



MICHELIN

The Right Community Changes Everything

by Katherine O. Pettit

"Michelin could have chosen anywhere in the world to expand their tire building capacity," says Peter Sutton, Lexington Site Manager and passenger tire plant Manager. "That they picked Lexington for over \$400 million of expansions at their earthmover and passenger plants speaks volumes about the quality of production and can-do attitude of these facilities."

Sutton, a French-Canadian, has lived and worked in a number of areas, including Nova Scotia, France and more recently, Greenville. His career has taken him to factories in Poland, Spain, Scotland and beyond. His range of experience is vast, and his knowledge of manufacturing is impressive. He's been site manager of the Lexington fa-

ility since October 2010, and what he's seen has convinced him that this facility, the people who work there, and the surrounding area offer an extraordinary collaboration for success.

"What struck me initially, and what continues to do so today is the amount of pride people display in making the best tire in the marketplace," he explains. "Machines make tires—but our people make the best tires."

"Our company philosophy is to remain strong in our mature markets as well as build facilities in our emerging markets," Sutton says. "Demand for our tires has increased dramatically and we are meeting that demand." In a world where "the right tire changes everything," it is the people

who assure that excellence is the standard.

The workforce mostly comes from a 50-mile radius around the plant and includes most of Lexington County. Many are local, however, it's not difficult to attract folks from far away to relocate to the area. "I have traveled quite a bit in relation to my work, and there may be one factory in Italy which can offer the same caliber of amenities one finds here," Sutton reflects. "The entire package is second to none. The education system is excellent, and arts and culture flourish. People love the outdoor recreation that's available year round. Everyone admires Lake Murray for its fishing and boating."

Since 1981, when Michelin arrived on the Lexington scene, a strong partnership has

steadily developed. And with the newest expansions, it's clear that this corporate leader has set down long-term roots and big-time commitments to Lexington. Part of that commitment includes community programs which are supported, company-wide.

Supporting Schools

The Michelin Challenge Education program provides support to public Title One elementary schools in the form of tutors, mentors, lunch buddies and financial contributions. The goal? To offer the human capital to positively impact the lives of disadvantaged children. The emphasis is on reading, science and math, and Michelin's chosen school in Lexington is Red Bank Elementary. Red Bank's



ington's Michelin plants have raised more than \$250,000 (projected by year-end 2012) for Columbia March for Babies. As one of the top fundraisers in the Midlands, Michelin clearly believes in the power of the March of Dimes to transform the lives of tiny infants and their families.

Partnerships Grow Communities

And there's more. Michelin is a strong contributor to the Midlands United Way. Through funding, as well as its substantial number of volunteers, the plants raised more than \$150K during the past year in support of the United Way of the Midlands—a record level of contributions.

"Respect for the communities in which we operate is a fundamental value at Michelin," says Sutton. "In order

teacher of the year (and Lexington School District 1 teacher of the year) John Paul Sellars credits the Michelin team as being a major factor in building a championship team of students, and impacting "the amazing learning environment of success!"

His fifth grade class includes 40 students. They've met with Michelin representatives to discuss jobs, safety, how to support one another, and what builds success. Undoubtedly, one or more of those students will eventually find their way into a Michelin career, as almost 1500 employees have done. Wherever they go, however, they will remember what they learned through this strong community supporter. It's an impressive collaboration, but it's not the only education initiative

from the company. Michelin has made substantial financial contributions to Lexington School District One Educational Foundation. Michelin North America also offers a scholarship program to students attending Midlands Technical College. The scholarship covers the cost of tuition, fees and books. Scholarship recipients also gain on-the-job experience through part-time employment opportunities with Michelin.

March of Dimes

Environmental protection officer Eric LeGrand says you'd never recognize his daughter, Hayden, from her days as a premature infant receiving treatment in a special care nursery. "Today, she's as big, as active, and just as smart as any child her age—maybe smarter," he grins. Sponsored by the Lex-

ington Michelin family, Eric and Christina LeGrand, with three-year-old Hayden, helped kick off the six-mile walk/run for the March of Dimes this past April. By serving as the ambassador family, the Le-

AT A GLANCE: MICHELIN'S LOCAL IMPACT

- 1981:** Passenger/Light Truck Plant (1.2M sq. ft.) opened in Lexington
- 1998:** Earthmover Plant opened (825,000 sq. ft.)
- 1,960:** Total number of employees in Lexington
- 8,370:** Total number of employees in South Carolina
- \$5B:** Amount invested in South Carolina since 1973

Grands helped raise money for the March of Dimes. Both employees at Michelin, the company was delighted to recognize their efforts to raise awareness and funding. Indeed, Christina was active in the program long before Hayden was born, and during the past 10 years, Lex-

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