

Sasol to build first US gas-to-liquid fuels conversion plant

According to the *New York Times*, South Africa's energy company Sasol announced on Monday, 3 December 2012, that it would build America's first commercial plant to convert natural gas to diesel and other liquid fuels.

This, NYT says, is an ambitious bet that the glut of cheap natural gas in the United States will last for many years. Sasol pioneered a technology that has tantalised energy scientists for decades over its potential to produce liquid fuels without using oil, which has historically cost far more than natural gas.

Having already built smaller plants in South Africa and Qatar, Sasol has designed its new Louisiana plant to produce 96,000 barrels of fuel a day. By using Sasol's Gas to Liquids (GTL) technology, "states such as Louisiana will be able to advance the country's energy independence through a diversification of supply," Sasol's chief executive David Constable said at a news conference near the project's planned location.

It will be the second-largest plant of its kind in the world, after Royal Dutch Shell's Pearl plant in Qatar, and will cost \$11 billion to \$14 billion to build, the *New York Times* reports.

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