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Marvin Wood Products receives VPP safety recognition

(Baker City) – The Department of Consumer and Business Services today presented ‘VPP Merit Award’ status to Marvin Wood Products in Baker City. The Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) is a workplace safety-and-health-management program that encourages employers to voluntarily meet rigorous workplace safety standards to protect workers and reduce injuries. Currently, nine sites participate in VPP in Oregon.

“Marvin Wood Products demonstrates a commitment to improving safety in an industry where many injuries have traditionally occurred,” said Peter De Luca, administrator of the DCBS Occupational Safety and Health Division (also known as Oregon OSHA). “Safety has been transformed from a ‘catch phrase’ to being a core value at this mill. Management and employees in this facility are working together to ensure a positive direction when it comes to safety.”

To achieve VPP status, a work site must undergo an extensive Oregon OSHA review of workplace conditions, safety records, employee safety and health programs, and regulatory compliance, including interviews with employees. Evaluators review nineteen program elements including management commitment to safety, employee participation, self-inspection, safety and health training, emergency programs and drills, and preventative maintenance. Oregon OSHA’s VPP employers are removed from routine scheduled inspections for the duration of their participation. Employees do not lose any rights under the program. Oregon OSHA still investigates accidents, formal complaints and chemical spills.

“VPP sites are recognized as leaders,” said De Luca. “VPP changes the traditional relationship between industries and Oregon OSHA, and Marvin Wood Products joins a select group of just over 1000 sites in the United States.”

The mill was recognized by the Oregon OSHA Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) in July 1999. The management and employees at the Baker City mill made the commitment to participate in the Voluntary Protection Program, and the facility qualified for ‘Merit’ status in the safety and health management program in July 2003. ‘Merit’ sites accomplish most of the safety and health management principles of the Voluntary Protection Program and require additional work to reach ‘Star’ status.

Marvin Wood Products employs 218 people at the Baker City location, many of whom are actively involved in safety and health management programs at the facility.

There are currently nine VPP sites in Oregon. The other VPP sites are DPR Construction - Ronler Acres project in Hillsboro, Frito-Lay Beaverton, Georgia-Pacific Coos Bay mill, Georgia-Pacific Philomath mill, Georgia-Pacific Toledo pulp and paper mill, Kerr McGee Chemical in The Dalles, PW Eagle in Eugene and Timber Products Spectrum Division (TP Spectrum) in White City.

For more information about involvement in the VPP or SHARP programs, contact Mark Hurliman, Oregon OSHA VPP/SHARP program manager at 503-947-7437.

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