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New Flint Hills Resources dock to be ready for Eagle Ford Shale crude by summer

By Mike D. Smith

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CORPUS CHRISTI — Flint Hills Resources has spent about half of the $40 million the company estimates will take to ready the dock portion of the former Naval Station Ingleside for Eagle Ford Shale crude, company vice president and manufacturing manager Phil Gaarder said.

The more than 100 workers connecting pipes, pumps and ship connections there are on track to have the terminal running by June or July, Gaarder told Port of Corpus Christi commissioners Tuesday.

At that time, the project will tie in with a pipeline network being extended by related company Koch Pipeline and linking Karnes and Bee counties to Ingleside and pumping crude into vessels for transport to points such as the Houston area and Louisiana.

"Our goal is to continue to make Corpus Christi move toward an oil export hub rather than an import hub," Gaarder said.

Flint Hills finalized its $8 million purchase of the dock in February.

Under construction are a 30-inch pipeline running along the facility and piers being driven into the ground to support the terminal's infrastructure, which will be built within the next few weeks.

Three of the six permanent employees who will staff the facility have been hired.

Eagle Ford is proving lucrative for Flint Hills Resources.

South Texas crude now accounts for two-thirds of Flint Hills' production at its Corpus Christi refinery — a 100 percent year-over-year increase, Gaarder said.

With some production projections of 1 million barrels per day, the shale formation will provide ample opportunities for the Coastal Bend to cash in on the boom, Gaarder said.

"Corpus Christi can take the majority of Eagle Ford production either to the refineries or to the water," he said.

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