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Siluria lands big partner, site to test gas-to-ethylene tech



by Cromwell Schubarth
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Siluria Technologies on Wednesday landed a big partner and a test site for its technology that makes ethylene from natural gas.

The San Francisco company led by CEO Ed Dineen said it is working with Braskem SA, Latin America's biggest petrochemical maker, to build a \$15 million demonstration plant at a property in **La Porte, Texas**, owned by its new partner.

Dineen's previous employer, Arco, and others have long sought to find an economical way to turn natural gas into a chemical feedstock.

La Porte is the fourth test site for Siluria's novel process to convert the methane from natural gas into ethylene, a key plastics ingredient. The previous test sites are in San Francisco, Menlo Park and Hayward.

Dineen said in an interview that he is lining up more partners this year and expects to have commercial units operating by 2017.

"For the most part the world just burns natural gas for energy," Dineen said. "There are some technologies, too, that break natural gas apart for methanol or ammonia but these have been very capital intensive. We have succeeded in developing a catalyst to produce ethylene that can be fairly economically employed."

Siluria has raised \$66 million since it was founded in 2008 from investors including **Alloy Ventures Inc.**, **Arch Venture Partners LP**, The Wellcome Trust, Bright Capital, **Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers**, **Altitude Life Science Ventures**, **Lux Capital** and **Vulcan Capital**.

It employs 60 people, most of them chemical engineers.

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