



DOWNSTREAM

Sector Editor: Andrew White

Solvay plans specialty sulfone expansions in Georgia, Ohio

PRINCETON, N.J. — Solvay has unveiled an ambitious expansion plan for its U.S.-based sulfone business, which focuses on polymer solutions for various critical life science applications, as part of its ongoing commitment to build capacity in this field to support a growing global customer base.

The full scope of the multi-year expansion plans will ultimately touch all of Solvay's sulfone polymers. The first major investment steps will include a capacity increase for Udel® polysulfones of over 25 percent by 2024 at the company's production site in Marietta, Ohio, with much of this increase expected on line by early 2023. Likewise, Solvay's production capacity for dichlorodiphenyl sulfone — an important common building block used in all sulfone polymers — will also be expanded by more than 25 percent by 2024, resulting in capacity increases at the company's Augusta, Georgia, site by the end of 2022.

For more information, visit www.solvay.com or call (609) 860-4000.

MMEX acquires additional sites for integrated refining, hydrogen complex

FORT STOCKTON, Texas — MMEX Resources Corp. has completed additional site acquisitions of 632 acres for its West Texas projects, bringing its total land ownership to 1,082 acres.

Jack W. Hanks, president and CEO of MMEX Resources Corp., said, "We [previously] announced that ... along with Polaris Engineering, we had completed significant milestones on the technology timeline for our UltraClean Refinery project, and we have received permit approval for the project by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality."

MMEX land assets also sit in the middle of prime West Texas logistics: railroad access to the Texas Pacific Railroad corridor interconnecting to both the Texas Gulf Coast and the Mexico Western Ports for exports, and a highway interconnection readily available on Interstate 10. This ideal location is expected to allow MMEX to market its ultraclean refined projects and green hydrogen from coast to coast in the U.S and to Western Mexico Ports for export to Asia.

For more information, visit <https://mmexresources.com> or call (855) 880-0400.

PureCycle breaks ground on new recycling facility in Georgia

AUGUSTA, Ga. — PureCycle Technologies Inc. recently broke ground on its second U.S. plastic waste purification facility in Augusta, Georgia, which will enable PureCycle to expand production of its ultra-pure recycled (UPR) resin.

This facility is designed to transform No. 5 plastic waste into a sustainable material that can be used to make products consumers use on a regular basis. PureCycle's Augusta location can support up to eight purification lines, which collectively are designed to produce approximately 1 billion pounds of like-new recycled plastic annually.

The groundbreaking and start of construction in Augusta come on the heels of the recent announcement of PureCycle's \$250 million private equity capital raise, which will help support the build out of the Augusta facility. PureCycle expects the first two Augusta purification lines to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2023, with a capacity to produce 260 million pounds of like-new recycling resin annually.

For more information, visit <https://purecycle.com> or call (954) 647-7059.

Huntsman expands TPU capabilities at Illinois site

RINGWOOD, Ill. — Huntsman recently hosted a formal event at its polyurethane elastomers production facility in Ringwood, Illinois, to mark the completion of a series of strategic investments in its thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) manufacturing capabilities for end applications in paint protection film and security glazing.

Huntsman is one of the longest-standing producers of TPUs for protective film applications. For more than 45 years, the business has been making high-performance TPUs that form the basis of paint protection films, surface protection systems and security glazing technologies.

Over the past two years, Huntsman has constructed a purpose-built TPU manufacturing facility for protective film technologies at its Ringwood site — fitting it out with cutting-edge automation equipment. This investment has helped increase the output of products within Huntsman's renowned KRYSTALGRAN® and KRYSTALFLEX® TPU portfolios.

For more information, visit www.huntsman.com.

SUSTAINABLE SAFETY EXCELLENCE

Seven COVID-19 culture casualties

It has been two years since the world changed with the spread of COVID-19, with little certainty as to when life will return to what was previously perceived as "normal times" or, alternatively, how we can find our "new normal." However, let not the lessons be lost on us.

In March 2020, my in-person work came to a halt, but I never stopped working with and advising my clients as they dusted off their business continuity plans and began creating and implementing new and unanticipated protocols. I started traveling almost weekly in the summer of 2020. I have toured dozens of locations across most industries, interviewed thousands of employees remotely and in person, and observed the safety practices of all of these companies. I have a great understanding of COVID-19's impact on many of these company cultures. These are the seven most common culture casualties I've observed.

• Communication suffered, and so did trust: Many companies lost the ability to dialogue with people and resorted to simply sending signals. The free flow of information to those who needed it most was compromised. Unsurprisingly, this has led to a decrease in

trust levels throughout these companies.

• Changing staffing levels: Staff shortages have been problematic for many, putting pressure on the existing workforce. In several industries, the demand for their product increased drastically. Attracting, hiring and retaining talent must be a key area of focus.

There will be future disruptions and detractors to your safety strategy. How prepared will you be for the next one?

• Work-life balance compromised: An increase in workload and demands required many employees to work overtime. With the distractions of health impacts from COVID-19, educating children at home instead of school and the stress of being away from home longer in the day, many employees felt overworked and exhausted. I learned of many vehicle accidents that occurred with employees driving home after many longer-than-usual days.

• Decrease in average tenure: With the

need to change or increase staff in some businesses, the average tenure has decreased, and so has the average knowledge level. This requires experienced workers to spend additional time helping new employees learn their jobs and the associated hazards and risks.

• Decrease in standardization: Where there was an increase in new employees, I have also found new employees training newer employees. Where this occurred, I'm finding new and multiple common practices rather than the standard way the work is performed.

• Decrease in oversight and influence: Several companies have either lost supervisors or supervisors' span of control and influence has been compromised with an increase in personnel. Overseeing more people with the increasing administrative burden placed on many first-line supervisors decreases their ability to perform their most important roles, including coaching employees.

• Reduced sense of teamwork: Where people would regularly collaborate in person, virtual meetings and remote work now dominate the workforce. Moreover, as I've heard from many, the safety conversation focuses primarily on industrial risks, leaving workers

at home to feel that safety topics are not relevant, nor considering the different risk profiles they are working within.

We must investigate both what went well and what suffered during the response to COVID-19. What makes our safety strategy fragile or resilient? How can we make our continuous improvement efforts more agile? There will be future disruptions and detractors to your safety strategy. How prepared will you be for the next one? As the great boxer and philosopher Mike Tyson warned, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

Shawn M. Galloway is CEO of ProAct Safety and co-author of several bestselling books. As an award-winning consultant, trusted adviser, leadership coach, and keynote speaker, he has helped hundreds of organizations within every major industry to improve safety strategy, culture, leadership, and engagement. He is also the host of the highly acclaimed weekly podcast series Safety Culture Excellence®.

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