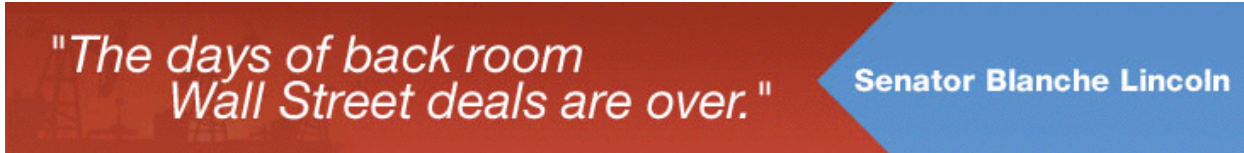


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### Welspun Prepares For 24-7 Manufacturing Schedule

By Arkansas Business Staff

4/22/2010 2:50:44 PM

The Welspun pipes plant in the Port of Little Rock is close to ramping up production, operating 24 hours per day, seven days per week and hiring 100 workers, company representatives said Thursday.

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Company representatives, speaking at Pulaski Technical College's "Community Conversations" event, said production on pipes for the oil and gas industry would soon go 24-7, with the firm hiring 100 more workers. The company had already offered jobs to 14 Pulaski Tech students, according to two people who attended the event.

Rajesh Chochani, Welspun's local assistant vice president, told [ArkansasBusiness.com](#) Thursday that some workers for the 24-7 production are already being trained during existing shifts. The 24-7 move should be completed in 4-6 months.

Chochani also said an official announcement about an expansion will take place in about two weeks.

The plans fit with what Welspun has previously told Arkansas Business. In November, [the company said it planned for operations to 24-7 by the end of the first quarter 2010](#), with an annual production goal of 350,000 metric tons by year's end and a top-end capacity of 400,000 metric tons.

That same month, the company added a third eight-hour shift to both the five-day work week at its spiral-welded pipe plant and the six-day work week at its pipe coating plant. The 400,000-SF facility at the Little Rock Port, the company's first outside of India, employs about 400.

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The company has eyed expansion since opening the plant in April 2009, [even as financial markets caused turmoil](#). In January, [Welspun acquired the 44-acre Wheatland Tube & Conduit property](#) at 8200 Frazier Pike, also in the Little Rock Port, from John Maneely Co. of Sharon, Pa., in a deal worth \$4.2 million.

In addition to gathering employment prospects from Pulaski Tech, [the University of Arkansas at Little Rock said this week](#) that Welspun had hired 15 UALR students, including some from its Donaghey College of Engineering and Information Technology.

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