

Two Approaches to Safety

Older buildings often present unique safety problems and challenges.

At the Influential facility in High Point, the safety team identified two such problems during the regular audits of the plant. One was a case of the floor wearing out; the other was a case of the level of the floor sloping in a work area.

"We have old wooden floors in our long-folding area," says Safety Coordinator Bobbie Mullies. "Over the years the buggies have worn holes in the floor. That made it hard to roll the heavy buggies across the floor, and we found that we suffered a loss of product because it bounced out of the buggies."

"Our safety committee recommended that the floors be replaced, and last fall we got new floors in the area."

Mullies says that correcting the other problem would have been very expensive for Sara Lee Sock Company. "When we were told that the sloping floor couldn't be fixed, the safety team went back and looked at the problem again. What they came up with was a suggestion that the room be rearranged so that it wouldn't be necessary to walk across the worst part of the floor," she says.

The safety team at Influential meets once a month. The members bring in safety concerns from employees, and Mullies types them and submits them to the plant manager. At the end of each safety team meeting, the team members do a safety audit that covers the entire plant.

The team members are Randy Farlow, Patsy Priddy, Gayle Bowman, Edna McLaurin and Earlene Jacobs.

Lena Bruner, Safety and Training Manager in Mount Airy, says there are various ways to look at safety.

"Our goal on the Safety Committee is to help each employee see that safety is an individual responsibility," Bruner says.

The company can work to create a safer environment, Bruner adds, but, in the end, safety comes down to what each person does to keep a safe work area.

"Our slogan is 'Who's Responsible for Safety? You Are!' and our theme is 'Safety Saves.'"

She says that the team is working to create the feeling that everyone "is in this together." Each safety representative can talk directly to employees about safety concerns without going through a supervisor. This is in keeping with the idea that safety is an individual's responsibility.

Bruner says that Mount Airy's

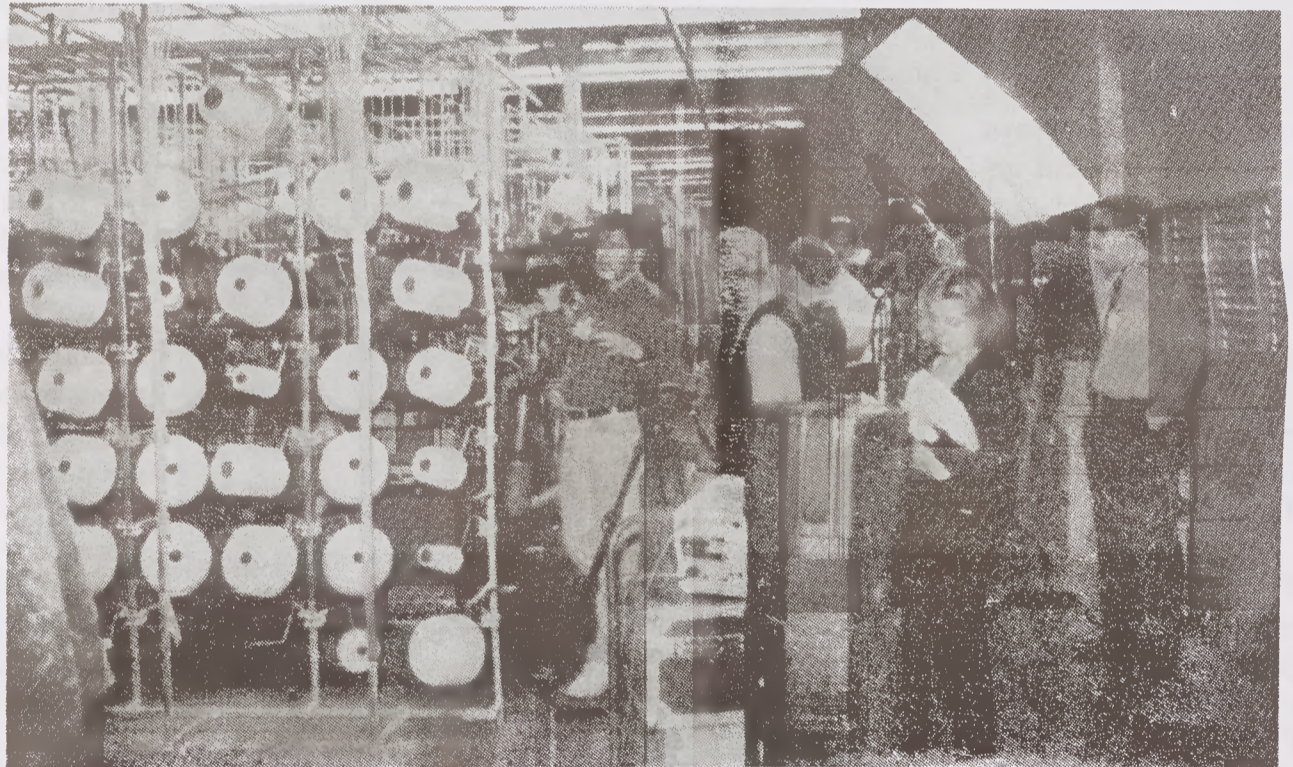
plant safety team audits safety conditions in each department. The team members look at things like aisles being blocked; liquid spills; electrical panels being blocked; items on the floor; protection equipment like glasses and ear plugs being worn; and the presence of aluminum cans not allowed in work areas.

The team is using a safety contest in May, June and July to promote safety. Each department started the contest with a set number of points and either adds to or subtracts from the total based on how well it meets specific safety standards. Monthly prizes are awarded, and a larger overall prize is presented at the end of the contest to the department that has accumulated the most points.

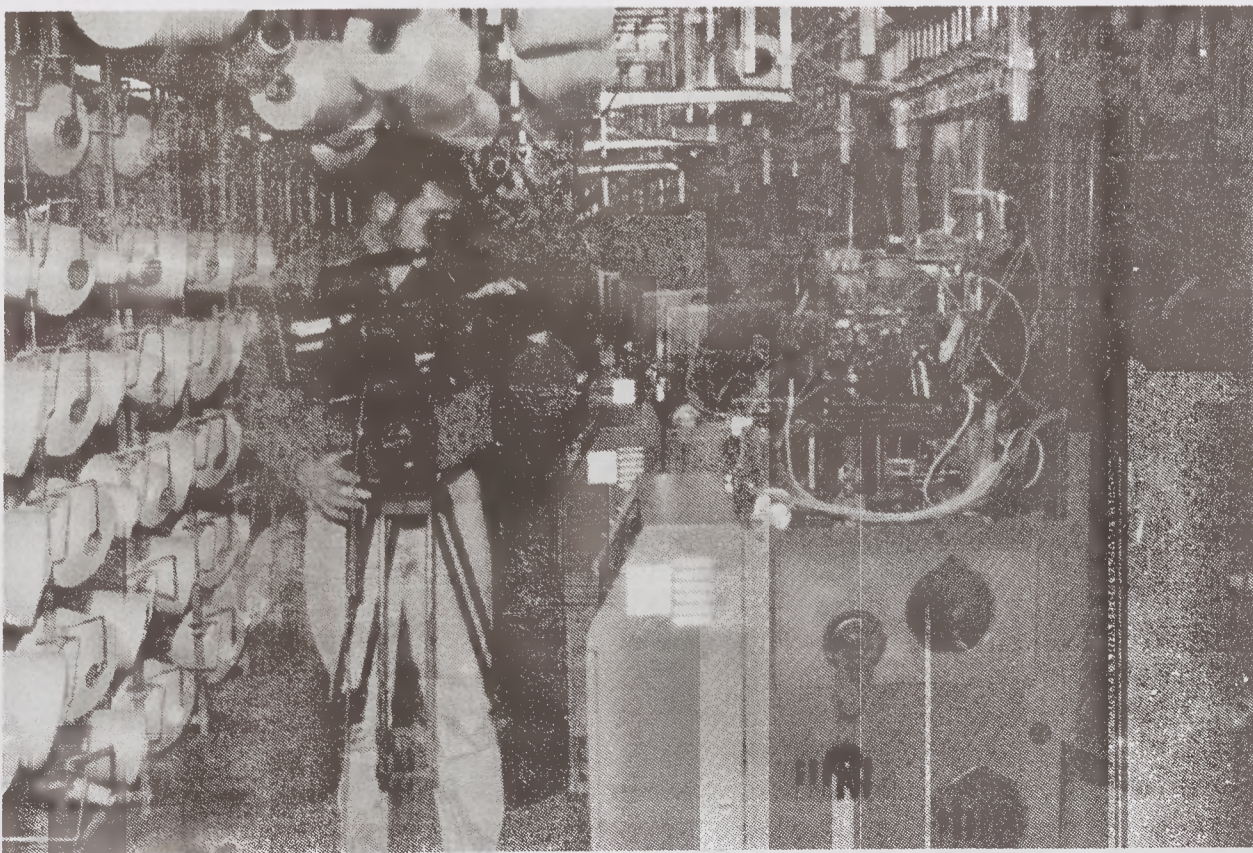
"All members of the safety team are enthusiastic, and the response to the contest from employees has been very good," Bruner says.

'Mister Rogers' Goes to Mt. Airy

Sara Lee Sock Company's Mount Airy employees saw more than the usual activity for two days last winter when *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, a children's television show, visited the plant. Mount Airy was featured because it is considered the most technologically advanced sock plant in the world.



It took two days of planning, taping, and editing to get the segment that lasted less than five minutes. *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* is a daily half-hour show on Public TV. It regularly features reports on different types of manufacturing.



The camera captured images of the manufacturing process close up. *Mister Rogers* added a description for all the children who were watching when the segment aired.