

Corzine applauds BASF's clean energy efforts in Franklin

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Photos by David Gard/For The Star-LedgerGov. Jon Corzine helps with the ribbon cutting as BASF officially opened its fuel cell production facility in the Somerset section of Franklin Township today.

FRANKLIN - Gov. Jon Corzine and other state officials applauded BASF's efforts to create clean energy at ribbon-cutting ceremony today at the company's fuel cell production facility in Somerset County's Franklin Township.

"New Jersey has long been renowned for innovation and discovery," he said. "Projects like this are exactly the type of private investment commitment that will create a more sustainable environment, keep our economy moving and put people to work.

"We are fortunate to have this facility in New Jersey along with the promise it holds for the future," Corzine said.

BASF develops and manufactures the central components of fuel cells, a more efficient, cost-effective and more environmentally friendly energy alternative. The technology produces heat and energy without combustion, which lowers harmful emissions and reduces carbon. Though fuel cells are only commercially used to power cell phones and laptops, the company said its goal is to eventually replace batteries and have the technology powering transportation and heating homes in the next 10 years.



BASF's Emory De Castro gives a tour of the plant in Franklin to Gov. Jon Corzine today.

Research executive director Dr. Andreas Kreimeyer touted the facility in the Somerset section of Franklin as the only fuel cell production facility in the world able to produce ready-for-production, high-temperature Membrane Electrode Assembly, a key component of fuel cells.

"Future enhancements and refinements of BASF's proprietary MEA product in conjunction with system developments by our alternative energy partners will make fuel cell energy realistic, affordable and widely available," he said.

Several Franklin council members were on hand to show their support. "It's important that we start reducing our dependence on foreign oil and our carbon footprint," said Rajiv Prasad. "So strategically this is very important for America to get behind this type of alternative and lead the way. I'm proud it's starting here in Franklin."

Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club Jeff Tittel said that even though the organization has had turbulent relationships with fuel cell companies in the past, BASF has earned their trust. "We see this as a win-win situation for New Jersey, we can help produce jobs in New Jersey while also creating green energy," he said. "It is an opportunity for us to move the state forward both environmentally and economically."

The U.S. Department of Energy approved BASF for a \$2 million grant over the next three years for fuel cell technology manufacturing and it is estimated that the facility will create at least 40 new jobs in the township.

BASF has more than 1,900 employees in New Jersey.

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