



SHEPHERDSTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC.

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ROCKWOOL: A Statement from the Chief's

September 20, 2018

The concern on behalf of Jefferson County citizens regarding the ROCKWOOL North America® plant being built within Jefferson County is noted. We have received many inquiries via email and phone as to the effect such a facility will have on our emergency response to the area. While our organization will not take part in any politically charged conversation regarding the facility's future, we do wish to take this opportunity to educate those concerned regarding our capabilities and response to the area.

For over 225 years the men and women of the Shepherdstown Fire Department have served the Shepherdstown, WV and surrounding communities; this includes the Jefferson Orchard area where the new facility is being built. We take our responsibility to our community seriously, and have always worked tirelessly to maintain the highest level of professionalism. The ROCKWOOL manufacturing facility, albeit new and different, will be served by our organization with the same professionalism and dedication as all of our response area.

ROCKWOOL officials have been in contact with us and are offering any help, training, or information that will benefit us in mitigating any type of incident at the facility. We have been pleased with the proactive nature of ROCKWOOL officials in offering their help to us as we learn about the new technology on which they have based their processes. We, like all of our neighboring departments, are an all hazards fire department, and are adequately trained and prepared for all hazards and will respond on all hazards. All our personnel are duly certified Hazardous Materials responders, as applicable. Our crews face vast amounts of hazardous materials on emergency responses to homes and many other facilities across our response area; we are well versed in the response procedures. The potential of a minor or major incident regarding ROCKWOOL is no different than any other home or facility across the region. The types of potential chemical fires or hazardous materials incidents that many are concerned about already exists in Jefferson County at other manufacturing businesses, and are already a part of our normal course of business. The same (and worse) chemical types travel through the entire county each and every day by truck traffic and railroad cargo, and our responders must be prepared to mitigate these incidents at a moment's notice. In fact, it is our opinion that a sedentary plant such as ROCKWOOL is safer with its containment areas, and much easier to control, than something mobile like trucks and trains. Rest assured, being proactive and working with ROCKWOOL officials, necessary response plans will be made prior to operations of the facility, and our crews will adequately train should there be a need for additional tactics.

At this time, we have no reason to believe our nationally recognized tactics or state of the art equipment will need to change. We have mutual aid agreements already in place with other agencies that provide specialized resources to respond when needed. Our department will continue to stay in contact with ROCKWOOL and keep our neighboring departments informed as needed. The community can be assured that every fire department in Jefferson County and surrounding counties will give 100 percent effort to provide a safe and quick response to help mitigate any type of emergency at ROCKWOOL - just the same as we would to your residence or place of business.

Ross L. Morgan
Fire Chief

Marshall DeMeritt, MS
EMS Chief