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Invitrogen recognized for workplace safety excellence *Eugene company achieves VPP Merit status*

A Eugene chemical research company is the latest worksite to join the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP), a prestigious safety and health excellence program.

The Occupational Safety and Health Division (Oregon OSHA), a division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services, will present the “VPP Merit” award to Invitrogen Corporation’s Molecular Probes Labeling and Detection Technology in Eugene on September 12, 2008. The Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) is a workplace safety and health management program that encourages employers to meet rigorous workplace safety standards that go beyond regulatory compliance to protect workers and reduce injuries. Currently, 16 Oregon worksites participate in VPP.

Invitrogen, which employs more than 300 people in Eugene, is a developer and manufacturer of fluorescent dyes and research chemicals for the scientific research market. The company has approximately 3,200 products which are made in small batches (typically gram quantities) and uses laboratory scale equipment and standard fume hoods. All chemical operations, including laboratory activities, chemical storage, and waste storage, are conducted indoors.

“We’re very proud of the safety culture that our employees have built at our Eugene site,” said Augie Sick, vice president and general manager of Invitrogen’s Cellular Analysis business unit. “Earning VPP designation for this site, a first for Invitrogen, is a significant milestone, and I’m confident we will continue to improve our safety record.”

To achieve VPP status, a worksite must have an average injury and illness rate at or below the rates of other employers in the same industry. The worksite undergoes an extensive Oregon OSHA review of workplace conditions, safety records, employee safety and health programs, and regulatory compliance. The review includes Oregon OSHA interviews with employees.

Evaluators conduct a thorough evaluation of all aspects of the site’s safety and health management system, including management commitment to safety and health, employee participation in safety, workplace self-inspection, providing safety and health training, emergency programs and drills, and preventive maintenance. VPP participants are removed from Oregon OSHA’s routine scheduled inspection list 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.

Additional Oregon OSHA VPP sites are AmeriTies West LLC in The Dalles, GE Security Inc. in Tualatin, Georgia-Pacific Toledo LCC pulp and paper mill, Georgia-Pacific West Inc. Coos Bay mill, Georgia-Pacific West Inc. Philomath mill, iLevel by Weyerhaeuser Beaverton Service Center, Kiewit Bilfinger-Berger (KBB) on Portland's East Side Big Pipe project, Linde Inc. Medford Electronic Materials in White City, Marvin Wood Products in Baker City, Owens Corning Roofing and Asphalt LLC in Portland, The Stanley Works Hydraulic Tools in Milwaukie, Timber Products Company Spectrum Division in White City, Utility Vault in Wilsonville, Weyerhaeuser Company TOPS Operations in Springfield and Weyerhaeuser Company Coos Bay Timberlands.

Two federal facilities in Oregon, the United States Postal Service Evergreen DCU in Hillsboro and Washington Group International in Umatilla, participate in the national Voluntary Protection Program coordinated by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

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Oregon OSHA, a division of the Department of Consumer & Business Services, enforces the state's workplace safety and health rules and works to improve workplace safety and health for all Oregon workers. For more information, go to www.orosha.org. The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit www.dcbs.oregon.gov.