

Press release

18 December 2001

Umicore grows its specialty metal chemicals activity in the USA

Effective December 17, 2001, Umicore has acquired certain industrial assets of The Hall Chemical Company in the state of Alabama. Umicore will commence operations using the assets, with such operations specialising in the conversion of nickel, cobalt and manganese metal into specialty chemicals for a wide range of applications. The plant is located in Arab, Alabama in the Southeast US and will be named Umicore Specialty Chemicals-Arab.

The plant offers Umicore an ideal foothold to service the important North American chemical, catalyst, plating and electronics industries with metal based specialties in solution and crystal form while the world wide marketing network of the Umicore Group will promote and sell its products on the export market. The plant will also specialise in the recycling of spent cobalt-based catalysts from the chemical industry.

Cobalt, manganese and nickel chemicals play an important role as a catalyst in the petrochemical and the chemical industry, as an additive in the battery industry, as a corrosion inhibitor in the coating industry and as a plating chemical in the electronics industry. Those materials affect all aspects of daily life as the products are ultimately used in polyester resins, plastics, pharmaceuticals, packaging, automobiles, textile applications and consumer electronics.

With the acquisition of these industrial assets Umicore strengthens its position in the cobalt- and nickel-based chemicals business by a further broadening of its product range and by the geographical diversification of its manufacturing and customer base.

The activities at the Specialty Chemicals facility will be integrated in the Ceramics and Chemicals Business Line of Umicore Cobalt & Energy Products, taking advantage of the attractive synergies with Umicore's existing portfolio of cobalt and nickel chemicals, powders and compounds. It is expected that within five years the new activity will add at least USD 20 million in sales revenues.

For more information:

n.v. Umicore s.a.:

Press: Mrs Moniek DELVOU - Tel. +32 2 227 70 63 * +32 475 26 64 95 – moniek.delvou@umicore.com

Investor Relations: Mrs Isabelle MICHOTTE - Tel. +32 2 227 71 47 – isabelle.michotte@umicore.com

n.v. Umicore s.a.

Corporate Communication

Broekstraat 31 Rue du Marais
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
www.umicore.com

Phone +32 2 227 70 63
Fax +32 2 227 79 03
e-mail info@umicore.com

BTW BE401 574 852

Bank 210-0053806-23 - TRB 85382

Registered Office: Broekstraat 31 Rue du Marais, B-1000 Brussels

PROFILE

Umicore is the new name Union Minière adopted on 3 September 2001.

Umicore is an international metals and materials group, which strives to obtain leadership positions in selected markets. Its activities are centred on 3 main business groups: Copper & Precious Metals, Zinc and Advanced Materials. To ensure a rapid response to market openings, each business group is divided into several business units.

The Umicore Group has industrial operations on all continents and serves a global customer base through an international sales network with offices in more than 25 countries.

The underlying principles of Umicore's strategy across the various business groups are a commitment to technological innovation, operational excellence, recycling and environmental responsibility.

The Group generated a turnover of EUR 3.8 billion in 2000. Umicore currently employs some 8,200 people.
