

Westlake to restart Louisiana cracker in upcoming week: sources

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US petrochemical producer Westlake Chemical is expecting to restart its Petro-1 steam cracker in Lake Charles, Louisiana, by mid-July, market sources with knowledge of operations said Friday.

The startup talk is on the tail end of an 80-day planned outage that started on April 19. The turnaround will also include a capacity expansion of 113,000 mt/year.

The company operates two steam crackers at the site -- Petro-1, with current ethylene capacity of 567,000 mt/year, and Petro-2, with 886,000 mt/year.

The company is currently under a force majeure declaration at its Calvert City, Kentucky, vinyls complex, stemming from an unplanned outage on June 1 at the 299,000 mt/year steam cracker at the site. The restart of the Kentucky plant was expected in late July, sources added.

Westlake will become the fifth US Gulf Coast producer to complete a planned maintenance in the past two months, after four planned turnarounds were completed in Texas. The sole remaining planned and ongoing outage is LyondellBasell's Corpus Christi, Texas, expansion, which is bringing a 363,000 mt/year addition to its 771,000 mt/year ethylene plant.

In spot markets, US ethylene was in bid-offer range of at 26-26.375 cents/lb Mont Belvieu Williams pipeline basis for July deliveries, after deals were heard concluded at 26 cents/lb MtB Wms.

Spot ethylene was assessed Thursday at 25.75-26.25 cents/lb FD USG for July and August deliveries.