

Renovations on 43,000-square-foot building have already begun

## Chemical business in works

WEST ORANGE

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A start-up company called Chem 32, likely named for the undergraduate course in chemistry that sets up more involved studies, will build a new plant from the long-vacant shell of the A. Schulman Inc. plant that closed in 2003.

Douglas Wene, a member of the limited liability company that created

Chem 32, said the business recently acquired 30 acres and the 43,000-square-foot building at 3007 Burnet St., outside West Orange.

Wene said he hopes to have the building renovated and the new business in operation by January. He plans to employ at least 20 people in jobs similar to petrochemical plant operators.

The business will focus on blending inorganic chemicals, which refers to a class of chemicals that do not have carbon as the principal element.

Wene said large petrochemical plants do not blend chemicals on small scales for specialty customers. Large plants typical of the Southeast Texas petrochemical variety provide base chemicals to customers who buy in quantities large enough to be trans-



location, access to good transportation, and because the community is welcoming.

"The site was a good price and there is good infrastructure," he said.

Wene declined to reveal the amount of investment in the company or in renovating the site, which he said has suffered from hurricanes and vandalism over the past several years.

Sheri Arnold, of Coldwell Banker Commercial, Arnold and Associates, sold the property to Chem 32.

"This is good news," Arnold said, referring to the investment by the private company and the jobs it will create.

She said work on renovating the building has already begun.

A. Schulman once operated a plastic resin production facility at the site.

The company, head-

quartered in Akron, Ohio, closed the Southeast Texas plant in 2003. A. Schulman's operations included taking raw plastic resin available from local chemical plants, increasing its tensile strength and adding color to it, according to an article published in the April 9, 2003, edition of *The Enterprise*.

The plant shipped the material as plastic pellets to other factories which then formed it into plastic parts used in motor vehicle manufacturing and other uses. The plant produced about 60 million pounds a year of the resin.

A. Schulman has retained a presence in Southeast Texas, acquiring ICO Polymers North America in China in 2010. A. Schulman also owns Texas Polymer Services in Orange. Both industries are makers of plastic resin. †



Pete Churton/The Enterprise

A Houston-based startup company will build a chemical blending operation on the site of the former A. Schulman plastics resin plant, which shut down in 2003.

ported by barge, ship or rail.

Intended customers would be any user from

makers of car batteries to the needs of an oil refiner, Wene said.

The plant will not have

flammable chemicals on site, he added.

Wene said Chem 32 chose the site because of