

Inside Omya Vermont

Summer 2007 Vol.1 No.1

From the President A Note from James Reddy

We recognize that you are curious about our work and facility. For that reason we designed this newsletter to offer information about our operations. More importantly, we hope this newsletter allows us to continue and strengthen our relationship with you.

We hope that this newsletter:

- Is viewed as a reliable source of trusted information;
- Shares plant-related updates and develops a dialogue with you; and,
- Encourages your participation in Omya-related activities and issues.

We invite your questions and comments and look forward to offering the kind of information that matters to you. We also hope that our newsletter will communicate the various ways that Omya is working to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to improve our environmental performance.

Thank you for reading our inaugural newsletter.

Sincerely,
Jim Reddy



On-site Tailings Management Areas store byproducts from Omya's calcium carbonate processing operations.

► Highlights

Omya News

September 13, 2006: The Supplemental Spring 2006 Monitoring Report indicates the possible presence of Omya's flotation reagent at offsite sampling locations.

November 8, 2006: Using a more advanced laboratory analytical method, the 2nd Addendum to the Spring 2006 Monitoring Report concluded that Omya's flotation reagent was not detected at offsite sampling locations.

January 15, 2007: The Fall 2006 Groundwater Monitoring Report indicates the absence of Omya-related chemicals at all offsite sampling locations consistent with the supplemental Spring 2006 monitoring events.

January 25, 2007: Section 5 Study Phase I Report completed including incorporation of comments from stakeholder Oversight Team.

February 2, 2007: Omya hires Jim Hamilton for newly created position of Vice President Environmental and External Affairs.

March 26, 2007: Oversight Team members and consultants present the Section 5 Study Phase I findings and Phase II work plan to the Department of Environmental Conservation within Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources.

► Action Update: Groundwater Monitoring

Managing Tailings Management Areas

Omya is committed to maintaining groundwater and surface water quality. As part of the Interim Certification application, Omya must demonstrate that its Tailings Management Areas (TMAs) do not "create an unreasonable risk to the public health nor be unreasonably destructive to the environment." Omya stores its byproduct materials in the TMAs on site. These byproduct materials result from the removal of mineral impurities from the ore that is processed into high grade calcium carbonate. The retention of the byproduct has been undertaken to preserve access to residual calcium carbonate for further processing. Local residents have expressed concern with Omya's activities and the environmental effects of the TMAs.

One way to determine that the byproducts are stored safely is to monitor and test the groundwater and surface water in the vicinity. Water testing began in 2000 as part of an ongoing State-approved monitoring plan to test groundwater and surface water both on and off-site.

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► Action Update: East Plant Shutdown

Response to Omya-Initiated Odor Study

On Friday, June 9th, 2006, Omya temporarily shut down its East Plant in Florence, Vermont, in response to preliminary results from an ongoing odor study. The results indicated that the plant's emission of formaldehyde and acrolein were above technical action limits. After consulting with toxicological experts and state regulatory officials, Omya is confident that the air quality levels do not constitute a threat to the environment or to the health of the employees or residents living in the area.

The chemicals in question are typical products of fuel oil combustion that are part of Omya's dry mineral processing operation. The state regulates the chemicals via tests of the plant's dryer emission levels as well as estimates of the corresponding air quality levels of the surrounding area. The formaldehyde levels that were detected were 0.03 micrograms per cubic meter above the hazardous ambient air standard of 0.08 micrograms per cubic meter set by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Following additional emissions testing and modification of our processes to reduce air emissions, Omya submitted a proposal to the DEC and other interested parties that demonstrated emission reductions. Subsequently, on June 30, the DEC approved Omya's proposal and the plant was reopened utilizing the production process changes that significantly lower the plant's emissions and associated odors to within acceptable standards.

Omya continues to work with the DEC Air Pollution Control Division and community members to address the issue. In a June 14th, 2006 Rutland Herald article, DEC Commissioner, Jeffery Wennberg stated that "Omya acted very proactively in voluntarily shutting down the boilers as soon as they found out they had a violation and certainly that is the right response."

Omya has established a dedicated community call-in line for you to use to ask questions regarding plant odors. The dedicated



The Verpol Plant in Florence is undergoing an independent assessment to determine any impacts to human health or the environment.

number is: 802-770-7644. We pledge to return all calls made to the Community Feedback Line by 5:00 p.m. on the next regular business day.

► What's Happening

A Section 5 Study Update

On June 16, 2005, the Vermont Legislature approved Act No. 65: An Act Relating to Solid Waste Facility Fees, Taxes and Certification (H.532) that called for a review of the environmental and human health effects of calcium carbonate processing at Omya's Florence plant. Section 5 of the Act requires that a study be conducted by certified, independent, third-party experts. The Study must be completed and submitted to the Legislature on or before January 15, 2008.

A collaborative multi-stakeholder group (the Section 5 Oversight Team) was organized to assist in the selection of qualified scientists to conduct the investigation and to make sure that the study is carried out in an impartial and credible manner.

In a letter dated April 25th, 2006, Commissioner Jeffrey Wennberg, of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), stated, "As important as the study content is the study process which

must be independent and objective to the best extent possible."

That letter also acknowledges DEC's review of the Oversight Team's April 3rd, 2006 Request for Proposals and "concurrs that both the content of the RFP and the process being utilized are consistent with the requirements of Section 5 of H.532."

In May of 2006, the Section 5 Oversight Team selected a group of experts, comprised of scientists from Cambridge Environmental Inc. and Geosyntec Consultants Inc., to perform the Section 5 study. Cambridge Environmental Inc. headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is leading efforts to assess the site data related to human health and environmental risks. Located in Acton, Massachusetts, Geosyntec Consultants Inc. is providing a review of geology and groundwater at the site.

During the last six months, the scientists reviewed reports, studies, and permits, etc. previously collected at the site to determine whether they meet rigorous standards for accuracy and completeness. The consultants recently identified that additional information may be needed to answer questions about Omya's possible human health and environmental impacts.

On Friday, April 20th, 2007 the Section 5 Consultants from Cambridge Environ-

Study Update

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mental Inc. and Geosyntec Consulting Inc. provided a Section 5 Study progress update to members of the Vermont Legislature. In the two separate meetings with the Vermont House Committee on Ways & Means and the House Committee on Natural Resources and Energy, the consulting team provided an overview of the Section 5 process, Phase I data review and findings, and Phase II proposed scope of work.

The scientists will gather additional data over the next year in order to submit a comprehensive report to the legislature by January 2008.

All Oversight Team meeting minutes and copies of all reports can be found on our website: www.OmyaInVermont.net

► Omya 101

From Local to Global—An Abbreviated History of Omya

The Plüss-Staufer company, known today as Omya AG, was established in 1884 in Oftringen, Switzerland as a

company specializing in the manufacturing of high quality glazier's putty, a flexible substance made of chalk whitening and linseed oil that holds together the joint of glass and its frame. A second factory began production in 1900 in the town of Omye, France home to "Les Omyats," or residents of Omye, from which Omya acquired its name.

Throughout the early to mid-1900s, the excavated chalk, mined for the company's putty, was recognized as a cost-effective constituent of many other products. These new uses caused the progressive growth of Omya into an international white minerals company.

Omya continues to process chalk and its global operations have expanded to include the processing of limestone and marble. Today, Omya operates in more than 100 locations in over 50 countries employing over 6,000 employees. Omya's Head Office remains in the city of its origin, Oftringen, Switzerland, with its North American operations headquartered in Proctor, Vermont.

► Omya Outreach

Community Interest Survey

In order to encourage community feedback, Omya is working with The Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont to conduct a Community Interest Survey. This survey is designed to help us gain insights regarding your perceptions of the Florence plant and our role in your community. Over the upcoming months, Pittsford residents will be welcomed to participate by completing the survey that we will mail to each residence. The questions within the survey will ask for your opinions regarding our operations and presence within our community, and ways that we can keep community members better informed. In addition, homeowners living within a one-mile radius of the plant will be asked to participate in a door-to-door survey that asks about their experiences living in close proximity to the plant. We invite you to be honest in your assessment of us and our work so as to enable us to meet your needs better. All answers will be kept confidential and participants are assured of their anonymity through standard controls and procedures adopted by The Center for Rural Studies. Once information is compiled and tabulated it will be shared with you in a future edition of *Inside Omya Vermont* and on our website.

Community Highlights

A Message from Tony Colak

Hello Readers,

I would like to take this opportunity to give you a brief update on Omya's involvement with a unique group of stakeholders called the Section 5 Oversight Team. The Oversight Team is overseeing the Section 5 process whereby a team of independent scientists reviews the potential environmental and human health impacts of calcium carbonate processing at Omya's Florence facility. Omya is one of many participants on the Oversight Team—a group that includes residents of Pittsford, elected officials, and representatives from the VT Agency of Natural Resources.

The Oversight Team's first task was to define the parameters of the study and develop a scope of work that outlined how the study was to be performed. Next, the Team chose a highly qualified group of scientists to perform the Section 5 Study. The scientists then analyzed all of Omya's existing data—which totals many thousands of pages of information—as part of the Phase I process. That work concluded with a Phase I Report that summarized the initial findings. The scientists also developed Phase II Recommendations for additional data collection and analysis, which is set to take place over the next several months.

The Oversight Team's regular progress reports are available in Omya's Online Project Library (<http://OmyaInVermont.net/lib.htm>). Omya welcomes your interest in this process and encourages you to visit the website to remain informed of our activities.

Tony Colak

Section 5 Study Oversight Team Member and Omya's Vice President of Operations

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Groundwater Monitoring

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The monitoring network used to evaluate water quality includes ten bedrock wells located throughout the plant site and eight wells and springs located off-site, including the Florence-Pittsford water system. In addition, all adjoining property owners were offered the opportunity to have tests conducted on their wells or springs. The State approved the monitoring plan Omya uses and receives all results of all monitoring. Monitoring stations are tested every year in the spring and fall and the results of the sampling events are submitted to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' (ANR) Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Pittsford-Florence Water District, and District Environmental Commission. Results are made available to all off-site well or spring owner participants and are posted on our website www.OmyalnVermont.net.

On September 14, 2006, Omya notified ANR that the Spring 2006 water monitoring results indicated the possible presence of Omya's flotation reagent in water samples taken from two onsite well locations. The same testing also indicated the possible presence of flotation reagent in three offsite wells and two offsite springs, with the concentration of flotation reagent in the offsite springs above Vermont drinking water standards. Omya performed further testing to learn why the positive results had occurred where prior monitoring data did not indicate the presence of the reagent. This re-analysis, performed by a second independent laboratory,



Omya tests ground and surface water as part of its ongoing State-approved monitoring plan.

used a new and more accurate testing methodology to analyze specifically for the flotation reagent, as opposed to the original test which looked only for a broad class of chemicals. These more specific analyses showed very clearly that Omya's flotation reagent was not present in the onsite and offsite water sources. During a subsequent round of testing conducted in the Fall of 2006, no detections of flotation reagent were found, which was consistent with the prior results.

We continue to sample and analyze groundwater and surface water samples in accordance with the state approved monitoring plan and regularly post the results of the analyses on our website. In addition, we have established a dedicated community call-in line for you to call with any questions regarding the water monitoring reports. The phone number for your questions is: 802-770-7644. We pledge to return all calls made to the Community Feedback Line by 5:00 p.m. on the next regular business day.

Thank You

We hope you found this newsletter to be informative and useful. Please visit our website: www.OmyalnVermont.net where you may submit comments and questions, or locate documents mentioned in this newsletter.

If you do not have access to the internet and/or would like more in-depth information about Omya's Vermont operations please visit our Information Repositories at the Omya plant in Florence, the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' Office, or the Pittsford Town Offices.

We invite you to send article submissions for consideration to appear in future Inside Omya Vermont newsletters. Please send your submissions to Christie Harris through the contact information provided below.

If you are not on our mailing list and would like to receive this quarterly newsletter, please call or send an email to christie.harris@omya.com.

Christie Harris
Communications Manager
Omya Industries Inc.
61 Main Street
Proctor, Vermont 05765
Phone: 802 770 7214
Email: christie.harris@omya.com

Do you have an issue or concern? **Omya wants to know.**
Please call and leave us a message at 770-7644 or visit our website
www.OmyalnVermont.net

We are actively seeking community participation in various aspects of our operations. We are involved in a variety of activities to increase our communication with community members. One of our initiatives is the creation of a phone line, called the Community Feedback Line, dedicated to register your concerns or suggestions regarding our mineral processing operations. We pledge to return all calls made to the Community Feedback Line by 5:00 p.m. on the next regular business day.

