

ExxonMobil Chemical says to start up Baytown steam cracker by H2 2017

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ExxonMobil Chemical will complete expansions of its Baytown and Mont Belvieu, Texas, operations on schedule in the second half of 2017, a company spokesman said Tuesday during ExxonMobil's fourth-quarter 2016 earnings call.

"The construction of the ethane cracker is progressing well," spokesman Jeff Woodbury said, adding that startup was expected by the second half of this year.

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The project will add a 1.5 million mt/year ethane-fed steam cracker at ExxonMobil's Baytown, Texas, facility.

ExxonMobil's Baytown petrochemicals facility can produce 1.18 million mt/year of ethylene, according S&P Global Platts data.

At least one polyethylene line is being built at ExxonMobil's Mont Belvieu complex too, and is expected to come online at the same time. The plant is expected to add linear-low density and high density polyethylene capacity.

The Baytown project will look to take advantage of cheaper natural gas liquid feedstock, according to the company.

When combined with ExxonMobil's 650,000 mt/year polyethylene capacity expansion at its Beaumont, Texas, facility (See story, 1635 GMT), about 2 million mt/year of capacity will come online, increasing ExxonMobil's US polyethylene production by about 40%.

The increase would make Texas the company's largest polyethylene supply point, Woodbury said.