



NEWS RELEASE

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SUBJECT: New agreement with DNR enables resins manufacturer to pursue environmental innovations

Madison, Wis. -- Cook Composites and Polymers Co. (CCP), a polyester and alkyd resins manufacturer located 25 miles north of Milwaukee, signed a cooperative environmental agreement today with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) enabling the company to reduce pollution and pursue other environmental improvements beyond those that regulations require.

"I commend CCP for its commitment to superior environmental performance," said Darrell Bazzell, DNR Secretary, who signed the agreement in the State Capitol today with CCP officials. "Agreements like this offer new ways to improve the quality of Wisconsin's environment while keeping businesses and government efficient."

CCP's five-year agreement with the DNR covers the company's manufacturing facility in Saukville, Ozaukee County. The facility, which is capable of producing 52 million pounds of resin a year used by a variety of industries, began production in 1949 and employs approximately 75 full-time staff in Wisconsin.

The agreement identifies specific objectives, activities and schedules CCP and the DNR will follow that will enable the company to change its overall approach to pollution and waste management. CCP anticipates its new approach will yield environmental, economic and community relations benefits.

Michael Gromacki, CCP Director of Quality, Safety and Environment said, "We believe the cooperative agreement has been a tremendous growth opportunity for CCP, the DNR and our neighbors in Saukville to work toward environmental improvement as a team effort. We believe that all parties involved now have a better understanding of each other, and the environmental aspects of our operation than when we started, and we expect this growth to continue."

In the agreement, CCP will take actions that go beyond those required by environmental regulations. Their commitment to superior environmental performance includes no longer burning

hazardous waste in their incinerator; reducing the amount of wastes generated and contaminants released, especially those with health and environmental concern; implementing an Environmental Management System; and, taking a leadership role in product stewardship.

CCP employees have already identified how to reduce solvent use from 1.7 million pounds a year to less than 1.2 million pounds a year. CCP is making piping changes to achieve this initial reduction, which will save about \$80,000 in raw material costs.

Michael Lotman, CCP Director of Polymer Manufacturing said, "CCP considers the signing of this agreement as the beginning, not the endpoint, of a fresh approach to environmental management as a continuous improvement process, with a foundation built on community and employee involvement. Through this process, CCP welcomes constructive ideas from our employees and our Saukville neighbors to improve our operations and minimize our impact on the environment. As a result, we have already discovered new ideas and opportunities for improving our environmental performance and reducing waste."

By agreeing to develop an Environmental Management System for its manufacturing plant, CCP has committed to making continuous environmental improvement a standard operating practice throughout its Saukville facility. CCP will improve its practices to minimize environmental impacts, conserve natural resources -- including raw materials and energy -- and work cooperatively with neighbors and the community. One early goal CCP has set is to find ways to address concerns the public has expressed about periodic ambient odors from the company's plant.

The DNR is providing coordinated, expedited review of multiple environmental approvals for CCP projects called for under the agreement that involve wastewater pretreatment, waste management and air quality. Bazzell noted CCP's efforts to involve community residents in CCP's Environmental Management System.

"CCP respects the public's desire for a healthy environment. It has brought in a facilitator for its Community Advisory Committee, who has experience and credentials with the environmental community. CCP will consult with its advisory committee as the company develops its Environmental Management System and pollution prevention projects. This is a bold move reserved for those visionaries that are prepared to balance environmental, economic and social issues, " he said.

Legislation passed in the 1997-99 state biennial budget permits the DNR to sign cooperative environmental agreements with up to 10 companies that pledge to pursue a higher level of environmental performance than current regulatory programs require. CCP is the second company to sign such an agreement with the state. Wisconsin Electric Power Company signed the first agreement of this type with the state DNR in February.

Companies interested in learning more about the Environmental Cooperation Pilot Program should contact Mark McDermid, Director, DNR Bureau of Cooperative Environmental Assistance, (608) 267-3125, 101 S. Webster Street, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707. More information about the program is available on the DNR Web site at www.dnr.state.wi – go directly to a bureau on the DNR home page and select Cooperative Environmental Assistance, then select "Environmental Cooperation Pilot Program."

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