



KANSAS ETHANOL IS LOCATED on the rail spur in the manufacturing district south of Lyons just west of state highway 14.

Kansas Ethanol has good year, outlook remains strong

Demand remains steady for locally manufactured products

Demand for Kansas Ethanol's distillers grain cubes and tubs have remained strong through the past year according to CEO Mike Chisam. Chisam said they had a good year with the tubs, and although not as strong due to the good moisture levels last year, the cube business remained solid with a moderate increase in sales.

The major innovation for 2015 is the addition of a steam powered turbine generator. This installation utilizes the energy from high pressure steam to generate electricity for the facility. Chisam said that they brought the unit, which produces 1

megawatt of electricity, online in 2015. Although the plant still utilizes the same amount of power as before, this generator allows them to reduce the amount they have to purchase from the grid, which reduces their costs and increases the overall efficiency of the plant. Chisam explained that it solves an inefficiency they were aware of from the opening of the plant, and that product improvement and cost reductions allowed them to move forward with this improvement last year.

For 2016 the plant will begin selling a new product they have had in development for some time. Fiber and high pro-

tein distillers grain sales will begin on February 15. In the past, fiber would ride through the Ethanol production process as an inert ingredient before being incorporated into the distillers grain. However, with a new fiber separation system, the fiber will be separated from the other fermentable portions of the grain and sent directly to the distillers grain production process. The new system, according to Chisam, will increase ethanol production and yields, and decrease natural gas and electrical consumption per gallon.

Ethanol production has continued to remain level at 60 million gallons

annually. With the ethanol production, and the products mentioned above, the company also produces distillers grain and grain oil.

To meet the demand of all the plant production, the number of employees at Kansas Ethanol is now at 50, up from 46 last year. Chisam said the facility is meeting demands of their customers by operating 24/7.

Chisam said that 2015 was a good year, and that although fuel prices are soft, demand for ethanol remains strong, similar to last year. He said the lower gas prices have kept individuals driving more, creating more gasoline demand

than usual. Chisam predicts that the demand for ethanol will continue to remain strong as more areas around the na-

tion now sell E15 gasoline and commitments from other areas to sell the product continue to grow.

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Rice County Aerial LLC serves local and regional farmers

Rice County Aerial LLC (RCA), located at the Rice County airport, started in Lyons in 1998 as an add-on to Bill Hoeffner's Ellinwood Flying Service, which has been serving Rice County since 1981. That partnership ended in January of 2011 when Hoeffner kept Rice County Aerial Sprayers and his partner kept the Ellinwood business.

Last fall the business be-

came a division of MKC, however, Hoeffner still manages the day to day operation of the company. Heather Howard is the office manager.

RCA uses three turbine spray planes in the operation. They added the turbine planes in 2010 which increased their efficiency by 40 percent. The bigger planes carry a payload of 500 gallons and travel across a

field at 150 miles per hour.

Rice County Aerial LLC provides pasture spraying in the spring and fall, mainly for musk thistle control and crop spraying from March through Thanksgiving. By that time, most everything is dormant. The business serves a twelve county area from Great Bend to Marion, and from Wichita to north of Salina.



Rice County Aerial Sprayers pilot-mechanic Spencer Maxwell inspects the engine compartment on one of the yellow crop-dusting planes used in the operation.

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