

Freudenberg-NOK Visit

From: **Cheryl Cox** (cm.cox@outlook.com)

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Good morning all,

I just wanted to thank Lee Nichols for arranging the visit on Tuesday to Freudenberg-NOK. Lee, Norm DeWolfe and I met with Roger Keezer, the operations manager at the Ashland facility. Roger stated Freudenberg-NOK is the largest company "no one knows about". This facility is part of the Freudenberg Sealing Technologies division. It is a LEAN manufacturing facility that produces many types of seals found in a broad range of products manufactured by a wide range of industries and used by professionals and households throughout the world.

<http://www.fst.com/Markets/Industrial-Applications>

Roger spent about ninety minutes telling us the history of the company and how it came to locate in Ashland. He also talked about the changes at the plant over the years. It was very informative and gave me a new appreciation for just how valuable an asset they are to Ashland.

<http://www.fst.com/Company/About-FNST>

Roger talked about having a difficult time getting applicants to even come for an interview to the Ashland plant because they perceive it as being too far north or too out of the way. As we have discussed, he felt marketing Ashland's easy access to 93 would be very beneficial, as well as the quality of life our area offers. Lee asked about the possibility of expansion and though Roger feels that could be several years away, it would be possible if the business grows according to current plans.

We then got about an hour long tour. We started in the manufacturing facility. It was impressive. We saw some very dedicated workers who have real ownership in their jobs. We got to see the new "state of art" testing center. Roger said he appreciates how the town has worked with him in approving the back building for this new testing center which will be showcased when customers visit the facility. A lot of work has been done and it is outfitted with some impressive equipment. In the next few weeks we will see the area in front of the testing center landscaped and a new gazebo added.

Freudenberg-NOK has a substantial investment in Ashland and this was a great step in building a working partnership with them. Roger said he would be happy to attend the meet and greet we will be scheduling.

Again, thank you Lee for making this visit possible!