

OKONITE'S ORANGEBURG, S.C. FACILITY RECOGNIZED

Region says Thank you with Industry of the Year Award

Tom Sanchez, The Okonite Co. wire facility manager, and Sherrill Newnam, plant manager of the Orangeburg company's compound facility, have gone beyond their management duties at one of the county's largest and growing organizations.

Sanchez serves as a director on the board of the Orangeburg County Economic Development Partnership. Newnam serves as director of the Orangeburg County Chamber of Commerce and the Lower Savannah Workforce Development Board, which makes decisions for the expenditure of work force investment dollars.

For their efforts toward economic development advancement in the county, Sanchez and Newnam were recognized by Gov. Mark Sanford on Monday, September 19 at the Governor's Mansion Complex.

Recipients from each county are recognized for efforts to create new job opportunities, encourage capital investment, increase the quality of life for South Carolinians and promote the state's business climate.

Both men were humbled and downplayed the recognition, but did acknowledge the year has been a successful one. "It will be a record year for our company," Sanchez said. "It is very nice to be considered but as far as Okonite is concerned, we don't like to be in the limelight. That is not what we are after." Newnam agreed. "We pride ourselves on what we do here," he said. "It is an excellent company and we are always striving to do more in every area to serve our customers. We are very pleased to be honored in this respect."

About three years ago the company announced a \$7 million investment expansion and 15 new jobs. The investment was in the purchase of manufacturing equipment and a building addition to improve its high-voltage testing capability.

The company's reach is beyond Orangeburg. Its products are being sent to Hurricane Katrina-ravaged regions as part of the recovery efforts.

"Making South Carolina more competitive is a team effort," Sanford said. "At the heart of our efforts are folks like Tom Sanchez and Sherrill Newnam in Orangeburg County who are working hard to bring new jobs and new capital investment to their corner of our state."



Governor Mark Sanford (left) and SC Secretary of Commerce Bob Faith (right) present Sherrill Newnam his award during the ceremony at the Governor's Mansion

WHAT'S NEW



The Okonite Company
September 2005



As part of the Industry Appreciation observance, The Okonite Company was honored with Industry of the Year for its growth and expansion.



Tom Sanchez, left, and Sherrill Newnam were recognized by Governor Mark Sanford at the Governor's Mansion on September 19

I can't thank Tom and Sherrill enough for everything they are doing to make our state more competitive on the economic development front."

The local Okonite facility is actually a two-plant complex consisting of a three-story, 70,000-square-foot compounding plant that produces a synthetic rubber compound (Okoguard®) to insulate copper conductors and a 200,000-square-foot facility to make power and control cables. Administrative offices and a distribution center are also housed in the cable plant.

Okonite is located on 76 acres along U.S. Highway 21. The facilities have been operational since 1993. Since Okonite's arrival to Orangeburg, the company has undergone about a 174,000-square-foot expansion, representing a 72 percent increase.

Okonite is America's oldest independent wire and cable manufacturer, with a history of more than 125 years of service to the electric industry. Since 1976, Okonite has operated under an Employee Stock Ownership Trust form of ownership.

Okonite also maintains the only direct sales network in the cable industry. The network is electronically linked to six service centers, providing access to a nationwide stock inventory. Six manufacturing plants, all located in the United States, provide customers with an array of wire and cable products.