is owned jointly by Continental Oil company and Cities Service company.

The plant will produce 100,000 tons of ammonia annually and will employ approximately 100 men.

Construction to start “within the next few weeks” is scheduled for completion in the fall of 1957.

By-product hydrogen, the principal raw material for ammonia, will be supplied to the new installation by the Continental and Cities Service refineries near Lake Charles. Nitrogen, also used in producing ammonia, will be extracted from the air.

The major portion of the ammonia produced at Lake Charles will be sold as fertilizer. A small amount will go to industrial plants for use in making plastics and various petrochemical products.

Location of the plant was not included in the announcement, but the fact that its supply of raw materials will come from refineries west of the Calcasieu river indicate it will be built in the Ward 4 industrial area.

The PCI announcement also made no reference to construction contracts.

Ammonia produced by the plant will be marketed by Mid-South Chemical corporation of Memphis, Tenn. Mid-South is also owned jointly by Continental and Cities Service.

Mid-South distributes ammonia through more than 150 stations to markets in Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana.

The firm transports ammonia by river barge, tank car and truck and plans to expand its marketing operations to include much of the central United States, the announcement also said.