



# LOCKPORT SINCE 1821 Union-Sun & Journal

## DEVELOPMENT: AES announces plan for \$25M pier

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Niagara Gazette

— Using Lake Ontario and a number of state and county officials as a backdrop, AES Somerset President Kevin Pierce announced the company's \$25 million plans to construct an enormous pier on Tuesday.

The pier, officially dubbed a lake unloading facility, will accept products such as coal and limestone off ships instead of by train, which is how the Town of Somerset power producer currently gets its material. It will measure about 3,200 feet.

"Our project we are commencing today is about the future of AES Somerset," Pierce said at the press conference, which also included an audience of about 50 of the plant's workers wearing white T-shirts bearing the phrase "AES builds Niagara." "It's a great augment to a great facility."

A series of speakers hailed the pier as a significant happening for the plant, saying it will generate 100 short-term construction jobs and help stabilize about 150 management and union jobs in the case of long-term delays in railroad service.

It will also lower the cost AES spends on delivery of services, since ships are cheaper than trains, Pierce said. The role AES plays in producing fuel and preserving the state's energy infrastructure also helps national security, he said.

AES plans to fund the construction in full, with no use of public funds.

Federal, state, county and local permits are now needed for construction of the pier, a process which will likely take between 12 to 18 months, Pierce said. Construction will take about two years after that.

The announcement comes several weeks after AES won a legal battle when a judge ruled tax breaks it obtained in October were acceptable under the law. The controversial tax breaks — obtained after the company promised to expand its operations — had led to a public concern regarding the county's IDA and Legislature.

IDA Chairman Henry Sloma, who endured frequent calls for his resignation by the public and some members of the Legislature for his role in securing the tax breaks, said on Tuesday that the announcement was the sign of a positive trend for Niagara County's economic climate.

"The folks at AES said if we could give them predictability with their taxes, they would add jobs and expand their facility," Sloma said. "They kept their promise."

State Sen. George Maziarz, R-Newfane, who was in attendance along with state Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte, D-Lewiston, noted that recent months have probably been tough on AES employees. But the plant is a necessary presence for keeping jobs in the area, and countering the noted "brain drain" felt throughout Western New York.

"These are the types of jobs we need to keep those young people here," he said.

### BY THE NUMBERS

- \$25 million: Price of new pier
- 3,200: Pier's length
- 100: New construction jobs for pier
- 150: Approximate number of workers at AES Somerset plant

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Photos



071002 AES announce1 - Medina JR Albert T. McCracken /Contributor Baker, NY- Plant Manager Kevin Pierce makes the announcement for a new lake unloading facility. The project will create over 100 union construction jobs over a two year period at the AES plant on Tuesday October 2, 2007. Greater Niagara Newspapers



071002 AES announce2 - Medina JR Albert T. McCracken /Contributor Baker, NY- Plant Manager Kevin Pierce makes the announcement for a new lake unloading facility. The project will create over 100 union construction jobs over a two year period at the AES plant on Tuesday October 2, 2007. Greater Niagara Newspapers