



Steve Gross/The Anniston Star

Charlie Anderson of OSHA (left of star flag with hand raised) talks to employees and visitors at Monsanto during the flag-raising ceremony Monday.

Monsanto celebrates federal safety award

By Frederick Burger
Star Business Editor

The official recognition came in May, but management and workers at Monsanto's Anniston plant took time out Monday to celebrate formally their receipt of a coveted federal award for workplace safety.

"This is very significant, and we are delighted with this remarkable achievement," said Charlie Anderson, the assistant administrator for OSHA's Atlanta office.

The citation from the U.S. Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration designates Monsanto's local plant as a member of OSHA's Voluntary Protection Plan. The Monsanto facility entered the three-tiered VPP program at the Star level, the highest step and the hardest to attain.

Monsanto is one of only about 125 companies nationally that are

members of the VPP program, said Pamela Evatt, an OSHA's VPP coordinator. Of the total membership, about 34 companies are in the Southeast, and about half of those are in Alabama.

In February 1992, Southern Tool in Oxford became the first local company inducted into the VPP program. It entered the program at the second-tier Merit level and is working to reach the Star level.

Part of the Monsanto observance included raising a white VPP-Star flag at the plant off Alabama 202, which primarily makes Therminol, a heat-transfer fluid used to warm such things as oil pipe lines and keep the oil flowing. It also makes Paracetamol, which is used in such medications as Tylenol.

Monsanto has long maintained a self-regulated safety program and had little trouble attaining the

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VPP-Star designation. The most serious injuries suffered at the plant in the last couple of years were relatively minor cuts and bruises, said Michael R. Bork, the company's local administrative assistant.

To qualify for the Voluntary Protection Program, a company must undergo an OSHA audit and demonstrate exemplary safety and health programs and practices that significantly exceed OSHA's compliance regulations.

In 1991, Monsanto executives set a goal of having all its roughly 30 U.S. plants qualify for OSHA's VPP program by the end of 1997. The Anniston plant, which employs 106, is the company's second to be included in the Voluntary Protection Plan.

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In our opinion

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Col. Harry M. Ayers, President and Publisher, 1910-1964

H. BRANDT AYERS
Editor and Publisher

P. A. SANGUINETTI
President

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The Anniston Star

The Anniston Stars Safe workers

AS THE nation gets into its debate over health care reform, one Anniston company has gotten to the source of workplace injuries. Monsanto's Anniston plant has been awarded a prestigious federal award for workplace safety. Credit goes not to any one person, but to all 106 employees.

The U.S. Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration designated the Anniston chemical plant a Star worksite, the highest honor in a voluntary protection program. Monsanto, which already had a long-term safety program in place, earned the honor by demonstrating exemplary safety and health programs and exceeding OSHA compliance regulations.

The award is important not only for the company as a whole, but also for the individ-

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ual employees. With such safety in the workplace, the chances of injuries and lost time decrease. Costs can be kept down, productivity stays up, the work environment is less stressful and the overall work experience is better for everyone.

SEVERAL other Alabama worksites — including Oxford's Southern Tool — have become involved in the safety program. Monsanto's success can be seen as an example not only for those other companies, but for the rest of us as well. As employers and employees work together to improve safety on the job, we all contribute to the general well-being.

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