

Eddyville getting some national historical recognition

BY LEANNE FULLER

lfuller@paducahsun.com

Eddyville will soon join more than 70 locations across the country to be recognized for important chemical science contributions to society when the town is dedicated as a National Historic Chemical Landmark by the American Chemical Society.

Eddyville will be the first Kentucky town to receive the distinction, joining existing landmarks such as Thomas Edison's three research laboratories in Florida, New Jersey and Michigan and contributions such as the development of penicillin.

"This is big news," said Dr. Bommanna G. Loganathan, chemistry professor at Murray State University and 2014 chairman of the ACS Kentucky Lake Section, noting that ACS is the world's largest scientific society.

"The program allows (us) to bring out these kinds of great inventions," Loganathan said. "And it recognizes the seminal achievements in chemistry and records their histories."

The Eddyville landmark will recognize the pneumatic iron and steel process developed by iron manufacturer William Kelly in the 1800s.

Looking to save fuel costs, Kelly experimented to develop his pneumatic process from 1847 to 1850 at Union Forge iron works two miles from Eddyville, according to Loganathan, who nominated Eddyville for recognition as a landmark. He said Kelly's experiments moved to Suwanee Furnace in the forest five miles

air into molten pig iron or cast iron would increase the temperature without using more fuel, as well as boil out impurities in the iron ore to produce iron and steel.

The process is often referred to as the Bessemer process, named after Sir Henry Bessemer of England. Loganathan explained that Bessemer patented a pneumatic steel-making process in England in 1856, despite the fact that Kelly began developing and experimenting with the process several years earlier. Kelly was able to prove to the U.S. Patent Office that his invention had priority over Bessemer's, Loganathan said, and the American received a U.S. patent in 1857 superseding Bessemer's.

Loganathan said the cost-effective steel-making process "changed history" because of the importance of steel in building bridges, railroads and skyscrapers, helping to grow the industrial world. In his nomination application to the ACS, Loganathan said further advancements that emerged after Kelly's method was discovered eventually created millions of jobs all over the world.

"One of the greatest inventions, one of the greatest discoveries in the world, happened right here in Eddyville, Kentucky," Loganathan said.

The National Historic Chemical Landmarks program was established in 1992 to boost public appreciation for the chemical sciences' contributions to

modern life in the United States, said Keith Lindblom, ACS program manager.

Loganathan submitted the nomination as 2014 chairman of the ACS Kentucky Lake Section, and it was supported by Harry Fannin, chairman of the MSU chemistry department; former Lyon County resident Don Hicks, Ph.D., and the MSU office of development.

A dedication ceremony will be held in April or May when the ACS will present two large plaques designating the National Historic Chemical Landmark: one for the Lyon County Public Library and one for the MSU Chemistry Department. Loganathan said representatives from MSU, Eddyville Mayor Nancy Slaton and other local officials will attend the ceremony.

Loganathan said it's chemistry departments of larger universities that usually receive ACS landmark recognition. Purdue University and University of Michigan are among those with National Historic Chemical Landmarks.

"We're so honored to have that kind of recognition for the Murray State Chemistry Department," Loganathan said.



Please see **KELLY** | 8A
northwest of Eddyville
around 1850.

Through years of experimentation, the manufacturer found that blasting

