

## Ormet Power Bill To Be Electrifying

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HANNIBAL — The annual electric bill at Ormet's reduction plant is expected to increase to \$223 million in 2008, and officials there see this as a positive thing.

It means all six potlines now are in operation, according to Mike Griffin, vice president of operations at Ormet. He said the 2007 electric bill for the plant was \$146 million, as the potlines have been gradually restarted over the course of the year.

Ormet officials, nevertheless, would like to see some stability when it comes to energy costs. As such, local state and federal officials were invited to tour the plant Thursday after Ormet reopened its sixth and final potline.

There was discussion of energy legislation recently passed by the state Senate and currently before the Ohio House. This legislation would give companies such as Ormet tax credits for conserving energy.

Griffin provided a lot of facts and figures about Ormet during the tour. Among these was that Ormet now employs 1,100 at its reduction plant, and that 360 work on the potlines.

Those workers appreciate the winter cold, he added, as the molten aluminum they pour from the potlines comes out at 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit. Even at 10 feet away, the heat is felt emanating from the aluminum "sows."

The molten aluminum is poured into rectangular, box-type forms called "sows." The rectangular shape is needed for shipping purposes, according to Griffin. These sows weigh 1,500 pounds each, and the plant produces 1,000 sows each day.

The sows are transported to warehouses and sold on the commodities market, he said. Most of the shipping is done by truck.

The Ormet plant operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Just how much electricity they use is absolutely amazing," said U.S. Rep. Charles Wilson, D-Ohio. "About 38 percent of their cost is electricity."

The amount of electricity needed to operate the reduction plant is about the same as is needed to power the entire city of Pittsburgh, added Ohio Rep. Allan Sayre, D-Dover.

"We always knew Ormet was a great asset to the area," he said. "Their amount of usage shows the need for predictability of electric rates."

And action needs to be taken soon, added Ohio Rep. John Domenick, D-Smithfield.

Legislation passed by the Ohio Senate that is now before the Ohio House would give companies like Ormet tax credits for taking measures to conserve energy in its operation. But any such plans would take at least a year to implement in the state, Domenick added.

“Time is of the essence for Ormet,” he said. “If something is not done in the next few months, they could have major problems. They have a wonderful future, and we have to do this.”

Ohio Sen. Jason Wilson, D-Columbiana, pointed out that Ormet is using raw materials from abroad to make an American product that is sold regionally, and that the company is now looking for a “reliable, sustainable” energy source.

“We are trying to build two power plants in Meigs County, and Ormet plays a role in this,” Sen. Wilson said. “First, they employ 1,000 people here, and the electric company has to hire 1,000 to power the plant. Then, a coal company has to hire 1,000 to produce enough coal for the electricity. See how it all rolls over?”

Ormet may actually look to hire additional workers as early as next spring, Griffin said. Anyone interested in working for Ormet in the future should look for training in the electrical, plumbing and construction trades, he added.

“We’re trying to make a place where a worker could be for the next 30 years,” Griffin said.

## Article Photos



Photos by Joselyn King

Ohio Rep. John Domenick, D-Smithfield, from left, U.S. Rep. Charles Wilson, D-Ohio; Ohio Rep. Allan Sayre, D-Dover; and Allan Maxwell, senior project engineer at Ormet, discuss Ormet’s electricity usage during a tour of Ormet’s reduction plant in Hannibal Thursday.



All potlines at the Ormet reduction plant in Hannibal now are in full operation.