LANXESS inaugurates largest Butyl Rubber R&D Centre in Canada

- Global Butyl Rubber R&D Centre employs roughly 60 researchers and chemists
- R&D focus on materials research and emerging technologies
- Investment in innovation yields first bio-based butyl rubber

London, Ontario – Today, LANXESS inaugurated the largest butyl rubber global research and development centre in Canada, dedicated to butyl elastomers. Located in the Research Park of the University of Western Ontario, the centre’s official inauguration was marked by a ceremony attended by the Chairman of the LANXESS Board of Management, Axel C. Heitmann, Vice President of Research and International Relations at the University of Western Ontario, Dr. W.E (Ted) Hewitt, and the Head of the LANXESS Butyl Rubber Business Unit, Ron Commander.

The Global Research and Development Centre is designed to leverage access to the knowledge base and technical capabilities in all areas of material research. Sharing the London Research Park with over 60 start-up companies creates a unique culture for innovation and a centre of excellence for material research.

The R&D Centre plays a central role in generating a continuous pipeline of product applications that meet the growing demand for high-quality rubber products in emerging markets. In China, for example, where the population is aging, the need for butyl rubber used in medical devices has increased rapidly. Butyl rubber is the material of choice for such products as closures in injection vials and...
blood collection tubes. Because of butyl’s impermeability to gases and liquids, it ensures proper protection of sterile pharmaceutical products from external contamination during storage and use.

As access to mobility continues to increase around the world, the Butyl R&D Centre is also closely engaged in developing innovative solutions in this field. For example, new grades of butyl rubber are being used in tire treads in ways that provide greater traction, significantly improving tire performance in wet and dry conditions and adding to their safety performance. Rolling resistance and tread durability is not negatively affected.

In his address, Chairman Axel C. Heitmann said, “One of the most promising areas of research for our new R&D Centre is rubber made from biomass instead of petroleum-based raw materials. Here in this R&D Centre, we have produced the first quantities of ‘bio-butyl.’ This bio-based rubber will enable us to decouple our resources from petroleum dependency.”

Through its partnership with Gevo, a US-based renewable chemicals company, LANXESS has demonstrated a firm commitment to producing premium synthetic rubber from bio-based raw materials. Gevo is currently developing a fermentation process to produce isobutanol from the fermentable sugars in biomass. At the same time, researchers at the new LANXESS R&D Centre are concentrating their expertise on developing a dehydration process to convert isobutanol into isobutene, a key input in the production of butyl.
Ron Commander, Head of the Butyl Rubber Business Unit, stated, “For innovation to pay off, it must target the specific needs of our customers in a specific market. For this reason, we take a global approach to R&D. We are also leading the way in sustainable innovations. A greener world is coming, and next-generation products are helping to make it happen. All of us at LANXESS, and certainly our employees here in Canada, are proud to be doing our part.”

About LANXESS in Canada
LANXESS in Canada employs around 500 highly-qualified personnel engaged in innovation and production of Butyl rubber and olefins, while the Research Park in London, Ontario is home to more than 60 companies with over two thousand professionals in a multidisciplinary environment.

About LANXESS Butyl Rubber
LANXESS is the world’s second-largest producer of Butyl rubber and has plants in Sarnia, Canada, and Zwijndrecht, Belgium. The company is also investing EUR 400 million in a new Butyl rubber plant in Singapore, which comes on stream in the first quarter of 2013.

LANXESS’ Butyl Rubber Business, headed by Ron Commander, produces high quality Butyl and Halobutyl rubbers for the tire and rubber industry. High impermeability to gases and liquids is one of the great advantages of these rubbers. This property is particularly useful for tire inner liners, inner tubes and other niche markets, such as pharmaceutical closures and protective clothing.
News Release

About LANXESS
LANXESS is a leading specialty chemicals company with sales of EUR 7.1 billion in 2010 and currently around 15,500 employees in 30 countries. The company is at present represented at 46 production sites worldwide. The core business of LANXESS is the development, manufacturing and marketing of plastics, rubber, intermediates and specialty chemicals.

Forward-Looking Statements.
This news release may contain forward-looking statements based on current assumptions and forecasts made by LANXESS AG management. Various known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors could lead to material differences between the actual future results, financial situation, development or performance of the company and the estimates given here. The company assumes no liability whatsoever to update these forward-looking statements or to conform them to future events or developments.

Information for editors:

You can find further information concerning LANXESS chemistry in our WebMagazine at http://webmagazine.lanxess.com.