



Investor Update
August 2006 Business Trends Report

September 22, 2006

AUGUST BUSINESS TRENDS VERSUS PRIOR YEAR	
CONSOLIDATED SALES +13% Consolidated sales increased +13% YOY, for the month of August. Sales growth reflects strong volume growth and higher pricing.	
NORTH AMERICA Sales +11% YOY, +12% ex-natural gas. Strong overall volumes and higher pricing drove sales growth for the month. Solid growth in on-site and merchant volumes across the region, both YOY and versus July. Strong YOY sales growth in packaged gases.	EUROPE Sales +17% YOY, +11% ex-currency. Higher sales driven by volume growth in merchant and packaged gases in Spain and Italy and higher overall pricing.
SOUTH AMERICA Sales +18% YOY, +10% ex-currency. Solid volume growth and higher overall pricing drove sales growth.	ASIA Sales +21% YOY, +19% ex-currency due to strong volume growth in on-site and merchant gases. Electronic sales +39% YOY.
PST Sales -1% YOY, +14% ex-aviation repair divestiture. Continued strong demand for OEM aviation coatings in the US and Europe.	

The information provided in this report reflects one month's business activity (except where noted otherwise) and does not necessarily reflect longer-term business trends or suggest financial results for the current quarter or for future reporting periods. Unless specified, trends are not adjusted for differing numbers of sales days. The monthly sales data is unaudited.

This document contains "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based on management's reasonable expectations and assumptions as of the date the statements are made but involve risks and uncertainties. These risks and uncertainties include, without limitation: the performance of stock markets generally; developments in worldwide and national economies and other international events and circumstances; changes in foreign currencies and in interest rates; the cost and availability of electric power, natural gas and other raw materials; the ability to achieve price increases to offset cost increases; catastrophic events; the ability to attract, hire, and retain qualified personnel; the impact of changes in financial accounting standards; the impact of tax and other legislation and government regulation in jurisdictions in which the company operates; the cost and outcomes of litigation and regulatory agency actions; continued timely development and market acceptance of new products and applications; the impact of competitive products and pricing; future financial and operating performance of major customers and industries served; and the effectiveness and speed of integrating new acquisitions into the business. These risks and uncertainties may cause actual future results or circumstances to differ materially from the projections or estimates contained in the forward-looking statements. The company assumes no obligation to update or provide revisions to any forward-looking statement in response to changing circumstances. The above listed risks and uncertainties are further described in Item 1A (Risk Factors) in the company's latest Annual Report on Form 10-K filed with the SEC which should be reviewed carefully. Please consider the company's forward-looking statements in light of those risks.