



## **Clovis Lands \$17.5 million Bio-Diesel Plant :**

Clovis is riding high with the addition of a new \$16 million biodiesel fuel plant. According to the Clovis Industrial Development Corporation, construction will start later this year, and the plant will fully be operational by next year.

"It's an exciting time here in Clovis right now with the announcement of the Special Ops mission, and we'll have our official grand opening of Southwest Cheese, and this announcement with the biodiesel plant makes Clovis a front-runner for renewable energy," said Ernie Kos with the Clovis Chamber of Commerce.

Besides providing ten new jobs to the area, Clovis officials say the economic impact this plant will provide is immeasurable.

City officials say the new plant will set up shop and be the first company in the town's new industrial park. The company, Ares Corp, is out of Burlingame, California.



## **Clovis Community College in line for DOL Funding:**

The growing manufacturing industry in eastern New Mexico is getting a boost from the Department of Labor and Clovis Community College. Government officials announced Monday that Clovis Community College and Mesalands Community College in Tucumcari have been awarded approximately \$3.3 million in federal grants from the Department of Labor.

With its grant money, CCC plans to launch a program for people who want an associate's degree in advanced manufacturing, which officials hope will fill the need for skilled workers. The college is slated to receive \$1.27 million to expand outreach and recruitment in the advanced manufacturing industry, according to a press release from Sen. Pete Domenici, R.-N.M. The project will allow the college to train approximately 300 people in the next 10 years.

The grant will be accompanied by \$713,896 in funds from local businesses and organizations, the release reads. The kernel for the program came from eastern New Mexico manufacturers including Southwest Cheese, Cummins Natural Gas Engine and DairyConcepts of Portales, CCC Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness David Caffey said. The companies are short on skilled workers, he said. "They emphatically had a need for trained technicians ... technicians that can deal with state-of-the-art machinery," Caffey said. Those companies, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales Schools and Clovis Schools partnered with CCC to apply for the Department of Labor grant, Caffey said. Southwest Cheese President Maurice Keane said his plant will definitely hire graduates of the CCC manufacturing program.

"We are looking for people with those skills, and we are finding it difficult to get as many as we would like to hire. We are doing it, but with the right number of people, we could always do it better," Keane said. To attract more businesses such as Southwest Cheese to the area, "there has to be a skilled work force available," Keane said.

People with such skills can make as much as three times the minimum wage, according to Caffey. Caffey said the manufacturing program at CCC could get off its feet as early as fall 2007.

"We are extremely happy about it (the program) because it's a way the college can contribute to the growth of those industries and the economic diversification of the region," Caffey said. Through the same grant, Mesalands will receive \$2 million for employment expansion with the wind energy industry in New Mexico and neighboring states.

An additional \$1.22 million in matching funds will be provided from state and private institutions. As part of the grant, the college will acquire a wind power turbine as an educational resource. The funds are administered under the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and approved by Congress, according to Domenici's release.

Of 429 grant applications received this year, only 72 were approved, according to the Department of Labor. The fiscal year 2006 funds should be awarded by the end of the year, according to Department of Labor officials.

**\*\*This story was taken from the Clovis News Journal on Thursday, December 14, 2006\*\***