

### The Cary Company

By Bill Allmond, NACD, Director, Regulatory and Public Affairs

A visit to The Cary Company is a lesson on what each distribution facility should consider when addressing safety in the workplace. I had the distinct pleasure of dropping by The Cary Company's Addison, IL, headquarters in July to take a quick tour of its expansive yet well-organized warehouse and top-shelf office space.

The Cary Company, founded in 1895 by George B. Cary, began operations in Chicago as an exporter and continued successfully through two decades when World War I necessitated switching to a domestic type of business. Thereupon, the enterprise became manufacturers' agents to distribute raw materials to the paint industry. The five decades that followed manifested steady progress in a healthy growth of The Cary Company and were marked at intervals by acquisition of additional, carefully chosen product lines. In 1970, William G. "Bill" Cary, a great grandson, joined the company and is now President. Bill represents the fourth generation of Carys who have operated the company.

Today, The Cary Company represents a list of distinguished suppliers that serve such industries as the paint and coatings, adhesives, asphalt, automotive, electronics, flooring, food, graphic arts, printing inks, paper, plastics, pharmaceuticals, rubber, detergents, and wallpaper to name only a few. Active in NACD, The Cary Company is often called upon for expertise within the factory-packed aspect of our industry.

As I entered The Cary Company's reception area, I admired the company's collection of service and industry awards and honors displayed in a glass showcase. It was apparent that the company has a solid devotion to the local community as well as to the industry.

During the facility tour, Bill and Dave Meehan, Cary's logistics and regulatory manager, proudly showcased for me their state-of-the-art 140,000-square foot warehouse and office, which they have occupied since 1997. Various product lines were represented and stored in neatly-built racks within the warehouse. Several loading bays were busy preparing deliveries to customers, who extend within a 100-mile radius of the

facility, using Cary's own fleet of trucks. The warehouse floor appeared clean enough to eat from. I also got an up-close view of the facility's foam suppression system and a description of how company personnel respond in the event the system is activated in an emergency, including heat sensors and sprinklers built into the racks. From the front door to the back door, I could clearly see how seriously Cary considers safety within its operation.

After all, The Cary Company has been recognized by both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and safety industry media as a model for other industrial facilities to follow. In 2001, EPA published a 3-page bulletin using The Cary Company as an example of how best to enhance community safety through interaction with first responders. Entitled "Work with Your Local Fire Department to

Enhance Community Safety: The Cary Company," the publication highlighted Cary's proactive approach to safety during the planning and construction of its Addison warehouse. Billed as a win-win for both the facility and the fire department, Cary's experience demonstrated its success with complying with fire codes while familiarizing the fire department with the facility, which helped the department prepare in the event of a response situation. The publication is an excellent example of how NACD members and non-members alike should approach fire safety within their local communities.

In 2002, The Cary Company was again recognized for its commitment to safety in the *Occupational Hazards* magazine. The article highlighted the company's ability to implement a successful hazardous communications plan to regularly train employees on potential workplace hazards and how to respond in the event of a chemical spill. Once again, the article is a great example for others on communicating with employees about workplace hazards.

To avoid delaying them from their annual staff softball game at a nearby park, I departed The Cary Company that afternoon having seen first-hand, a model chemical distributor. ☞



Left to right: The Cary Company's Ken Tyrrell, Vice President; Bill Cary, President; and Dave Meehan, Logistical/Regulatory Coordinator