

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 Paranitrophenol, 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.

XC TO:
Jack Molloy
Vike Mathucia
Bob Jones
Dick Dumas
We also got picture from WJSU - channel 40 local news affiliate on Tues 10/19 6pm news. Will pass footage along if requested.

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