

Atlas Carbon seeks \$25 million loan to expand local plant

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The Atlas Carbon production plant, above, stands on the grounds of the former Fort Union coal mine. Atlas Carbon uses a new filtration system invented by one of the company's experts.

Atlas Carbon's request for a \$25 million loan from the Wyoming Business Council will be discussed when the council meets this week.

The Wyoming Business Council board of directors will consider three economic development large-project loans, including the Atlas Carbon loan when it meets starting at 8:30 a.m. Thursday in Worland.

Atlas Carbon is seeking the loan to expand its activated carbon plant in Gillette. The company now produces about 16 million tons of activated charcoal per year and operations became 24 hours a day, seven days a week this past summer.

The plant expansion would boost production to 108 million tons per year, increase full-time employees from 12 to 32 and provide an economic boost to Campbell County and the state, according to Atlas Carbon's proposal.

The jobs created in the expansion would inject about \$2.2 million in sales and tax revenue over the life of the loan, according to a press release from the Business Council.

Jobs created would exceed local wages by 39 percent.

The Business Council staff is recommending partial funding at \$6.53 million.

Also requesting a large loan is Standard Alcohol of Cheyenne, which is seeking \$25 million to build its first production facility for turning natural gas and carbon dioxide into mixed alcohols for use as a fuel additive. The project is expected to create 32 new jobs and pay \$2.9 million in annual wages and add \$40,000 in state and local tax benefits per year. The staff is recommending \$17.4 million in partial funding.

The third request is for a loan of \$33.75 million from Cody Laboratories to expand its pharmaceutical manufacturing process in Cody. It would more than double production to 11 metric tons per year and create 39 jobs exceeding the local average wages. The staff recommends partial funding at about \$9.87 million.

While meeting in Worland, the council also will review a community readiness grant of \$1.2 million to renovate the historic Wyoming Frontier Prison's guard quarters in Rawlins to include entrepreneurial space, a conference room and more restrooms. Staff is recommending no funding for the project because it doesn't meet the criteria, according to the news release.

And the council will look at a \$313,700 loan and \$466,210 grant to build a 3,400-square-foot chamber of commerce and visitor center in Lander. Staff is recommending the total grant and a \$194,316 loan.

The final request is a \$50,000 grant to Niobrara County to develop a long-term community development and housing plan that will serve as a blueprint to the damage caused in Lusk and Niobrara County in June 2015. The staff is recommending partial funding with a \$44,035 grant.