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West Alabama to welcome largest wood pellet facility in world, construction underway

Alabama Public Radio | By [Joshua LeBerte](#)
Published August 4, 2023 at 5:13 AM CDT

[Link to article-including an interactive video of the EVA-1100 production facility model:](#)
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A design image depicting Enviva's standardized wood reception, processing and storage. The design is part of Enviva's new facility model, the EVA-1100. Alabama's plant will be the first of its kind.

Enviva

A Maryland-based renewable energy company is bringing hundreds of new jobs to West Alabama. Enviva is the largest producer of sustainably sourced wood pellets in the world, and construction is underway for the company's latest wood pellet production facility in Sumter County. Not only will this facility be the largest in Enviva's fleet, but it will also be the largest wood pellet facility worldwide.

The facility will be located in the Epes Industrial Park next to the Tombigbee River, comprising more than 300 acres and boasting a yearly capacity of 1.1 million metric tons. The plant will source fiber within a



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75-mile radius by following the company's existing practices and principles as well as produce Enviva's sustainably sourced wood pellets. It is the first of Enviva's newest facility model, the EVA-1100.

Enviva officials said the company has been eyeing Sumter County since 2018, when the site was first assessed and later purchased in 2020. Construction began last July. Most recently, Enviva held a groundbreaking ceremony for the plant this June. Enviva representatives along with Alabama Governor Kay Ivey and several other local and state officials were in attendance. Mark Coscio is the chief development officer and executive vice president for Enviva. Coscio said there were several reasons why Alabama was chosen for Enviva's latest facility.

"The rich fiber basket [supply] in the area and the supply in all of Alabama, along with the transport logistics [managing materials as they move through the supply chain] [and] a great local workforce were some of our key deciding factors to move forward with this project," he said. "It's what made Epes very attractive for Enviva."

Enviva's wood pellets act as substitutes for coal, particularly in power and heat sectors around the world. The company produces its pellets before exporting them to clients across Europe and Asia. A majority of its wood is sourced from the Southeast, and Alabama will soon be one of those sources. The Epes plant will be Enviva's 11th, with Alabama joining Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Mississippi as states with site locations.

Coscio said this plant will positively impact Sumter County in two major ways. Firstly, the facility will provide employment to hundreds of Alabamians.

"After manufacturing facilities, specifically, we'll have about 100 jobs," he said. "But, indirectly, we'll also be supporting at least 250 jobs from the logging, trucking and shipping activities in the area. It's going to jumpstart economic growth in the area, and it'll bring employment opportunities back to Sumter County."

Coscio said the facility will also benefit Sumter County by providing capital for infrastructure projects and programs.

"We expect the Epes plant to be one of the largest taxpayers in the county, which will help support economic benefits to the community [by] funding programs like road maintenance, schools, as well as safety and emergency services," he said.

However, Coscio said this plant does not only affect Alabamians; it affects international energy consumers and industries.

"In addition to the positive economic impact to the region, our pellets that will produced at the Epes plant will be exported to international markets," he said. "[Pellets] go mainly to Europe and Asia. That'll help fill this international demand to secure sources of renewable energy, which will help de-fossilize the power



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heat generation market. Other energy intensive industries such as steel, cement and lime [will also be impacted], as well as positioning for sustainable aviation fuels.”

Above all else, Coscio said he is excited to expand operations in Alabama.

“We’re excited to grow in Alabama,” he said. “We remain committed to being a long-term source of green jobs and green investment across the state. The welcome we received and have received over the past couple of years, not only from the governor’s office [but from] the local mayor, Mr. Porter, and the whole county commissioner in the area as well. We’re excited to be there and excited to grow in Alabama. We’re excited to call our new home Alabama.”

Enviva officials anticipate the facility to be in service by mid-2024 with production fully ramped by 2025. More information on Enviva and its ongoing construction in Alabama can be found [here](#).

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