

FMC is dedicated to community

Chemical mixing/packaging company has long history in Middleport

BY KALEY LYNCH
kaley.lynch@lockportjournal.com

MIDDLEPORT — FMC Agricultural Projects Group has been a fixture of Middleport's canal community for 70 years.

With a community outreach center and a community panel made up of residents, the company makes efforts to be a good neighbor to Middleport, Jessica Heideman, FMC community relations director, said, "As a corporation, you're part of the fabric of the community."

The chemical company, located on Niagara Street off Route 31, mixes and packages herbicides and fungicides for worldwide distribution.

"They help crops to grow around the world and make them safer," Heideman said.

FMC ships to Brazil and across the U.S., as well as overseas. Products are shipped to more than 100 countries.

The FMC campus houses several different buildings on its 90-acre Niagara Street property, including administrative and maintenance buildings, as well as buildings where products are produced. The different factories have taken many forms over time as they progress with technology.

"The buildings obviously adapt with technology, as things change," Heideman said.

FMC's Middleport location opened in 1946, in the former Niagara Spraying Company building. Niagara Spraying Company opened in 1906 and was a producer of herbicides.

Although the Middleport plant was originally a chemical manufacturing facility, it now only formulates products — mixing and packaging more than 100 different products.

The FMC Corporation is based in Philadelphia, and employs about 5,500 people worldwide. The Middleport facility currently employs 65 full-time employees, with more workers hired during high production times.

In addition to its Niagara Street location, FMC Middleport also has a community office located on South Vernon Street. Residents are welcome to come in with questions about the plant or for more information from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by appointment.

"FMC Corporation made the commitment to make a separate building that's accessible to the community, since sometimes there's production going on and you can't access the site," Heideman said.

Before relocating to the office on South Vernon Street, the community office was located in houses or other buildings in town, Heideman said. The South Vernon Street location opened about three years ago after being restored by



A worker mans the controls inside the FMC Middleport plant.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



The outside of the FMC Middleport building.



A worker examines chemicals inside of the FMC Middleport plant. The company mixes and produces over 75 varieties of herbicides and fungicides which are distributed to 100 countries worldwide.



An employee monitors a chemical container in the FMC Middleport plant.

a resident. It had formerly been home to a gas station and convenience store.

"It's a great location to provide access to the community, and we're able to fill another building in Middleport," Heideman said.

Meetings and events are also held at the community office building.

FMC established the

Community Advisory Panel, or CAP, in 1990 to provide transparency to the community about factory operations. The panel is made up of citizens, including business leaders, Royalton-Hartland School board trustees and district administrators, students, clergy and first responders. The CAP meets about six times

well as national FFA sponsors to help coordinate the program.

"FMC has been a big contributor with the FFA Chapter at Roy-Hart," Heideman said.

"The FFA chapter has been giving students leadership work, holding conferences, and they've started a garden at the elementary school so that the elementary school students can actually see agriculture in motion," Heideman added.

FMC Corp also gives

three \$1,000 scholarships to Roy-Hart students pursuing higher education in science fields annually.

"We'd love to have them come back and work with us in the future," she said.

FMC also donates a variety of other charities and organizations, most of which are located in Middleport. The company also helps out by offering volunteer hours, Heideman said.

"A strong community means a strong FMC."

FAST FACTS:
FMC Corporation of Middleport

Niagara Street, Middleport. Chemical formulations plant for herbicides and other chemicals used on plants and crops worldwide.

- Established: 1946
- Number of employees: 65

a year, and provides feedback to FMC.

"We get together and provide them with information about what's going on at the plant so they understand what FMC is doing here and nationally, so that there's transparency back and forth and so that as a company, we can make adjustments as needed. It's a great sounding board," Heideman said.

In 2014, FMC Corp. gave the Royalton-Hartland school district a \$4,500 grant to fund a start-up chapter of Future Farmers of America.

"FMC has made several significant contributions, both material and financial, to support the establishment of an FFA program at Roy-Hart High School," Royalton-Hartland Superintendent Roger Klatt said.

About 36 students are currently involved in the program, which offers leadership training and hands-on application of classroom instruction in agricultural sciences. According to the FFA website, the organization is for future farmers, as well as "Future Biologists, Future Chemists, Future Veterinarians, Engineers and Entrepreneurs of America, too."

Students in the FFA program attend agricultural science conventions and competitions. They competed at the state level for the first time this school year, Klatt noted.

"We're very proud of their achievements," Klatt said.

FMC works closely with teachers and guidance counselors at the school as