

VISTA CHEMNEWS

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OKC modernization demonstrates Vista's commitment to PVC customers, business

The upcoming expansion of Vista's Oklahoma City, Okla., polyvinyl chloride (PVC) resin plant demonstrates Vista's commitment to its PVC business, says Gary Draper, president, Olefins & Vinyl division.

The expansion allows us to grow our PVC business, Draper says. It goes a long way toward improving productivity which will help us attain our goal of being in the lowest quartile among PVC resin

producers. It also will help us meet the increasing demand for our PVC resin and enhance Vista's position in the PVC market as we grow with our customers.

The modernization of the Oklahoma City plant, to be completed in early 1995, will add about 110 million pounds to the plant's PVC resin capacity. In addition to steam stripping, it will include installation of a state-of-the-art computer control system. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 1993.

A separate expansion of Vista's Aberdeen, Miss., PVC plant calls for an additional 200 million pounds of capacity. Draper says this project is scheduled to go before the Vista board of directors next summer for approval.

Customers use Vista's PVC resin in a wide variety of useful products: patio and lawn furniture, agricultural, residential and commercial pipe, building and electrical wire, shoe soles and automotive dashboards.

Alumina maker Ceralox becomes part of Vista

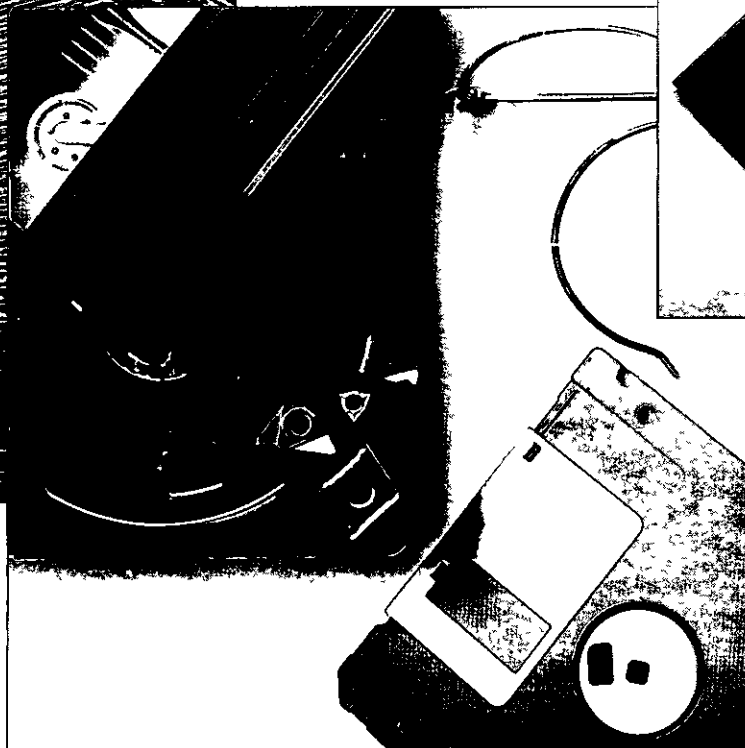
Ceralox, a Tucson-based manufacturer of ultra-high-purity alumina products, recently became part of Vista Chemical. Ceralox had been a wholly owned U.S. subsidiary of CONDEA Chemie since 1988.

Ceralox's strength is in being a small entrepreneurial company, says Bruce Larsen, president, Surfactants & Specialties division. It will maintain the same business direction, selling highly specialized, high-purity alumina.

The combination of Vista, CONDEA and Ceralox offers RWF-DEA's alumina customers a broad range of alumina products. This "three-brand" approach brings value to our customers by offering many different product quality specifications from one organization.

Ceralox is capable of producing some of the highest-purity alumina available in the world. Its alumina products are sold into industrial applications, such as artificial sapphires, sodium vapor lamps, ceramics for high-tech cutting tools and magnetic media coatings. In the future, Ceralox may also toll-process some Vista alumina.

With 35 employees, Ceralox has annual sales of about \$2 million.



Ceralox's high-purity alumina complements Vista's alumina product line. From left, Uses for the two companies' aluminas include anti-skid agents to prevent cardboard boxes from slipping when stacked, coatings for video tape and computer disks, eye glass polishes and household cleaners.

Vista continues efforts to protect U.S. LAB market from Canadian subsidies

In July *ChemNews* reported that Vista was taking a proactive stand to protest the participation of the Government of Québec in construction of a linear alkylbenzene (LAB) plant near Montreal.

The new plant is planned to produce more than three times the annual Canadian demand for LAB. Vista believes that most of the plant's production will be targeted at U.S. markets at low prices made possible by the government subsidy.

Canadian government ownership in this plant would create unfair competitive advantages for the Canadian company, Société générale de financement du Québec (SGF-Québec) and the Spanish company Petresa, and could threaten hundreds of U.S. jobs including those of more than 200 Vista employees at the company's Baltimore, Md. and Lake Charles, La., LAB plants.

Vista has continued its efforts to bring this inequity to the attention of the U.S. government. Vista petitioned the United States Trade Representative Mickey Kantor and the International Trade Commission for pre-emptive

action. The International Chemical Workers Union (ICWU), the union representing many Baltimore plant workers, formally joined this petition. Kantor has 90 days from the date of the petition to respond.

On August 4, Jim Ball, Vista president and CEO, Bruce Larsen, president, Surfactants & Specialties division, and Pete Markey, manager, Baltimore plant, met with Maryland Governor William Schaefer

and representatives of the Maryland congressional delegation. Schaefer urged the delegation to collectively put pressure on Kantor to accept the petition of Vista and the ICWU and to call for an investigation by the International Trade Commission.

"I don't like what this could do to the 180 Marylanders who work for Vista in the South Baltimore plant," Schaefer told the delegation, adding that he had registered a strong complaint with Kantor.

In addition to Governor Schaefer, supporters of Vista at the meeting included Maryland Business Council President Donald P. Hutchinson, Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke and Maryland

Secretary of Economic and Employment Development Mark L. Wasserman.

As a result of the meeting, the Maryland delegation is requesting a meeting with Kantor. In addition, Vista produced video news releases showing the meeting and explaining the issue and sent the releases to television stations in Texas, Louisiana, Maryland and Canada.

Vista awaits government response

Vista now is waiting for Kantor and the U.S. government to respond. "Vista supports NAFTA and other, regional agreements, but this is not a free trade issue," Ball says. "Rather, it's about unfair trade and subsidies."

"We're not afraid of free, open trade — as the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement are meant to achieve — so that we can compete on a level playing field with anyone, anywhere in the world," Larsen adds.

"We would be pleased to match up our Baltimore employees against any other workforce anywhere in the world in a fair competition — but the competition must be fair and unsubsidized," he says.



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