

World's largest paint company relocates to Southeast

By Eric Gross

SOUTHEAST—Talk about painting the town green or red or even blue!

The world's largest paint company—Akzo Nobel—headquartered in the Netherlands officially announced its opening Monday of an executive office complex along Fields Lane in Southeast.

Dr. Dale Steichen, vice president of research and technology for the multi national company, told a news conference attended by a number of state, county and local officials, that Akzo Nobel was involved with three component businesses—chemicals, pharmaceuticals as well as coatings. “We’re bigger than Sherwin Williams,” he said with a grin.

The chemical branch will be locating to Putnam County. Steichen explained that three business units would be coming to greater Brewster. “The primary research to be achieved at our new facility will be in cellulose ethers and surfactants that are incorporated into herbicide formulations, asphalts, building materials and deep well oil drilling,” he said.

Eighty-five employees will moving to the new facility off I-684. Steichen said the company decided to relocate from Dobbs Ferry in Westchester to Putnam because of its employees. “This site is more centralized. A map was drawn of our employee residency and the location was at the center of the geographic area. We also took into consideration the traffic patterns for the workers. It will be a much shorter commute for our folks—even those who live south of here will be going against traffic each morning and evening,” he said.

Kevin Bailey, president of the non-for-profit Putnam County Economic Development Corporation, called it “amazing” that Putnam continues to attract “high quality jobs. Not only have we attracted the world's largest paint manufacturer but we also brought Power Fasteners and Ace Endico to Southeast. This resulted from a team approach thanks to the efforts of our state senator, county executive and legislature.”

Legislature chairman Dan Birmingham said the 85 high paid research and development jobs would bode well for the county's future. “We are truly humbled that they have chosen us as their home. Akzo Nobel could have gone to a lot other places but they saw the advantages of relocating to Putnam,” he said.

County Executive Robert Bondi called the announcement exciting. “We hope this is the first of many growth steps that this huge organization will take in Putnam County. Their residency consisting of jobs and economic growth is appreciated. We look forward to getting them involved in many community activities as well,” he said.

Senator Vincent Leibell agreed with his colleagues. “The talented men and women who will be working here is what makes the announcement so exciting. Many of the world's leading scientists and brilliant minds will now be sharing their daily labor with our local residents. We welcome them,” he said.

Geoffrey Reinwald, president of the Brewster Chamber of Commerce, also addressed a brief ribbon cutting ceremony. “You are our 220th member of the chamber and you’ll love it here,” he said.