

SASY COMMITTEE TOURS MADISON KIPP PLANT May 16, 2014

- Lance Green, SASY Council and Kipp Committee Member

Each year the Madison Kipp Corporation turns over 30 million pounds of recycled, pre-smelted aluminum into precision die cast components and subassemblies for the automotive, leisure vehicle, lawn/garden and industrial end markets. Four members of the SASY Neighborhood Association Kipp Committee recently toured their facility on Atwood Avenue to review recent and ongoing environmental clean-up work. CEO Tony Koblinski said he was able to offer us this tour because the US EPA was conducting a stack test that day and most normal operations were shut down.

In a pre-tour meeting, Tony gave us a history of the 100-year-old plant, noting that it was originally the "Four Lakes Ordinance," supplying parts for WWI military equipment. The company now operates 260,000 square feet of manufacturing space in two Madison and one Sun Prairie facility. Twenty five of their 300 employees have worked at Kipp over 40 years.

Assisted by Alina Walcek, MKC's Environmental Officer, Tony led us through the plant, telling how molten aluminum is transferred from two main furnaces to robotic die-cast and finishing stations. He noted that PCB contamination still exists in the soil under the concrete plant floor from years of process spillage and showed where the soils had been removed under new concrete, as will be done whenever floor sections are replaced.

As we walked out over the north parking lot, Tony pointed out where a new building will enclose the soil vapor extraction (SVE) and groundwater pumping systems. Since 2012 the SVE system has been pulling PCE vapors from soil near the NE edge of the property in order to reduce vapors moving towards homes. The groundwater pump will pull up 40-50 gallons of water per minute which will be treated on site to remove the PCEs. About half of this water will go directly into sanitary sewage, while the other half will be used for cooling water, then re-treated and sent in to the sanitary line. These systems will operate for years to remove pollutants, said Tony, and the building will help reduce noise.

At the NE end of the parking lot we looked over the ditch which had been a raingarden. Much soil with PCB pollution had been removed a couple weeks ago, then rainwater was pumped out and hauled away for clean-up and disposal. Although a layer of fresh soil was now filling most of the ditch, Tony explained that testing showed remaining PCB-contaminated soil which would have to be removed before the final dirt and plants would be installed to rebuild the raingarden.

Tony noted that MKC contractors will soon be removing and replacing a foot of soil from the yards of many adjacent households, as agreed in the recent lawsuit settlement. This action will help assure these neighbors that contact with the soil in their yards will not expose them to any lingering PAH or other contaminants. Homeowners can choose whether to have the soil replaced or receive a cash equivalent.

Back inside, we observed EPA officials conducting tests on the tall stacks above the aluminum melt furnace, where chlorine is added to remove "impure" metals like magnesium. (About 1000 lbs of chlorine is stored on site, with up to 3 lbs used in each melt as needed.) The EPA tested for chlorine, hydrochloric acid, hydrocarbons and particulates to assure compliance with emission standards. MKC had received a Notice of Violation from EPA reflecting periods when MKC's records did not provide sufficient information to assure compliance. Tony assured us that all required records are now properly kept, and that emissions from the two furnace stacks would be well below standards. The SASY Committee will review test results when available.

A series of fans mounted in the building ceiling now force general factory air out of the other six stacks above the center of the building. Previously open windows on both sides of the building used to let this air move out directly into neighbor's yards, and closing them off also helps reduce noise. Releasing this air higher disperses it and reduces concentrations at ground level, Tony explained.

Before we left, Tony told us about MKC's Community Investment Fund, which has provided help to MATC scholarships, Goodman Center, Boy Scouts, Gilda's Fund, United Way and other groups. He said he wants to be a good neighbor and work with SASY to address and solve problems, and invited our group to tour MKC's Fair Oaks and Sun Prairie plants.

Visit SASYNA Kipp Committee web page: <http://www.sasyna.org/index.php/recent-activities/kipp/>