



GULFPORT, Miss., Feb. 17 -- The Du Pont Company said today it is proceeding immediately to purchase land it has under option in coastal Mississippi for its fourth U.S. titanium dioxide plant, and plans to pace construction to general economic conditions. The plant will be capable of producing 130,000 tons of pigment a year.

Construction activities, originally estimated to begin in early 1975, will be extended to track recovery of the paint, paper, textile and plastics industries, the major users of titanium dioxide. Arthur H. Geil, vice president and general manager of the Pigments Department, said the company is optimistic about the product's long-term growth prospects.

Du Pont first confirmed an interest in the 2200-acre tract in DeLisle, on the Bay of St. Louis, in November, 1973. Mr. Geil said positive results of all site evaluations by company technical experts and outside consultants and the continued support by coastal Mississippi residents and local and state officials were equally important in the company's decision to purchase the site.

Du Pont said it has received permits from the Mississippi Oil & Gas Board, the Mississippi Air and Water Pollution Control Commission, and the Mississippi Marine Resources Council.

The plant is expected to begin operations with between 500 and 600 employees, with about 85 per cent to be hired locally.

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