



Wendell Hull & Associates, Inc.

Oxygen Safety • *Fire Sciences* • *Forensic Engineering*

Press Release 11/24/08

Within the Las Cruces community, Wendell Hull & Associates, Inc. (WHA) is a company with a worldwide influence in forensic engineering, fire sciences and oxygen safety.

In 1984, Dr. Wendell Hull took a leave of absence as a Professor in Mechanical Engineering at New Mexico State University (NMSU) to work on forensic cases. At the time, the need for forensic investigations applying principles of engineering and physics was great, and Hull saw an opportunity for a business, and a passion. By 1987, he was working on forensic cases full-time with the start of WHA. Over the years, Hull's business has seen substantial growth, first within the community, then nationwide and now worldwide.

In 1997, Hull bought a small chile processing warehouse and two acres on Doña Ana Road and used the acreage and the existing building for forensic testing, as he and his staff worked from a small office in the downtown area. What was once a 3,750 sq. ft. testing facility now provides 20,600 sq. ft. of space for Hull's thriving business, including offices, classroom space used for training and a forensic testing lab used to conduct certified fire and explosion investigations, testing and forensic engineering.

The high-tech facility is well designed – everything developed and used by the engineers within WHA. Standardized testing is important when it comes to product safety, and at the WHA testing facility, standardized tests are conducted by the same group of engineers that participated in developing the national and international standards.

“We not only build objects that are good for us and our facility, but that are good for other companies and test facilities,” Hull said. “WHA advances the science of oxygen safety, forensic engineering and fire sciences throughout the world.”

WHA engineers have extensive formal training, including advance degrees in engineering and related fields and various certifications. The WHA team is also known worldwide as experts in oxygen and fire-safety technologies.

Because oxygen is used in so many areas, oxygen safety has become a critical part of what WHA does. Practically all materials can react and burn in an oxygen-enriched atmosphere, with such violence that there is a risk of severe personal injury and total system loss. By studying oxygen risks and safety, WHA is able to understand what causes oxygen-related accidents and provides industry guidance for the way materials are utilized in the presence of an oxygen-enriched environment.

The achievements in oxygen safety and forensic engineering allowed WHA to work internationally. This month, engineers Barry Newton and Dr. Gwenael Chiffolleau won the ASTM International American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) International Advantage First Place Award for their article, "Preventing Oxygen Equipment Fires." The article showcased WHA's efforts to prevent devastating medical equipment oxygen fires, and the standards created for medical equipment supply companies. WHA focuses on ensuring oxygen safety by material selection, as well as good design practice and proper use of equipment.

WHA continually participates in the development of ASTM International standard methods for risk assessment and have extensive experience in oxygen system design for both private industry and the government.

Newton continues to educate on oxygen safety as an officer for ASTM G04 committee on Flammability and Sensitivity of Materials in Oxygen-Enriched Atmospheres and by teaching the Oxygen Safety Training Course Series with Chiffolleau and technical consultant Elliot Forsyth. To date, attendees have included NASA Kennedy Space Center, U.S. Navy Experimental Diving Unit, U.S. Navy Sea Systems Command, Royal Australian Air Force and Navy, Air Liquide and European Industrial Gas Association, among others.

Internationally, WHA has maintained a partnership with Apragaz, a European Notified Body in Belgium which tests equipment based on strict directives from the European Union (EU) and is a regulatory body that allows only equipment which has passed the directives to be safely sold in Europe. Apragaz partnered with WHA so products from U.S. companies could be tested within the U.S., then sold in Europe once receiving a recommendation from WHA that they are compliant with the EU directives.

Along with world-wide attention, WHA is a community leader in economic development, providing jobs to three full-time consultants and 20 employees (half of which are NMSU graduates) and bringing in engineers nationwide and internationally for educational classes, testing and consulting. WHA also works statewide with fire marshals, fire fighters and building officials on standards, testing and forensic investigations.

"We contribute to the community, the nation and the world," Hull said.

Wendell Hull & Associates Inc. will be celebrating the recent expansion of their offices and test facility with an open house on December 5, 2008, between 3 and 7 p.m. at 5605 Doña Ana Road. There will be guided tours, live testing demonstrations and catering provided by Dickerson's Catering. Media and public are welcome.

** For more information, to request packet/photos or to schedule an interview with Wendell Hull & Associates, please contact Charlotte Tallman at 575.635.6833 or charlotte.tallman@gmail.com*