

KNOWING *Our Members*

UNDERSTANDING *Our Industry*

Chem One, Ltd.

By Bill Allmond, Director of Regulatory & Public Affairs

During a recent trip to Houston, I dropped by to see how NACD's 2003 *Distributor of the Year* award recipient and former Responsible Distribution ProcessSM (RDP) Committee Chairman was enjoying semi-retirement. Of course, I am talking about Clare Welker of Chem One, Ltd.

Welker and Abby, his wife and business partner, live 90 minutes from Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport, which is where I met Welker one steamy hot afternoon in August. During the drive from the airport to the Welkers' ranch, named Bahia for the local stream that runs nearby, our conversation turned to important issues facing our industry, such as reactive hazards management, security, and new federal regulations. He shared his view of how RDP must continue to remain relevant to all NACD members, including the third-party verification requirements members must adhere to. Much of what he shared with me became useful content for the three-part series on RDP that is currently being featured in the *Chemical Distributor*, in which Welker's experiences as a volunteer leader on the RDP Committee are highlighted. It was clear that, while Welker is not currently in a leadership position in NACD as he has been for the past six to seven years, he remains close to the challenges that we face and offers his assessment on how to address them.

Once we arrived at Bahia, Welker and I toured the 44-acre ranch in one of his off-road vehicles. The Welkers have developed and maintain a unique wildlife refuge for a diversity of beautiful and exotic animals. There are usually 80 animals living within the refuge, including axis, Sika, Oryx, and black buck antelope.

Welker's wildlife refuge is not unlike his years as "caretaker" of the RDP Committee when he served as its chairman from 2001 through 2003. During his term, the committee was charged with enhancing the RDP *Code of Management Practice* with new requirements, some of which were not easy to address. For example, following September 11, 2001, the RDP Committee was charged with recommending security measures meaningful to a very diverse NACD membership, including full-line distributors, factory-pack distributors, and brokers and traders. As chairman, Welker sought a consensus among all sectors of the industry on approving new measures, patiently listening to each committee member's perspective and eventually submitting recommendations to the NACD membership and Board of Directors that represented the view of everyone. At the end of his two-year term last December, his efforts were rewarded by his industry peers, who chose him to become one of a select few Distributors of the Year.

The following morning we drove to Chem One, Ltd., outside of

Houston. Welker, his wife Abby, and his partners Jerry and Rowena Mohn opened Chem One, Ltd., in 1993 by combining assets of two firms, Chippenham and Synchem. Chem One Ltd. specializes in the importation and distribution of chemicals which are used for a wide range of applications. These applications include feed, fertilizer, food, industrial and water treatment. According to their Web site, Chem One's commitment to regulatory compliance and extensive product/supplier qualification process give their customers confidence that the products

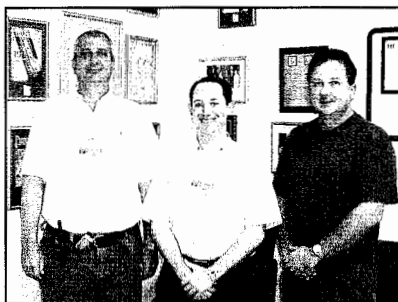
they purchase will meet their needs consistently. Their commitment to product stewardship was evident from the reception area display of safety and health bulletins developed by the Chemical Educational Foundation. One of the most unique aspects of Chem One's warehouse, other than its glistening cleanliness, is its method of handling chemical spills. On several walls strategically placed throughout the warehouse hang colorful dust pans with chemical names written on them. Employees who sweep up spills on the warehouse floor must use the appropriate dust pan for the type of chemical being swept. This is to avoid any

possible reaction by inadvertently mixing two or more incompatible chemicals together in one pan or waste bin. Welker touts this method as an inexpensive, common sense, and effective way to manage reactivity hazards in a warehouse. He credits Chem One's Warehouse Operations Manager, Charlie Ross, for keeping the warehouse in immaculate shape.

In 2001, Terry Podlogar was named President and a Director of Chem One following Welker's decision to step down from the position. It was clear from my visit that the company hasn't skipped a beat since Welker handed the reigns to Podlogar, who supervises a hospitable and highly-competent staff of 23.

Chem One has been a member of the NACD since 1995, after successfully completing the Responsible Distribution ProcessSM Documentation Verification assessment. The company has also successfully completed on-site verification of its written policies and procedures, first by Science Applications International Corporation in 2000 and again in 2004 by Parker and Associates. In addition to its RDP compliance, Chem One is certified to ISO 9001-2000. They are also members of the Copper task force and own an Environmental Protection Agency registration for Copper Sulfate.

Just before I left Houston, Welker and I stopped by a local restaurant for some spicy Indian cuisine, in spite of the fact that the on-board thermometer in his SUV was reading an outside temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. It was a great way to conclude my trip with Clare Welker: accepting a challenge and successfully achieving it without a reservation. ☞



Left to right, Chem One Co-Founder Clare Welker, NACD Director of Regulatory and Public Affairs Bill Allmond, and Chem One President Terry Podlogar