



Editorial: Good news on the gasification plant project

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LOCAL OPINIONS

Borderland got some good news this week with the announcement that Gov. Tim Pawlenty included \$1 million toward the plasma **gasification** plant in his capital projects proposals.

The county had originally sought \$2 million toward the project, which will allow Koochiching to dispose of its garbage more cheaply and cleanly. Currently, the county contracts with the Mar-Kit landfill in northwestern Minnesota for disposal. By gasifying the waste instead -- a process involving extremely high heat that essentially vaporizes garbage rather than burn it -- we'll be not only saving money but helping the environment.

A **gasification** plant also means jobs to our area. The facility would have about 15 positions. These would require a level of education and certification.

The project would involve a partnership between county, state and federal agencies as well as various private organizations.

County commissioner Mike Hanson was correct in urging a little caution before celebrating yet.

The governor's bonding proposals are but one step in a process that will work itself out this winter and spring at the state Capitol in St. Paul.

Both the House Republicans and Senate DFLers will present their own recommendations for state building projects as well. However, those typically are larger than the governor's. That means we've cleared what may well have been the highest initial hurdle in this process.

From here the ball will be in the court of Sen. Tom Saxhaug, DFL-Grand Rapids, and Rep. Irv Anderson, DFL-International Falls, who hopefully will offer strong support for the **gasification** project as lawmakers review bonding projects.

All the same, the news of the governor including it in his proposal is welcomed.