

Riverport plans announced

By Angela Gerald
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Groundbreaking for a new river port in southern Spencer County will begin later this year.

Wednesday, Indiana Michigan Power and Mid America Terminals announced the agreement that will lead to the terminal's construction, several construction jobs and 18 full-time terminal jobs.

Indiana Michigan Power/AEP will sell 600 acres of its Rockport Plant site to Mid America Terminals for the multi-commodity river port. The remainder of the total 900 acres was purchased from other property owners.

The site, which borders the Ohio River between Rockport

and Grandview, will also be available for future economic development expansion for all of southern Indiana.

"This site, located between mile marker 743 and 744 on the Ohio River, has the potential to be one of the largest and most active river ports between Pittsburgh and St. Louis," said Bruce Kanipe, president of Mid America Terminals. "The availability of rail, river and highway transportation makes this a prime site for development."

"Indiana Michigan Power is pleased and proud to be a part of this historic agreement," said Helen J. Murray, Indiana Michigan president and chief operating officer.

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"This project not only provides investment in the community today, but sets the state for additional investment — and jobs — in the future for this region."

"This is a huge step forward for both Spencer County and the state of Indiana," said Tom Utter, executive director of Lincolnland Economic Development Corp. "This port project not only creates opportunities for business expansion in the immediate

area but opens much of southern Indiana to both domestic and international markets.

"That could be critical to the growth of agriculture, mining, manufacturing and steel production — as well as other industries — that need to get materials and products in and out of this region by river, rail and highway," Utter said.

Utter explained that the infrastructure—I-64 and U.S. 231 in Indiana, the new bridge across the Ohio River and the link to the Natcher Parkway, Bowling Green, Ky. And I-65 — makes Spencer County's river shore an ideal place for a multi-commodity terminal.

Utter believes the terminal could potentially be used by industries across southern Indiana, not just southwest Indiana or Spencer County.

The multi-commodity terminal will "handle anything for anybody," Utter said.

Utter said Kanipe has been working on the project with Lincolnland Economic Development Corporation for about five years.

Mid America Terminals will invest about \$30 million in the first phase of the river port. Groundbreaking is set to start in June.

Bradley Damron, sports editor, contributed to this article.