

CONCENTRATES

Industry / Business

A big private uranium enrichment plant is a step closer as Uranium Enrichment Associates, a joint venture of Bechtel, Union Carbide, and Westinghouse Electric, obtains an option to buy a 1720-acre site near Dothan, Ala., for its proposed \$2.75 billion gaseous diffusion facility. A firm decision to proceed could come late this year, with startup of a plant capable of serving 90 nuclear power plants slated for 1983.

Demand for scientists and engineers rose to a seven-year high in May, as measured by the volume of "help wanted" ads directed to technical people. Deutsch, Shea & Evans, a recruitment advertising firm, says May was the fifth consecutive month of increased demand, with advertising up 41% from May 1973, and predicts further increases during the next few months.

Nalco Chemical will sell its Howe-Baker division, which markets refinery processes and engineering services, to a group of seven investors, including four members of the division's management, for an undisclosed amount of cash. The Tyler, Tex.-based subsidiary earned \$183,000 on sales of \$3.5 million in 1974's first quarter but only \$1000 on sales of \$9.3 million in all of last year. Earlier last month, Nalco announced plans to acquire Lawter Chemicals (C&EN, June 24, page 5).

Industry briefs

- Diamond Shamrock plans to have a 50,000 ton-a-year sodium silicates plant operating at Mobile, Ala., by early 1976.
- Miles Laboratories is spending \$25 million to build a new citric acid plant to be on stream near Dayton, Ohio, by January 1977.
- Celanese's expansion of its pentaerythritol capacity at Bishop, Tex., to 75 million pounds per year will be completed by mid-August of this year.

Government

"A new ethic of employee protection" should be embraced by the chemical industry, according to Occupational Safety and Health Administration head John H. Stender, to prevent future occurrences such as the liver cancer hazard posed by vinyl chloride. "Research so enthusiastically poured into finding profitable uses for new substances must be expanded to include determining how safe these substances are," he says, adding that "any doubt must be resolved on the side of the employee." He noted that OSHA and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health have "embarked on a \$3.5 million project to develop new standards for more than 400 known toxic substances."

FEA has begun phasing out the energy allocation program, with a proposal to suspend quotas for residual fuels for 90 days beginning Aug. 1. Al-

though the Federal Energy Administration says it has no master plan for ending allocation, aviation jet fuel and propane are expected to be next in line. FEA will begin public hearings on the proposed suspension July 22. The proposal then will be submitted to Congress, and if neither house rejects it within five days, the suspension will go into effect.

Congress has passed a biomedical research bill that requires recipients of biomedical research training awards to repay the Government, on a year-for-year basis, with further research, teaching, or medical service in a designated area. The bill also prohibits research on live human fetuses until a commission completes a study of the subject.

Washington roundup

- Rep. Mike McCormack (D.-Wash.) has introduced legislation that would set up a federal group to run a national solar energy R&D program and establish a Solar Energy Research Institute at a new or existing federal laboratory.
- President Nixon has nominated James L. Agee to succeed David P. Dominick as assistant administrator of EPA for water and hazardous materials. The post has been vacant since last October.

International

Dow Badische has become a Canadian nylon 6 producer by purchasing Union Carbide Canada's Arnprior, Ont., plant. The plant makes nylon filament and staple for the Canadian carpet industry. Dow Badische also is expanding its U.S. caprolactam capacity by 250 million pounds annually with a new plant at Calvert, Ala., to be completed by the end of 1976.

France and Iran have signed a trade agreement that involves Iran's purchase of five 1000-Mw. nuclear power stations from France by 1985 and supplying oil and gas to France. The pact, valued at \$4.5 billion, also calls for mutual cooperation in developing peaceful uses of atomic energy and a \$32 million steel plant to be built in Iran by France's Creusot-Loire group.

Italy's Liquichimica will supply the U.S.S.R. with technical know-how in exchange for petrochemical feedstocks. The Milan-based company, part of the Liguigas group, has signed a letter of intent that could lead to a 10-year agreement before year's end. Under the contract, valued at about \$1 billion, Liquichimica would share its expertise in such areas as detergents, lube oil additives, and linear olefins.

A \$60 million soda ash operation for Thailand is being discussed by Diamond Shamrock and the Thai government. The proposed venture, including a 1000 ton-a-day Solvay plant as well as rock salt and limestone mining, would be owned 49% by Diamond Shamrock and 51% by Thailand.