



American Chemet Corporation is a global leader in producing metal-based products that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make industries more efficient.

An East Helena building project slated to be completed this summer will put American Chemet on track to streamline its processes and increase capacity. The company started building one large structure over the top of several existing wood structures in August 2017. Once the shell is completed, the old walls will be demolished to create one giant space. The strategy to build on top of a building and demolish from the inside will keep the plant operational the entire time and was the most cost effective option, President Bill Shropshire said.

American Chemet already produces the most cuprous oxide in the world. By demolishing the individual wood structures, the company will be able to improve its processes. “This is going to give us that open space,” he said.

American Chemet was founded in 1946 by Shropshire’s grandfather and three others after World War II ended. American Chemet came to East Helena in 1947 to be near its zinc oxide raw material source. By the early 1970s, American Chemet was producing copper oxides, which are now considered to be a world standard, Shropshire said.

The cuprous oxide American Chemet produces is mostly used for marine anti-fouling paint. The paint is used on the bottom of ships and keeps invasive species from becoming attached. Ultimately, it reduces fuel consumption by 200 million metric tons per year. That’s 600 million metric tons less greenhouse gases emitted, Shropshire said.

“We were green way before it was cool to be green,” Shropshire said. “Our business model is green, but it also makes good financial sense.”

Shropshire said American Chemet is invested in East Helena. “East Helena has been hugely supportive of American Chemet the entire time we’ve been here,” he said.