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## Biodiesel franchiser seeking investors

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

By **KAIJA WILKINSON**  
Business Reporter

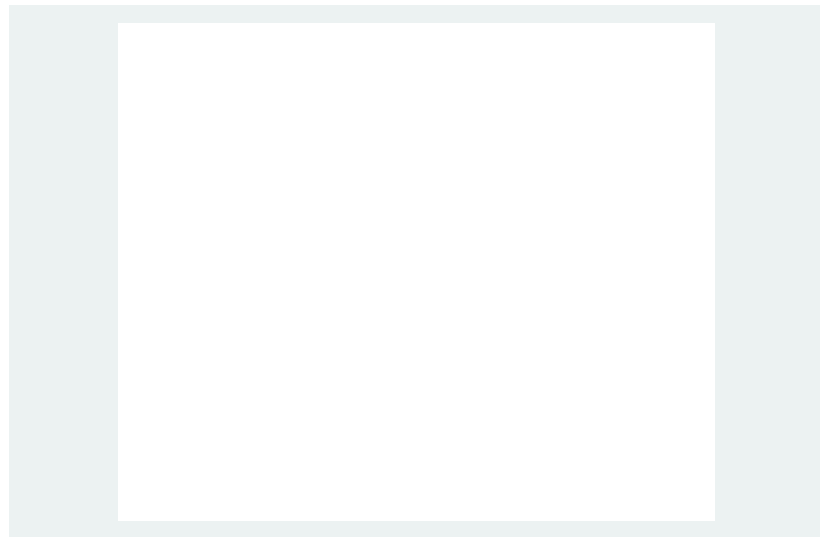
Later this week, several Alabama investors, including two from Mobile, are scheduled to fly to Orlando and hear a four-hour presentation from Xenerga Corp. about partnering in a biodiesel plant.

Anyone with \$1.9 million can become a partner, according to the company. No experience is needed. Xenerga would, according to published reports, supply the German-made equipment, set up the plant, train the employees, provide used oil and animal byproducts, monitor quality and find wholesale buyers.

Based on a national and state push to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil from unstable countries, Xenerga is confident its plan -- which Dave Jarrett, Xenerga's chief communications officer, compared to a franchise situation -- will take off.

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The company hopes to expand to 40 facilities in the U.S. in the next six to nine months.

Xenerga was founded last year by British-born entrepreneur Jason Sayers, who in 1996 founded FiltaFry, a franchised operation that cleans and recycles commercial and restaurant cooking grease. There are 500 FiltaFry franchises worldwide, including about 150 in the U.S., which have contracts with large chain restaurants like T.G.I. Fridays, Bennigan's and Hooters as well as caterers, casinos and schools.

It is through FiltaFry connections that Xenerga has contracts with waste oil collectors to provide feedstock for its biodiesel plant investors.

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Mark Sear, Xenerga's chief operating officer, had helped open about 130-plus biodiesel franchises in Europe and Asia through another company, part of which was purchased by Xenerga, according to Jarrett.

Investors in those plants ranged from individuals to groups to companies, he said, and he believes U.S. investors will be a similar mix.

Touted as a low-emission fuel, biodiesel is made from natural oil such as animal fat or soybean. It contains no petroleum and is typically mixed as an additive to pure diesel. Traditional diesel engines can burn fuel that contain up to 20 percent biodiesel, though it can be used in its pure form in some engines.

According to the National Biodiesel Board, which counts Xenerga among its members, there are 105 plants now operating in the U.S. with an annual production capacity of 864 million gallons. Around 80 are under construction, according to Biodiesel Board.

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