

**BRYAN CHRISTJANSEN, GENERAL MANAGER**

BUSINESS PROFILE

POET

QUICK FACTS

Moved to Wabash County:

2007

41

Current Employees:

When Jeff Broin, President and CEO of Broin Companies, decided the company needed a new name to take it into the 21st Century, he looked for a moniker that would serve as a metaphor for what the company does. That name was POET. “As a poet takes everyday words and turns them into something valuable and beautiful, we use creativity that comes from common sense to leave things better than we found them,” said Broin.

As the world’s largest supplier of ethanol, POET currently manufactures 1.5 billion gallons of ethanol a year from corn, which is then sold to fuel blenders. The ethanol is naturally clear and bright without any of the additives necessary to turn petroleum-based products into fuel. It also has twice the oxygen of other fuels; the more oxygen in fuel, the fewer emissions produced. According to Bryan Christjansen, general manager of POET’s North Manchester plant, “The reduction in emissions from the 1.5 billion gallons of ethanol POET produces annually is the equivalent of taking 438,000 vehicles off the road.”

Today, regular gasoline is blended with 10% ethanol for use in all standard, non flex-fuel vehicles; studies show that figure could go as high as 30% without any negative impact on performance. Fuel blended for flex-fuel vehicles can be up to 85% ethanol. Since 2007, Indy Racing League (IRL) cars have run on 100% ethanol.

Ethanol is more than just fuel for cars. Researchers at the University of Minnesota have made a hydrogen reactor that uses ethanol to heat homes. And Manchester College uses ethanol instead of formaldehyde to preserve specimens.

POET is a green company in more ways than one. “Energy consumption at the North Manchester plant is significantly lower than industry average and water usage is less than what an 18-hole golf course would use on a daily basis,” said Christjansen. “We have three to four million gallons of recirculated water going through the system every day.”

Finally, ten of the 190 acres of the POET North Manchester facility are dedicated to a mitigated wetland area. “It’s been nice to see it develop,” said Christjansen. “We see lots of deer and even the occasional coyote. It’s a nice area to go to take a mental break in the middle of the day.” Poetry, indeed!

POET WABASH COUNTY, INDIANA

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Building Made Easy

In 2007 POET selected North Manchester, Indiana, as the site for its 24th ethanol plant. From start to finish, the building process took less than 14 months. According to Christjansen, “This was by far the easiest plant to build of all our facilities. We’ve built at other locations where we had to hold the county people’s hands and walk them through the process. Here in Wabash, we didn’t have to do that. The folks at the Economic Development Group of Wabash County have lots of experience. They helped us every step of the way.”

That help included assistance in securing a \$100,000 Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) infrastructure grant to extend the natural gas line to the plant, as well as a \$40,000 IEDC training grant. In addition, Wabash County officials smoothed the way through the zoning and planning process and issued \$4M in TIF bonds. Because POET processes the “distiller’s grain,” which would normally go to landfill, into a high-quality animal feed product, Wabash County also provided Tax Exempt Solid Waste bonds that saved POET approximately 250 basis points in interest on up to \$12M in debt.

“If you’re looking for a group of people who are willing to work very hard to get things done, and are very trustworthy, Wabash County is the place to be,” said Christjansen.

A Wealth of Resources

“When we look at locating a facility we look at the availability of resources,” said Christjansen. “Access to abundant corn is a given, of course. But we also need access to rail lines, access to natural gas, and access to markets. Here in North Manchester, we have all of that.”

In addition to being surrounded by corn fields, the POET North Manchester plant is right next to a Norfolk Southern Rail line and within a mile of where four natural gas lines merge. With the infrastructure grant from the IEDC, POET was able to lay the mile or so of natural gas pipeline necessary to reach the plant. “It significantly reduced start-up costs,” said Christjansen.

Being close to markets is a big plus, too. “We have easy access to several key markets including a blending station in Huntington, Indiana—which is about 20 miles away—as well as blenders in Ohio and Michigan.”

Hardworking, Genuine People

“People in the area are very hardworking, very genuine people,” said Christjansen. “Their core values are the same as they were 20-25 years ago.”

In addition to farming, the employment background of most people in the area is automotive manufacturing. “It isn’t a great



WHY MOVE TO WABASH COUNTY?

1



LOCATION

2



AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

3



PROACTIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE

KEY PARTNERS

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT GROUP
OF WABASH COUNTY**

WABASH COUNTY

**CITY OF NORTH
MANCHESTER**

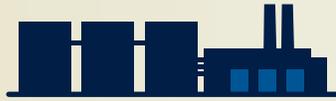
**INDIANA ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORP
(IEDC)**

NIPSCO

**NORFOLK SOUTHERN
RAILROAD**

SITE DETAILS

150,000 TOTAL
SQ. FT



MANUFACTURING: 140,000 sq. ft.

OFFICE: 10,000 sq. ft.

**ACREAGE: 190 acres
(10 acres mitigated wetlands)**



GREEN ELEMENTS:

**Recycle 3-4M gallons water daily.
Reduced dependence on natural gas.
Energy-efficient manufacturing
process.**

INCENTIVES

\$100,000

**IEDC Infrastructure
Grant**

\$40,000

IEDC Training Grant

\$4M

TIF Bonds

Tax Exempt

Solid Waste Bonds

leap to ethanol manufacturing,” said Christjansen. This means the company has had no need to recruit from outside the immediate area for employees. “Ninety-nine percent of our employees live within a 25 minute drive of the plant.”

To find the employees they needed, POET worked with WorkOne to establish guidelines and measurements for the needed skill sets. Several hundred people went through assessment testing and interviews. The new hires included 16 technicians and four shift supervisors, as well as support, maintenance, and office staff.

A training grant from IEDC enabled the company to provide the new hires with two months of training on the ethanol process—including the safety procedures. “Above all, our employees must be very safety conscious,” said Christjansen. “We want people who are willing to work in, and maintain, a safe environment. I’m proud to say we’ve had no lost time due to accidents since day one.”

The company has continued its relationship with WorkOne; any new hires go through the established assessment and interview process. In addition, POET is working with Ivy Tech Community College to provide additional on-site training and education for employees.

Small Town Charm

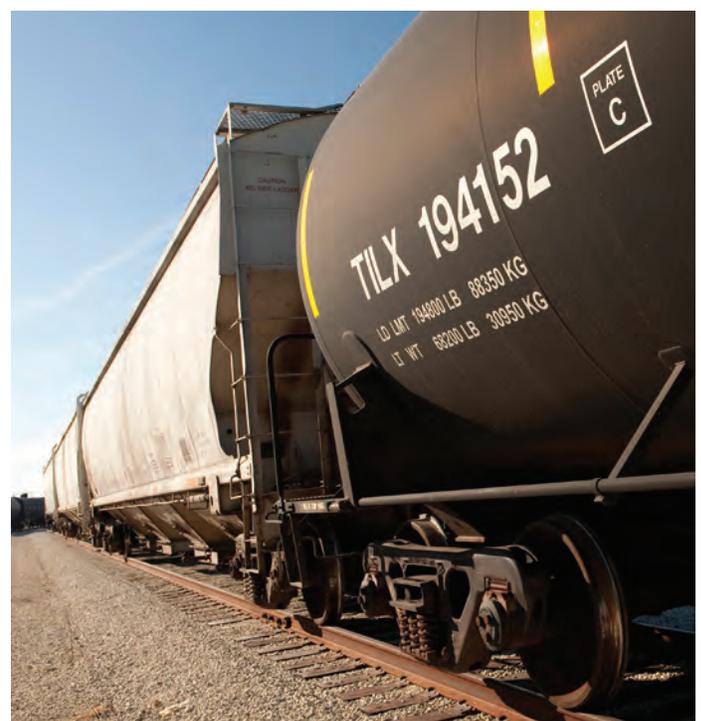
North Manchester is rich in small town charm and offers a wealth of outdoor activities. There are several parks in the area including Warvel Park, Halderman Park, and Harter’s Grove. “For my two girls, a trip to town isn’t complete without a visit to the North Manchester Covered Bridge,” said Christjansen. “And my wife loves the historic Victorian homes.” Downtown also boasts several restaurants. “There’s a great Mexican restaurant on Old Wabash Road,” said Christjansen.

Sports abound, especially basketball. And for those who want to see ethanol-fueled racing in action, the Indy 500 racetrack is just a little over an hour’s drive away.

Future Growth

In addition to producing ethanol from corn, POET has been involved in a pilot program to produce cellulosic ethanol from corn cobs, and expects to produce the product commercially within two years. For local farmers, this could mean extra income. An acre of corn produces approximately 480 gallons a year of corn-based ethanol; an additional 55 gallons per acre could be realized from processing cobs and husks.

The company is also looking forward to relaxed rules from the EPA, which would increase the limit on the ethanol that can be blended into regular gas from 10% to 15%. ■



FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN NEI

90 major employers in Northeast Indiana (NEI) are in the food industry, excluding agricultural and retail establishments. Included are employees not only in food and beverage manufacturing, but also in warehousing, transportation and logistics-related employment — as well as manufacturers who produce supplies or equipment for the food industry. This industry represents 4% of the private employment in the NEI region.

Food Processing Industry

- + Dairy Product Manufacturing: fluid milk products & ice cream
- + Bakeries
- + Animal processing (specifically poultry processing)

Future Growth

- + **The Food Science Department at Purdue University** offers a pilot lab with processing/packaging capabilities, equipment design, process design, quality control and recipe management, ultrasound applications, chemical sensor evaluation, shelf-life studies, etc.
- + **Three research Centers within the Food Science Department** at Purdue dedicated to food manufacturing:
 - ↳ The Center for Food Safety Engineering
 - ↳ The Center for Integrated Food Manufacturing
 - ↳ The world-renowned Whistler Center for Carbohydrate Research
- + **The Purdue Extension Services**, with offices in every county in Indiana, offers many programs on food, food marketing, and development, in addition to other resources.
- + Purdue University's Department of Agricultural Economics also has an **"Agricultural Innovation and Commercialization Center"** which sponsors the New Ventures in Food and Agriculture along with the Purdue Extension Service.

Workforce Development

- + Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne
- + Trine University
- + ITT Technical Institute
- + Ivy Tech Community College
- + Vincennes University
- + Harrison College – Indianapolis

Food Processing Companies in NEI

- + Edy's Grand Ice Cream
- + Kraft Foods
- + Miller Poultry
- + Red Gold
- + Bunge North America
- + Aunt Millie's Bakeries
- + Good Humor Breyers Ice Cream
- + Living Essentials
- + Dean Foods of Decatur
- + Schenkel's All Star Dairy
- + Prairie Farms Dairy

Workforce Statistics

Occupation	# Employed	Mean Wage
Laborers & Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,730	\$24,871
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	3,640	\$36,437
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Production and Operating Workers	3,530	\$50,323
Packers and Packagers, Hand	3,460	\$21,920
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	2,670	\$31,309
Industrial Truck and Trailer Operators	1,870	\$30,222
Packaging & Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	1,020	\$27,710
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	490	\$33,610
Food Batchmakers	440	\$33,590
Bakers	320	\$24,995

source: 2008 OES data, IN Department of Workforce Development

Incentives

Indiana Economic Development Corporation

- + EDGE and HBI tax credits
- + 21st Century Research and Technology Fund
- + Small Business Innovation Research Initiative
- + Venture Capital Investment Tax Credit

Local Communities

- + Tax abatements for new construction or equipment

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