Hattiesburg Airgas employees celebrate the national award during a special recognition held at the plant on July 18.

National Plant of Year
H'burg Airgas fill plant takes top honors

The Hattiesburg cylinder gas fill plant has been named National Plant of the Year by Airgas, an Air Liquide company. Selected from among 350 Airgas plants across the country, the Hattiesburg fill plant was the top performing fill plant in the South Division of the company, and surpassed other region leaders in safety and performance measures.

In 2016, the plant had no accidents for the second straight year and passed all compliance audits with near-perfect marks. The team of 22 plant operators and drivers—who fill and distribute cylinders of gases such as oxygen, nitrogen, argon, and helium to customers across Mississippi—produced around 21,000 high pressure cylinders per month, with one of the highest production and fulfillment rates in the South Division.

"This is an exceptional accomplishment, to be chosen as the best from almost 350 Airgas cylinder plants in the country," said Jay Worley, senior vice president of Distribution Operations for Airgas. "This National Cylinder Plant of the Year award recognizes the outstanding safety culture and productivity generated by the dedication and teamwork of each associate at the Hattiesburg plant."

Airgas CEO Pascal Vinet, Chief Operating Officer Andy Cichocki, South Division President John Sheehan and South Region President Edwin Robertson joined Worley on a visit to the Byron Street plant on July 18 to celebrate the plant's success, tour the facility and personally congratulate the plant's 24 Hattiesburg employees.

"Many of us have worked together at this plant for decades," said Robert Swilley, who has been at the Hattiesburg facility for 19 years and was recently named the plant manager. "We appreciate being recognized for doing what's right—working safely and efficiently while providing a quality product and service for our customers."

The Hattiesburg plant received a National Cylinder Plant of the Year trophy made from a three-foot gold cylinder. Additionally, each plant associate receives a personalized award ring commemorating the achievement. This is the inaugural year of the fill plant award, which will be an annual tradition going forward.

Airgas, an Air Liquide company, is the leading U.S. supplier of industrial, medical and specialty gases, as well as hardgoods and related products; one of the largest U.S. suppliers of safety products; and a leading U.S. supplier of refrigerants, ammonia products, and process chemicals. Dedicated to improving the performance of its more than 1 million customers, Airgas safely and reliably provides products, services and expertise through its more than 18,000 associates, more than 1,100 locations, robust e-Business platform, and Airgas Total Access telesales channel.

As an Air Liquide company, the world leader in gases, technology and services for Industry and Health, Airgas offers customers an unrivaled global footprint and a leading U.S. supplier of industrial, medical, and specialty gases to all Airgas branches in the South Region Mississippi markets, from Vicksburg to Jackson and south to the Gulf Coast. The customer base is broad, covering markets segments including Energy and Chemical Production, Metal Fabrication, Healthcare and Aerospace.

The Hattiesburg fill plant was built in 1995 and acquired by Airgas in 2012. It supplies industrial, medical, and specialty gases to all Airgas branches in the South Region Mississippi markets, from Vicksburg across to Jackson and south to the Gulf Coast.