

Algae, energy symposium starts today

- By Chuck Stinnett, *The Gleaner*

As many as 150 people are expected here today and Thursday for the first-ever Ohio River Valley Algae Symposium, which will focus on growing algae to capture carbon dioxide greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

"The last I heard, they had 138 registered and were expecting some walk-ins," said Brad Schneider, president of the Henderson Chamber of Commerce.

The chamber is co-sponsoring the event along with Henderson Fiscal Court and the Kentucky Department of Energy Development and Independence.

The symposium has been organized by the University of Kentucky Center for Applied Energy Research and Ohio University.

A variety of university researchers and industry representatives will make presentations on algae research and commercialization as well as policy issues related to capturing and storing carbon dioxide.

The presentations will include a discussion by a state official on how carbon management impacts national energy independence and Kentucky's strategic energy plan.

Advocates hope large algae farms can be developed in conjunction with power plants to promote the continued use of Kentucky coal. Algae is fast-growing and can be converted into fuel.

Organizers have several goals for the symposium.

"First and foremost, it's an excellent networking opportunity" for people interested in the subject, according to Mark Crocker of the UK Center for Applied Energy Research.

"We want to bring people from industry, academia and local government in order to encourage an exchange of opinions and ideas" on topics such as "CO2 capture using algae, where CO2 legislation is going and technical hurdles and possible solutions," Crocker said.

The event runs from 9 a.m. to 4:50 p.m. today and 8:30 a.m. to noon Thursday at the Henderson Fine Arts Center at Henderson Community College.