



# TO SPREAD THE NEWS

FOURTH EDITION 2021



*From left, Second Shift Reddi-wip Team Leader Kim Jackson, Engineering Project Manager Adam Bauer and Reddi-wip Process Engineer Alvin Baker*

## Keto process refined, adjustments paying dividends

**T**he case for Keto is only a bit more narrow than others, but it's the most narrow case the plant has run, which has reduced the margin for error on the back end to unprecedented degrees. The result has been a challenging rollout for the product that's required extensive case packer modifications and a lot of learning.

Some of what was learned was done the hard way, including crashes and significant downtime, but employees have come together to tame the process of running Keto, which now occurs every other week.

"We've made small changes each time," Engineering Project Manager

Adam Bauer said.

A number of enhancements and issue resolutions have made getting Keto to customers a smoother proposition. Importantly, centerlines (CL) have been developed that are trustworthy, which makes changing to

and from Keto production a more stable process. A comprehensive, photo-illustrated, step-by-step CL playbook has taken the guesswork out of changeovers for employees.

An issue with turn cases, cases

*Continued on page 2*





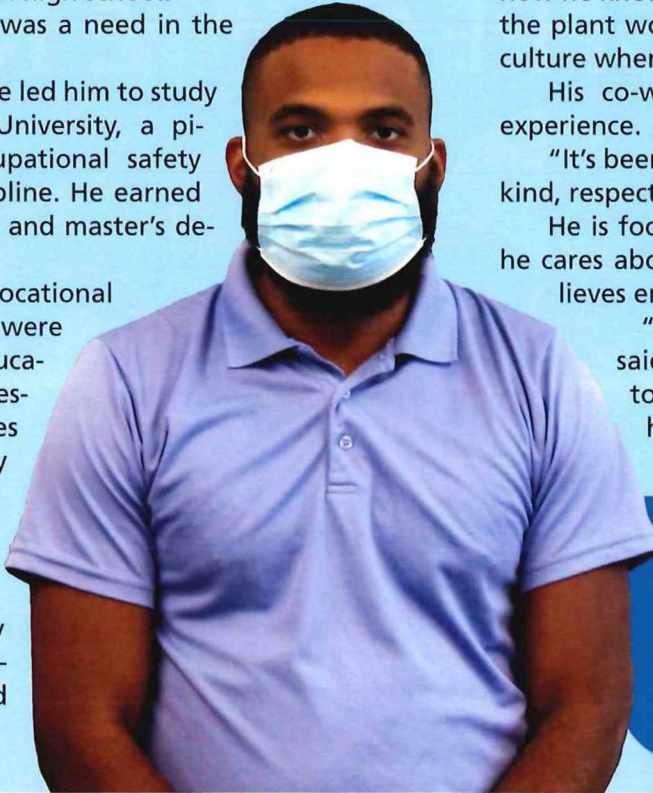
## Perry committed to safety

New Environmental, Health & Safety (EHS) Manager Braylon Perry developed an interest in workplace safety while in high school.

"I knew there was a need in the industry," he said.

That knowledge led him to study at Indiana State University, a pioneer in the occupational safety management discipline. He earned both his bachelor's and master's degree there.

While his vocational decisions initially were practical, his educational and professional experiences have helped Perry further develop a passion for safety. He began his career in the automotive industry but his recent experience is in food manufacturing.



"I appreciate Conagra's commitment to safety and its strategic environmental goals," Perry said, noting how he knew during the interview process that being at the plant would be a good fit for him. "Conagra has a culture where we strive to achieve zero injuries."

His co-workers have helped support his positive experience.

"It's been amazing," Perry said. "People are friendly, kind, respectful, supportive and eager to help."

He is focused on engaging employees and showing he cares about the issues affecting their safety. He believes employee input is vital.

"I like to be involved and on the floor," Perry said. "It's good to be slow to speak and ready to listen. It's important to hear what people have to say and come to a strategic solution to problems that make sense."

**"I appreciate Conagra's commitment to safety and its strategic environmental goals."**

- EHS Manager Braylon Perry

## Bauer takes new role

Adam Bauer's new role as engineering project manager will allow him to leverage the project management experience he gained as a Reddi-wip cell lead. He will use Early Management and its tools to develop the scope of projects and ensure success before implementation, something for which he's passionate. Planning and testing will be central to his work.

"I very much like thinking ahead about what can go wrong and addressing it," Bauer said.

He believes much can be learned from the Keto project, especially the need for a robust commissioning, qualification and validation process.

Given his experience as a Table Spreads process lead, Bauer has experience with both of the plant's businesses. He looks forward to leveraging that to achieve success in his new role and the opportunity to focus on projects at a high level, something he wasn't able to do given the demands of supporting daily operations.

## Keto process refined, adjustments paying dividends

*Continued from page 1*

that are out of position on the conveyor, has been addressed. Because Keto cases are significantly lighter, they tend to bounce around on the conveyor. It's resulted in many crashes with re-set times of at least five minutes in part due to the need to lock out the case packer on each occasion. By dialing in the case packer,

there have been fewer turn cases. An enhanced recovery process also has reduced downtime.

The shipper pick area has been redesigned. Shippers weren't being pulled into load position correctly due to a suction issue. In addition to repositioning existing suction, more suction was added.



Engineering Project Manager Adam Bauer glues a case of Keto.





From left, Machine Operator LaVonda Blakes, Reddi-Wip Team Lead Katrina Cole, Mix Room Operator Melissa Lane, Machine Operator Terri Williams, Continuous Improvement Specialist Cherelle Cousin and Machine Operator Victoria Smith

# F-tag competition a hit

How many F-Tags did you submit?

**"I submitted 19 F-tags for 54 points. As long as we see results from the process, it's encouraging, and we've already seen a few results."**

— Reddi-wip Mix Room Operator Melissa Lane, second-place winner

The Defect Finding Workstream Team is focused on building skills. Tasked with enhancing defect-finding capabilities within the plant, they are engaging employees with a contest that's first round has been complete.

By offering hourly employees from Reddi-wip and Table Spreads a first prize of a paid day off or \$125 in Conagra merchandise, a second-place prize of \$75 in Conagra merchandise and third-place prize of \$50 in Conagra merchandise, the team has achieved its goal of boosting F-tag submissions.

The contest is scheduled to run one week per period for three periods, concluding around Thanksgiving. The first week's winner was

Sanitation Crew Lead Kurstin Eckert who submitted more than 35 F-tags for well over 100 points. Safety items are worth the most points followed by quality.

Continuous Improvement Manager Jermell Williams said the immediate goal is for employees to find 120 defects per period, which would be about a tenfold increase. The first round of the contest beat the goal with 167 F-tag submissions.

While he characterized the results of the contest's first week as a "big success," he added that changing culture and getting employees accustomed to the practice of actively looking for issues and submitting F-tags to get them resolved is the overarching goal. He said one key to supporting the F-tag process is instilling trust in employees that the issue they report will be addressed if they submit an F-tag.

"The better the machine runs, the less safety exposure, and the better morale is," Williams said. "The contest is a great opportunity."

Continuous Improvement Specialist Cherelle Cousin, a team member, said part of the opportunity is coaching employees about how to submit F-tags

**What are your thoughts on the contest and Defect Finding Workstream Team?**

**"It's been a very positive thing. My big issues are safety and reducing stops."**

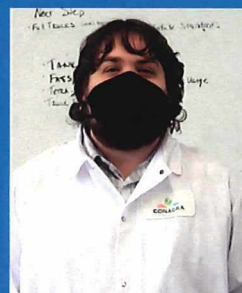
— Machine Operator LaVonda Blakes

**"If our co-workers physically see things turn around, it will boost the team's morale."**

— Machine Operator Terri Williams

**"I like the teamwork. It's encouraging to see our co-workers engaged and adopting a process that makes our lines run better. People have been more involved. The results benefit everyone. We have Maintenance, cell leads, operators all working together, so it's been a team-building experience."**

— Machine Operator Victoria Smith



Sanitation Crew Lead Kurstin Eckert

How many F-Tags did you submit?

**"I submitted more than 35 F-tags for 124 points. My strategy was to find an issue in one area and look for it elsewhere. I've decided to take the day off as a prize and use that for a date day with my wife, Kelley. Because I work a schedule that we don't get to do things on Saturdays."**

**Why is it important?**

**"It makes everyone safer, including our consumers. When we fix issues, it makes lines run better and we produce more product. That's more stable for the plant."**

— Sanitation Crew Lead Kurstin Eckert, first-place winner

and getting them comfortable with the process.

Other members include Machine Operators LaVonda Blakes and Victoria Smith, Reddi-wip Team Lead Katrina Cole and Machine Operator Terri Williams. The group worked together to organize the contest rules, determine prizes and raise awareness of the event.



# Broken emulsion breakthroughs

The battle to keep oil and water from separating continues.

Broken emulsions have been a top loss on Line 5 and numerous experiments applied through Focused Improvement methods, such as Unified Problem Solving, have brought actionable data.

A team of employees worked to study the issue throughout two days in September, including Cell 3 Process Engineer Matt Bailey, Continuous Improvement Specialist Taylor Duffy, Project Leader Rocio Hamlin, Benhil Operator Mike Kellermeier, Operations Manager Mike Roth and Cell 5 Cell Lead Andrew Saling.

"We went after the broad focus," Bailey said.

That meant focusing on the stability of emulsions inside the emulsion tank, before processing. If emulsions are stable as they enter processing, it's easier to determine what is breaking them despite there being multiple steps, any of which could be responsible.

## Using the tools

In addition to 6W2H, a problem-solving method, the team used the fishbone diagram, another UPS tool, which helps determine cause and effect. They then used a different UPS tool, cause and effect analysis. After the fishbone, each employee chose an area for which to focus.

One of the first considerations was oil percentage. The established baseline has been 53% oil in the mix. Unprocessed or agitated, the emulsion naturally will separate. Tests showed that emulsions were considerably more durable — stayed together longer — at 56% oil. Separations began at just under three minutes with lower percentages and made it to eight minutes at higher percentages.

Another consideration was how far to fill tanks. Typically, emulsion tanks are filled to 85% capacity to allow for manual adjustments to the mix. The study found that the less tanks were filled, the weaker the

emulsion. Because fill level isn't standardized across lines, this was an important finding.

One of the big takeaway of the study was that if everything is done properly at startup, manual adjustments aren't needed as much, meaning tanks can be filled safely closer to capacity.

## Piping, plates and batching

Piping was rotated to alter directional flow of oil into emulsion tanks. The idea was to get more agitation of the mix, but the changes were insignificant.

Of interest to the team was Line 7's emulsion tank, which uses a somewhat unique fanning plate to agitate mix as it enters the emulsion tank. That tank rarely suffers broken emulsions.

The team also experimented with adding more oil or whey to the mix.

No final determinations have been made with regard to the fanning plate or ingredient level changes.

## Shout out to Sanitation Manager Grant Pajak

Bailey credits Pajak with taking members of the team to "table spreads school."

"Learning about the chemistry helped a lot," Bailey said.

## What is 6W2H?

It's used to solve problems. There are six W's: What needs to be done? Why does it need to be done? Who needs to do it? When does it need to be done? Where will it be done? Which methods will be used? And two H's: How will it be done? How much will it cost? Addressing these questions helps create a foundation from which solutions can be found.

**What do you think of the work the team did?**

**"I think anything they can do is great. Broken emulsions can affect morale. When you're fighting with the issue, it can occur two or three times a day. I fully support what they're doing. My job depends on our success. If we're having issues, we're not putting product out."**

**Why do you take an ownership attitude?**

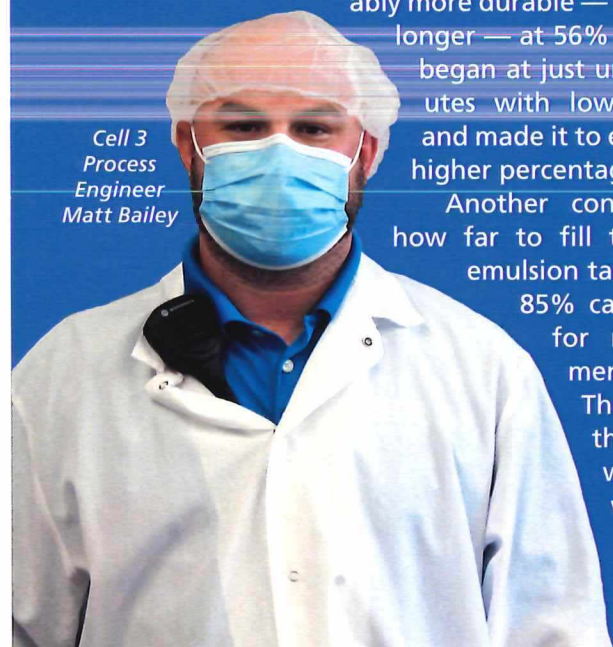
**"I like the line and know its quirks. If I take ownership, I don't have to waste Maintenance's time and it makes it easier on me."**

**— Benhil Operator  
Mike Kellermeier**



UPS tools are applied to Line 5.

Cell 3  
Process  
Engineer  
Matt Bailey





## People, products, progress inspire Gower to work at plant

Process Engineer Allyson Gower always has loved Conagra products.

The Michigan State University alum and biosystems engineering major perked up when the company visited her school's career fair.

When the opportunity to join the plant arrived, she was excited.

"I love working on products that people love," Gower said. "I can bring a bottle of Reddi-wip to a friend, and it brings them joy."

Having a more challenging role that focused on engineering also appealed to her.

"I enjoy being out on the plant floor and talking to operators and mechanics," she said. "The people have been amazing, and I've enjoyed the culture, which is youthful and diverse."

Making enhancements that

benefit her co-workers drives Gower. Presently, she's training with managers and shadowing Cell 5 Cell Lead Andrew Saling. She will report previous day's data at Daily Direction Setting meetings. Gower also is on continuous improvement for Cell 2's Reddi-wip mix room by addressing a clean in place (CIP) issue.

Away from work, she enjoys time with her golden doodle, Paisley.

"She's very fluffy and funny," Gower said.

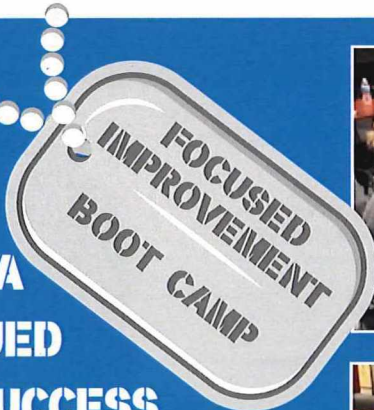
She also loves running. While many have gained weight during the pandemic and become more sedentary, Gower took a different tack.

"I used the time to train for my first half-marathon," she said. "It's been a personal goal of mine. I wanted to work toward something."



Process Engineer Allyson Gower

## A CONTINUED SUCCESS

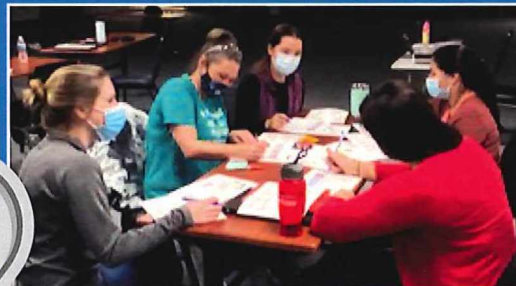


The plant hosted Focused Improvement (FI) Boot Camp Oct. 20-22.

In addition to plant and bakery employees, including FI Pillar team leads and new process engineers, visitors from Conagra's Milton, Pennsylvania; Jackson, Tennessee; and Darien, Wisconsin, plants attended.

CPS Manager Sarah Akin, Continuous Improvement Specialist Taylor Duffy and Process Engineer Andrew Lindner led training. They were joined by the bakery's CPS Manager Adam Carpenter and Focused Improvement Pillar Lead Samuel Jordan.

The focus was on teaching



the tools of FI, including Process Mapping, Universal Problem Solving, Work Process Improvement, Work Point Analysis, Statistical Process Control and Failure, Modes, Effects and Criticality Analysis.

Trainees were able to practice what they learned on the production floor.

Akin believes the past boot camps' success may have led to

visitors participating.

"There was a lot of interest," she said.

Akin said the training is necessary as FI is evolving constantly.

"We need to teach new team members the foundational FI skills to continue driving elimination and continuous improvement here at Indy and other sites," she said.



## Important:

### You must submit decisions this open enrollment period

Open enrollment is Nov. 1-12, and all employees must respond.

Human Resources Generalist Leidy Trujillo said this year is an "active year," which is distinct from "passive

years" in the past where employees haven't had to make decisions with regard to their health benefits.

She asks all employees to verify that they can access Workday and that all their contact information is correct to ensure that material is mailed to the right location.

Employees who have forgotten their password or otherwise cannot access Workday should call Conagra Human Resources and Employee Services at 866-275-4722 and select option 9 to request a reset. They can do so Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central.

Human Resources will have dedicated office hours to assist with open enrollment. Five kiosks will be available for employee use. Times for office hours will be posted soon.

#### Summary:

- This year's open enrollment is "active" and all employees have important choices to make.
- All employees should ensure they have access to Workday and call 866-275-4722 during business hours if they do not.
- To facilitate the open enrollment process, Human Resources will have five kiosks available for use during special office hours.



From left, Human Resources Generalist Leidy Trujillo and Human Resources Manager Carla Brouwer have kiosks ready.

#### Congratulations to employees reaching milestones from November through January.

#### Service ANNIVERSARIES

##### 40+ years

Dale Heitzman  
Usmanghani Zakaria

##### 20-30 years

Jesus Espinoza  
Mark Fields  
Christine Fredette  
Mike Kellermeier  
Judy Lloyd-Clark  
Michael Poole

Linda Robinson  
Max Simison  
David Williams

##### 10 years

Teddy Romano  
Robert Wilson

##### 5 years

Mark Boles  
Tim Leslie  
Torrey Stott

##### 1 year

Bryan Doss  
Tony Geib  
Tamara Hollis  
Radu Maxim  
Patrick Meadors  
David Perry  
Cole Persinger  
Evodio Velasquez Resendiz

#### Recent/ Upcoming RETIREMENTS

Don Paul  
Larry Pernell  
Tamara Smith  
Mark Waltz

#### Employee RECOGNITION

##### Ownership- Development and Adherence to Standards

Richard Aung  
Teri Bradberry  
Cung Bik Lian  
Fred Pittman  
Michael Poole  
Ladonna Templeton

##### Broad-mindedness

Clyde McFadden

##### Agility

Keenan Allen  
Daniel Cuttino  
Angela Murray  
Donte Wills

##### EHS/Food Safety Culture

Traice Allen

Mark Clark  
Amanda Cousin  
Dorothy Hill  
Gerald Sargent

##### Leadership

Paul Artis  
Nick Collier  
Ed Huggler  
John Peden

##### Problem-solving to the Floor

Zach Austin  
Tim Leslie  
Ruben Morton  
Francine Powell

##### Taking initiative

Buffy Crutchfield

Conagra Brands Indianapolis appears under direction of Ken Dobin, plant manager. For news coverage, contact Tom at the newsletter office by phone 402-475-6397, fax 402-475-6398, mail information to 122 S. 29th St., Lincoln, NE 68510-1403, or email tom.johns@newslink.com. This material is intended to be an overview of the news of the plant. If there are any discrepancies between this newsletter and any collective bargaining process, insurance contracts or other official documents, those documents will govern. Conagra Brands continues to maintain and reserves the right, at any time, to alter, suspend, discontinue or terminate all plans and programs described in this newsletter. This newsletter is not an employment contract or any type of employment guarantee. Thanks to everyone at the Indianapolis plant for taking time to contribute to this newsletter, including but not limited to, Haley Adams, Sarah Akin, Matthew Meyer, Terri Snodgrass and Leidy Trujillo.



## Dale Heitzman: 47 years of service

**In November, you'll have reached 47 years at the plant — how did it start?**

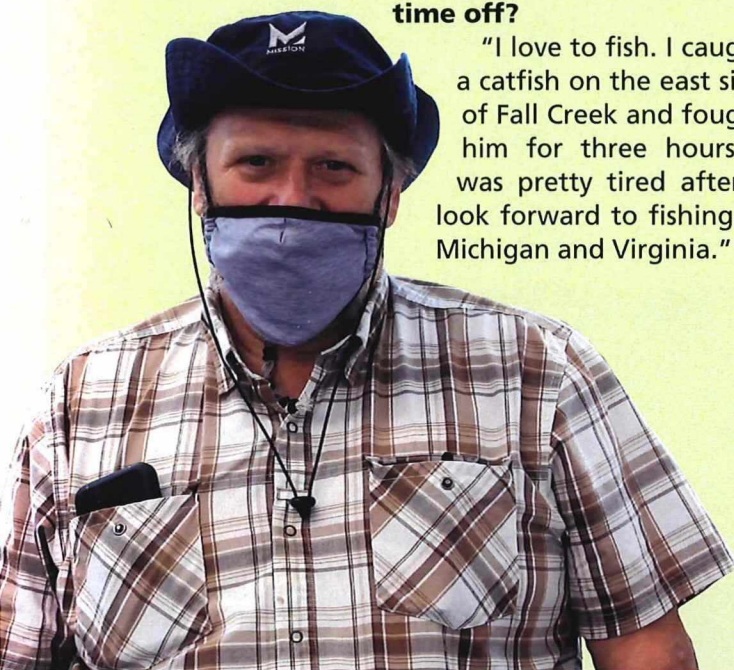
"I was fresh out of high school. Since then, I've had people come in after I started and retire before me. It has quite an impact on your quality of life. You don't go home complaining to your spouse."

**What are some things about forklift operating you've taught others?**

"How to safely maneuver and operate it. It's important to make eye contact before passing someone. We all want to go home the same way we came to work. My advice is to follow the rules and make a positive effort."

**What do you like to do in your time off?**

"I love to fish. I caught a catfish on the east side of Fall Creek and fought him for three hours. I was pretty tired after. I look forward to fishing in Michigan and Virginia."



## Don Bowsher: 48 years of service

When Distribution Center Operator Don Bowsher started at the plant, he'd always earned his living outdoors. Reasoning that people always have to eat, the financial security the plant was a draw for him.

It's been nearly five decades since he first walked into the plant, and he's never suffered a recordable injury. His advice to other hoping to match his achievement is simple.

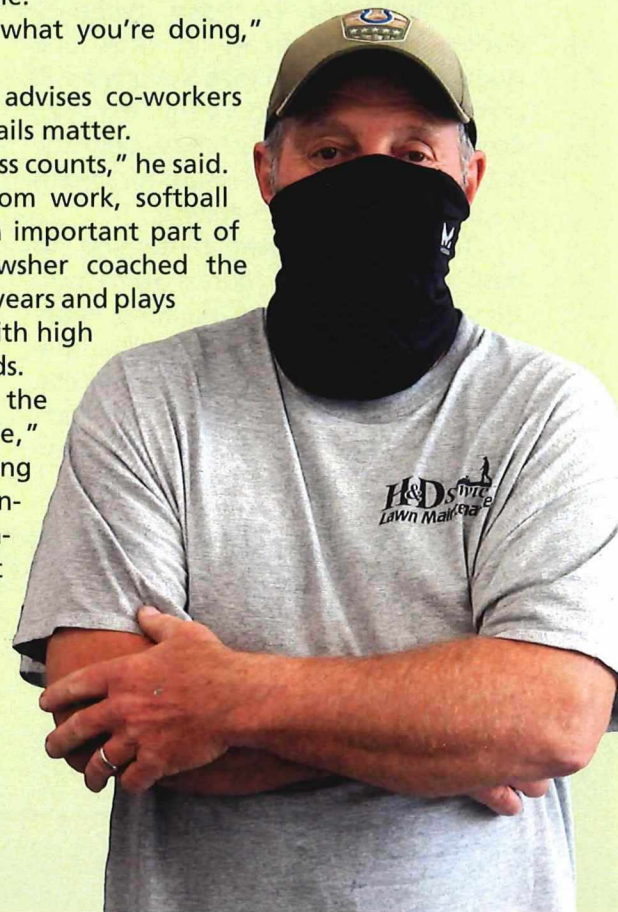
"Watch what you're doing," he said.

He also advises co-workers that the details matter.

"Neatness counts," he said.

Away from work, softball has been an important part of his life. Bowsher coached the sport for 15 years and plays the game with high school friends.

"I like the camaraderie," he said, noting that he's enjoyed camaraderie at the plant as well.



## Shooting event on target

Since 2003, Shoot For A Cure has raised more than \$6 million for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and various other charitable causes. In doing so, its participants have thrown more than 2.8 million clay targets while introducing more than 16,000 people to their sport.

United Food and Commercial Workers 700 sponsored an Aug. 17 Shoot For A Cure event, and Conagra Indianapolis joined as a partner.

"The event went well," said Team Lead Jerrod Harrison. "It was a good, solid group of shooters and a great time was had by all team members."

While the plant team did not place, some won



*The event is enjoyed by all.*

individual prizes. In addition to Harrison, participants included Distribution Center Operator Don Bowsher, Votator Operator Bruce Brown, Benhil Operator Ken Heatherly and contractor Jeff Napier.



## Nearing Phase 1 completion, plant hosts those starting CPS journey

The plant welcomed visitors eager to learn Conagra Performance System during the week of Oct. 25.

Team members from Council Bluffs, Iowa, Marshall, Missouri, and St. Elmo, Illinois, attended.

The plant is relatively advanced in its CPS journey, and its employees have much to teach.

As indicated by solid feedback during pre-assessments in May and August, it's expected that the plant will complete Phase 1 of CPS early next year. Corporate is set to touch base with the plant in November to ensure it remains on track for the achievement.

The plan includes continuing to push the pillars to address some outstanding items not yet meeting Phase 1 standards, including EHS metrics, specifically OSHA Recordable Incident Rate. Slips, trips and falls are a point of emphasis, and the hope is to drive them down through employee engagement.

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## Safety enhancement clears path

Line 30's emulsion tank was unique, and not necessarily in a good way.

The staircase used to perform observations was difficult to navigate due to instruments on the side of the tank.

"It was really condensed," said Line Tech II Gary Stein, who uses the stairs to perform observations.

The tank was turned 90 degrees counterclockwise to allow for enhanced ascension and descension.

"It's much more open," he said. "The staircase now is free and clear of everything. It's easier and safer."

That includes a clearer path of travel to get to the tank. Employees no longer have to walk through pallets of packing material to access the tank, and a pipe leading to it was rerouted lower to mitigate a potential tripping hazard.

The tank itself also was modified. The splash plates were angled to provide more agitation.

"The staircase now is free and clear of everything. It's easier and safer."

- Line Tech II Gary Stein