Dear Neighbors:

We at Hemlock Semiconductor (HSC) recognize the important role first responders play in keeping a community safe. That’s why HSC puts an enormous amount of effort into supporting first responders in our region. As the Safety and Emergency Services Leader, I am proud of the many services we have to offer to the often-unsung heroes of Saginaw County.

One way we support the community is by inviting local fire departments to use our firefighting training resources. We have a live fire training container, as well as many other firefighting props for fire departments to use while practicing different tactics. This year alone, we’ve hosted two training events and have four more scheduled. Several law enforcement groups also have used our facility to practice strategies and tactics in a large building setting.

HSC continuously opens its doors to organizations such as the County Fire Association so they can host meetings and other events. By offering a free space for safety organizations to discuss important issues, we can help the first responders serving our neighborhoods do more at less cost. We also have grant funding in place to help ensure local first responders have the equipment they need.

HSC will continue to find new ways to support the individuals who devote their lives to protecting us. We wholeheartedly support those working in public safety and are thankful for their day-to-day efforts.

Ryan Ludwick, Team Leader & Loss Prevention
HSC recently sponsored two campers’ trip to Camp Fish Tales, a barrier-free summer camp that provides weekend and week-long camps for kids and adults with special needs.

“HSC’s generosity and thoughtfulness provided an opportunity for campers to enjoy the benefits of independence and experience the joy of an outing at camp,” said Shannon Forshee, Camp Fish Tales’ executive director.

Helping provide a fun and rewarding camp experience is just one of many ways HSC is bringing broader opportunities to Saginaw County residents.

Puppies take over HSC lunch break

This summer, the Humane Society of Midland County brought a pack of puppies to HSC’s campus for employees to play with during their lunch break. The event helped promote local pet adoption as well as the Humane Society’s other services. It also allowed the participating puppies to be handled by groups of people, improving their socialization skills.

“The event was a blast. Everyone seemed to have a lot of fun,” said Natalie Clark, co-chair of HSC’s Employee Engagement Committee. “Our employees showed their gratitude afterwards by donating over $300 and two carts of pet supplies to the Midland County Humane Society.”

Silicon: From the Earth’s crust to today’s electronics

HSC specializes in producing polysilicon, an ultra-pure form of the element silicon, for the solar and electronic industries. HSC performs a key purification step in the transformation of quartz into the purest substance on the planet, and it all begins in the Earth’s crust!

Silicon is harvested from the Earth’s crust as quartz, a mineral made of silicon and oxygen. From there, quartz is turned into metallurgical grade silicon by removing the oxygen from the mineral. At this point, the silicon is at least 98% pure, but not pure enough for today’s technology.

The metallurgical grade silicon is used to make trichlorosilane, a gas molecule made of silicon and other elements. We use trichlorosilane at HSC to produce rods of polysilicon, which are 99.999999999% pure. That’s like allowing no more than one grain of sand inside an Olympic sized swimming pool! Our rods of polysilicon become the building blocks of computer chips and solar panels.
HSC sends local high schoolers to camp

Hemlock Semiconductor recognizes how important it is to invest in the next generation of engineers. That’s why HSC recently sent 30 high school students from the Great Lakes Bay region to Michigan Technological University’s Engineering Scholars Summer Youth Program on full scholarships. The summer camp gives students interested in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) the opportunity to be immersed in a hands-on week of learning and outdoor activities.

The scholarships HSC provided covered room, board, bus transportation and classroom supplies, allowing students to focus on gaining experience in an industry they may call home someday. The students traveled to Michigan Tech’s Houghton campus in the Upper Peninsula. There, the young engineers worked in teams to complete challenging tasks such as building bridges and designing prosthetic legs.

Jamie Modolo, a current HSC employee, attended a youth engineering camp at MTU when she was in high school.

“Going to camp at Michigan Tech was such a rewarding experience. Learning activities were a big part of it, but we had fun doing other things like hiking and kayaking as well,” she said. “I was still on the fence regarding what I wanted to study in college at the time. What I did learn from camp is that I wanted to go to Michigan Tech, which is where I later found out mechanical engineering was right for me.”

While working towards her bachelor’s degree at Michigan Tech, Modolo interned with HSC over a few summers. She’s a good example of how the young scholar camps can help high school students discover a future in STEM.

“HSC did a great job preparing me for my career,” Modolo said. “I decided to come back to HSC full time because of the culture. I’ve only been here a few weeks, but it’s already clear I made the right choice. I’m at a great place to work.”
Mark Bassett raises money for United Way while rappelling down building

When HSC Chairman and CEO Mark Bassett was invited to become this year’s campaign chairman for United Way of Saginaw, he quickly accepted. There was one string attached, however. That string refers to the rope that kept Mark from falling as he participated in United Way of Saginaw’s Over the Edge fund-raising event, which gave sponsors the opportunity to descend Saginaw’s five-story Covenant Health Care building using climbing gear. The money raised helps several United Way programs.

“Over the Edge was a special event. While I’m glad we were able to help raise a good amount of money for United Way of Saginaw, I certainly won’t be looking for an opportunity to rappel down another building anytime soon,” said Bassett, who is afraid of heights.

Of the $50,000 raised during the event, over $11,000 was brought in by Bassett and his supporters. He said he was glad to be the United Way campaign chairman since it allows him to continue his support for the organization and gives HSC a chance to show its continued dedication to the welfare of Saginaw County residents.

Preparing youth for a career in trades

HSC believes in supporting young individuals interested in a trades career. That’s why HSC donates annually to Swan Valley High School’s Beautification Day, a day where high school students build picnic tables to benefit the community.

In the last two years, HSC has taken its support a step further. In addition to a financial donation, HSC now sends volunteers to join in on the fun by completing the project side-by-side with students.

“These students knew what they were doing,” said Randy Peters, a site electrician at HSC. “The kids who participated in Beautification Day had precut all the wood required for the tables in their shop class. We were there to assist in the final leg of the project.”

The combined team of students and HSC volunteers constructed the parts into 50 picnic tables in under two hours, working with picnic table parts laid out in an assembly line.

HSC volunteers also had time to talk to students about trade careers.

“Some students were in awe when I told them they could work at a great facility like HSC with a trade certification,” Peters said. “It’s great that HSC is supporting programs like this. HSC puts a large focus on STEM programs, so it’s cool to see people with trade backgrounds getting involved as well.”