Vulcan outlines plans to reduce emissions

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GEISMAR — Like taking bites out of an apple, Vulcan Chemicals plans to reduce its air pollution emissions through a number of projects, estimated to cost between $5 million and $10 million, during the next few years.

In a July 24 letter to Dr. Mike McDaniel of the state Department of Environmental Quality's office of air quality, Vulcan officials outlined their plan to reduce their 1989 air emissions reportable under the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) Title III from 554,832 pounds per year in 1989 to 241,200 pounds per year in 1994.

The projected 1994 emission level, the company said, represents a 56 percent reduction from present levels, 61 percent reduction from 1987 levels and a 97 percent reduction from 1980 levels.

By the end of the decade, the company will phase out carbon tetrachloride production for chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) because of international environmental agreements phasing out CFCs, which are harming the ozone layer.

The company installed a vent condenser on a methyl chloroform storage tank that is expected to be 10 percent more effective in controlling emissions.

A similar vent condenser on a methanol storage tank installed during the methyl chloride expansion in the chloromethanes unit will decrease air emissions by four tons per year, even while the plant is increasing methyl chloride production by 21,900 tons per year, company officials said.

Other planned projects:

• A liquid nitrogen vapor recovery system, based on liquid nitrogen cooling rather than refrigeration, on the methylene chloride storage tank will increase vapor recovery from 84 percent efficiency to 98 percent efficiency, planned in 1991.

The system, if successful, also may be installed at the barge and ship loading facility by 1992.

• Improving the removal of standing liquid in the bottom of rail cars, which could reduce drying emissions by about 70 percent, planned in 1991.

• Installation of a vent control incinerator at the tank farm in addition to the primary vent vapor recovery system, planned in 1993.

Like a catalytic converter on an automobile, the vapor recovery systems reinject the material back into the process. The incinerator, however, would require a permit.