

## JATROPHA

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and featured on CNN, CBS and in local newspapers. A New Zealand airline using jatropha diesel to refuel their engines will even receive mention during this year's Olympic Games.

But Beckford, who attended a worldwide conference for jatropha last month in Miami, added that his job now is to "get past the hype" and figure out the realities and economics of growing the plant in Southwest Florida. As it turns out, a variety called jatropha curcas does particularly well in the region, even in sandy soil, in the heat or in the shade, wet or dry, and requires little fertilizer.

"There are still some kinks to be worked out," Beckford said. "This is not a solution (to the energy crisis) but it is one candidate I think is very, very valuable."

The plant is now grown on test sites around Southwest Florida, including in Lee County at the Farmers Market and on Buckingham Road. It's grown on at least 20 acres in LaBelle and over 200 acres in Arcadia. Other farmers in Florida, with total land of over 500,000 acres, have expressed interest.

Jatropha has been proven to yield over 400 gallons of oil per acre in the wild, Beckford said. Soy, even in its developed, commercialized form, produces only 50 gallons per acre and corn even less. And with the benefits of cloning and use of specific varieties, the potential is even greater.

"It is still undomesticated," Beckford said. "So, the potential exists for us to double that or triple that (amount of oil produced) with research, so we come up with a high yielding tree."

It takes 12 to 18 months for the plants, like the ones recently put in the ground at the Farmer's Market, to begin producing fruit - Dream Fuels plans to begin its cloning and processing operation there during that time frame.

And it takes at least three years for the plant to reach maturity. After that, it will produce fruit for 30 to 50 years, Beckford said.

Fort Myers State Farmers' Market Senior Market Manager Lee Crews, said the patch of land in the back of the market by the railroad tracks, where the baby jatropha plants exist now, was previously unused ground.

After they begin to produce fruit, he plans to use the biodiesel fuel to power a golf cart for getting around the market.

Beckford noted that while most people generally think of "diesel" as a fuel, it is actually the name of an engine that was originally used with fuels produced from living plants.

The diesel engine, created by German inventor Rudolph Diesel in the late 1800s, was first run with peanut oil.

"His idea was that regardless of where you are in the world, you could use it," Beckford said. "A diesel engine is really, really powerful. It gives you a great bang for your buck. So if you were in Europe and you had rapeseed, you could use that. If you were in Malaysia, you could use coconut oil. If you were in Georgia, you could use peanut oil."

"But of course, right after he developed the engine, we realized we could pump crude oil and petroleum out of the ground at a significantly cheaper rate, so it took over."

With jatropha, Beckford said, "We're basically making a 360 degree turn. We're coming right back to the point we were at 100 years ago." ■

## Gannett reorganizes community publishing division

The News-Press' Hudler takes over South division



Hudler

MCLEAN, Va.—Gannett, publisher of The News-Press, announced a reorganization of its U.S. Community Publishing division, several executive appointments and two retirements:

Five regional groups become four groups: East, South, Interstate and West.

East will continue to be headed by Senior Group President W. Curtis Riddle, who also is publisher of The News Journal in Wilmington, Del.

South will be headed by Group President Carol O. Hudler. She is president and publisher of The News-Press in Fort Myers and was a group president of the Sun Coast Group.

Interstate will continue to be headed by Senior Group President Barbara A. Henry until Aug. 1, when she retires. A successor will be named shortly.

West will be headed by Laura L. Hollingsworth, president and publisher of The Des Moines (Iowa) Register. She will become a group president. Headquarters of the former Pacific Group moves from Phoenix, AZ, to Des Moines.

The Arizona Republic, The Honolulu Advertiser and the Tucson Citizen will report directly to Robert J. Dickey, president of U.S. Community Publishing.

Denise H. Ivey, currently a group president of the Mid-South Group and president and publisher of The Courier-Journal in Louisville, Ky., will retire on Jan. 1. Until then, she becomes chairman of the Louisville operation. A successor to her as president and publisher will be named shortly.

"This reorganization both refines our structure and puts our top people in key jobs with expanded responsibilities around the country," said Dickey. "This will allow us to realign our strategic objectives and focus on top line growth as we go forward."

—Business Wire ■

## Fort Myers ActionCOACH earns company award

ActionCOACH recently honored the highest performers in its North American operations at an awards dinner held in Las Vegas. The ActionCOACH "Lighthouse Firm", of Fort Myers, received an award for attaining the highest year-to-year revenue growth rate. The Lighthouse firm's initial success accelerated in the last year as client referrals grew exponentially.

ActionCOACH CEO Brad Sugars noted the

local firm's fundamental strengths as he introduced the award, "This firm recognized immediately the value of client referrals. By focusing on extraordinary client results and service, they are growing a strong community of loyal clients and business associates that consistently generates new business. The Lighthouse Firm teaches us, again, that success breeds success. Their business has grown because they've made their clients successful." ■

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