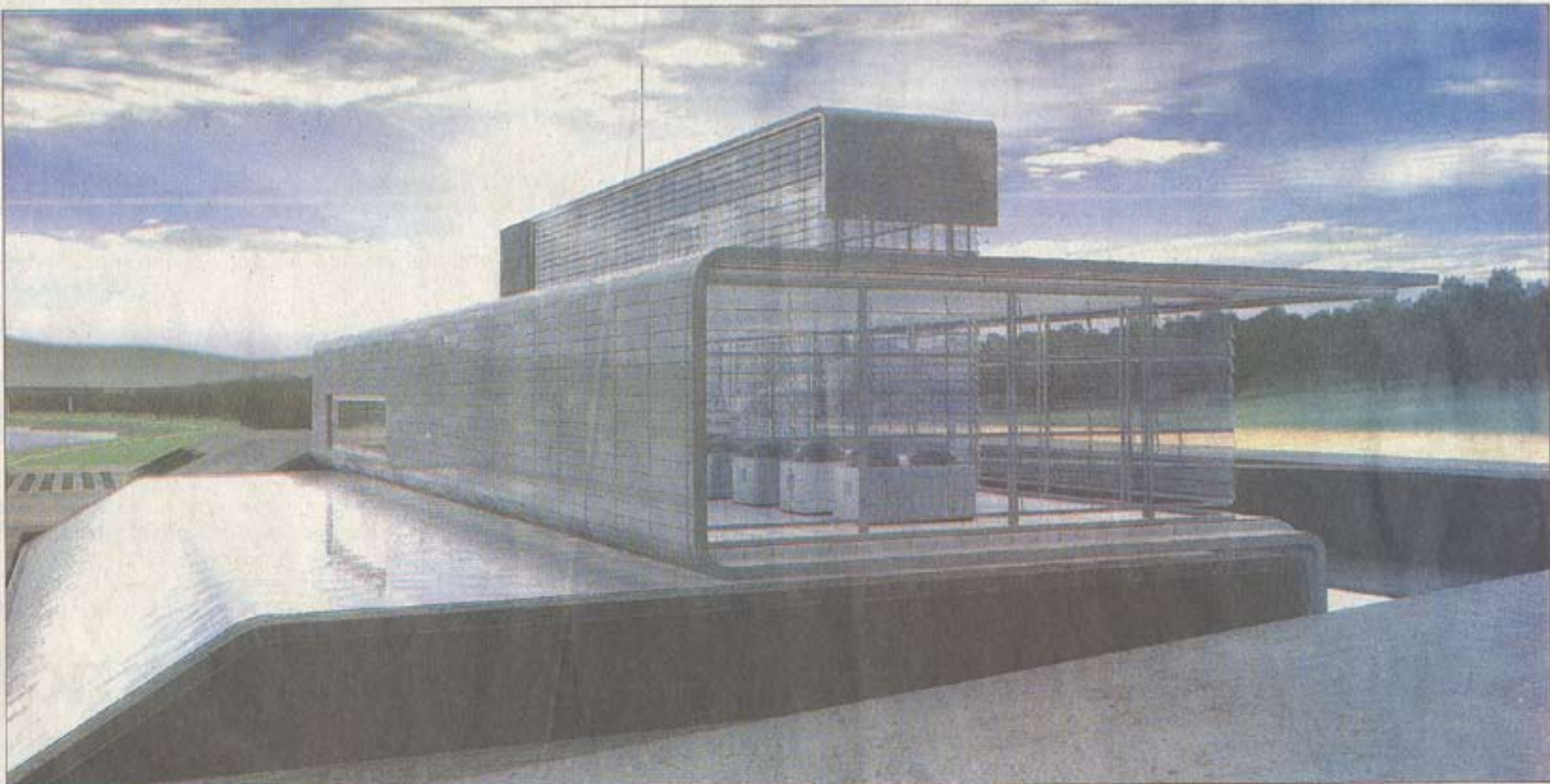


# Tuscola a FutureGen finalist



An artist's model of the proposed FutureGen coal gasification plant, which may be built outside Tuscola or Mattoon. Two Texas towns are also finalists for the \$1 billion project, which will bury greenhouse gases deep underground instead of polluting the air.

## City excited about jobs, clean energy

By Josh Thomas  
The Regional

Tuscola and Mattoon are among four finalist sites for a \$1 billion, international "power plant of the future" to be built starting in 2007.

Also named to the short list were Odessa and Heart of Brazos, Texas.

The plant, called FutureGen and sponsored by a multi-national consortium of big utility and energy companies and the governments of the United States, India and South Korea, will turn coal into a gas, which will be burned to spin turbines, creating electricity.

Coal gasification is a current technology widely used in Europe, but it produces highly polluting carbon dioxide, one of main culprits in global warming.

FutureGen is different. It will bury the CO2 deep underground, where it will eventually be neutralized into oxygen and water, thus providing—if all goes well—the cleanest energy humankind has ever known.

Tuscola and Mattoon happen to sit on top of the perfect deep-rock sand-

stone formations to allow the CO2 to be buried harmlessly, according to state geologists.

**"This puts  
Tuscola on the  
world map"**

*Dan Kleiss, Mayor*

Reaction to the news that Tuscola made the finals was immediate.

"We are pretty excited," said Joe Burgess, superintendent of Tuscola Community Schools.

"We're ecstatic," said Dr. Robert J. Finley, director of the Illinois State Geological Survey in Champaign.

"We're very excited about it," said Mayor Daniel Kleiss. "The population

is going to be thrilled and excited."

"That's great news," said Bill McCarty, a retired banker from Tuscola. "I think Brian Moody (of Tuscola Economic Development Inc.) did a great job."

"I'm very excited," Moody said. "This is great for us."

"I am extremely proud of Tuscola and Mattoon," said Congressman Tim Johnson, "for the professional way they prepared and presented their proposals."

"It's a net positive benefit for the area," said Tuscola city administrator

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Quinn Propst/ The Regional

Drew Hoel, Tuscola city administrator, Brian Moody, director of Tuscola Economic Development Inc., Jim Crane, County Highway Engineer, Chuck Knox, County Board member and Tuscola Mayor Dan Kleiss were at the city building Tuesday afternoon to discuss the announcement that Tuscola is in the top four FutureGen sites.

### FutureGen

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Drew Hoel.

Whichever city becomes the final choice, it's likely to become a future boomtown. Some 1,300 construction jobs will need filling from 2007 to 2012, and another 150 permanent jobs will last for an estimated 30 years, if not 80-100.

The economic impact during construction alone has been estimated at \$200 million for the host city.

That prospect has Moody and Tuscola grinning like storyboard cats.

### Kleiss: "On the world map"

Kleiss, Hoel, Moody and other city and county leaders huddled around computer monitors Tuesday morning to witness a webcast of the FutureGen announcement. They had already been informed a little while earlier in the day that Tuscola and Mattoon made the cut, but they were keen to see the news conference itself, held at FutureGen Alliance headquarters in Pittsburgh.

Next week Moody and other local leaders will attend a meeting in Pittsburgh to go over the next steps in the selection process. A lot of

work lies ahead—preparing environmental studies, transmitting mountains of geological data, assembling detailed information about the local site. Water and ground studies need to be conducted, an environmental audit—the requirements will be extensive and highly technical.

But Tuscola is ready.

The Illinois legislature earlier this year appropriated \$17 million to fund such studies, so local taxpayers should not have to invest much money at this stage.

If Tuscola is selected next year, improvements will be necessary on township roads near the plant, which would be

located at 750 East and 1050 North, said Jim Crain, Douglas County engineer. But there is a year to plan for the needed work.

Even if Tuscola loses out to one of the other three sites, it has already benefitted from its exposure in the race to land FutureGen, according to Moody. TEDI has "already had several inquiries as a direct result of publicity from FutureGen. And it will continue to generate leads."

As Mayor Kleiss put it, "This is a good, positive thing for the city of Tuscola. FutureGen has put us on the world map."