



Preformed Line Products receives Carolina Star

By Jim Lisk, Editor

Tuesday, December 8, 2009 — Just one week to the day after Thanksgiving, the management and employees of Preformed Line Products (PLP) sat together and feasted together as one big, happy family ... and rightfully so, for the plant was being recognized by North Carolina Commissioner of Labor Cherie Berry as the state's latest Carolina Star recipient.

The designation goes to companies in North Carolina that have met standards for safety set by OSHA and the NC Department of Labor, and in addition, have an accident rate 50 percent below the national average or better. PLP has been involved with the Carolina Star Safety Program for five years and were recognized as a Rising Star recipient the prior two years. But after improving their accident record, the top award was accomplished.

"We're extremely proud of this accomplishment, and each of you should hold your heads high for this achievement," PLP Plant Manager John Ziebarth said in addressing the 150 employees and luncheon guests of the company.

"Who in his right mind would invite OSHA in to inspect his plant? We did, and through the hard work of everyone, we've achieved this honor. In the end, this program is exactly how business and government should work together for the good of all."

In praising the plant's management and employees for their efforts in winning the award, Dave Sunkle, vice president of research and engineering from the home office in Cleveland, Ohio, said, "There's no greater responsibility for employers than the safety of its employees. Winning this award is a testament to the caliber employees we have here."

When addressing the gathering, Commissioner Berry spoke to the hard economic times and challenged all PLP employees to continue to be their brothers and sisters keepers.

"We're not all in the same boat in today's tough economy, but we're all in the same storm," she said.

"Some of our friends are not even in the boat, rather in the water, just struggling to stay afloat. Then there are others in a lifeboat, trying their best to make ends meet without a job. Those of onboard the boat and fortunate enough to still have our jobs need to do everything in our power to steer our companies into a safe harbor.

"There's so much stress out there today and we're seeing it in a number of fatalities from heart attacks. We're all in situations in our personal lives that affect our work. We're one big family within our workplace, and as such, we need to look out for one another."

Based on improving workplace safety across North Carolina, insurance rates for businesses were lowered this year and will be lowered even more in April 2010. In total, businesses will save close to \$200 million due to these rate decreases, Berry said.

After getting their fill of the feast, a couple PLP employees joined the chorus of praises for the company and the family of workers that call PLP home.



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Kevin Russell is a 26-year employee, who said of that caring family atmosphere, "I'm glad they opened the door for me. They take good care of their employees, and if you have a family problem of your own, they tell you to do what you've got to do."

"It's good to get up in the morning knowing that you've got a job with a company that truly cares about its employees," said Mark Stogner, a maintenance supervisor.

"It's obvious that our management considers employees as their most valuable asset. If they didn't, they would not have spent all the money they have for safety improvements. All in all, this is a great place to work with a family-oriented atmosphere."

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Photos



Safety committee members of Preformed Line Products unfurl the Carolina Star flag, which will now fly at the plant and symbolizes the plant's outstanding safety record. Of the more than 250,000 businesses in North Carolina, less than 100 have earned the Carolina Star distinction. Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry, right, makes the presentation to the PLP employees.