

POLYONE CORP
Form 10-K
February 12, 2013

United States
Securities and Exchange Commission

Washington, DC 20549
FORM 10-K

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the transition period from _____ to _____.

Commission file number 1-16091

PolyOne Corporation

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Ohio 34-1730488

(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization) (IRS Employer Identification No.)

33587 Walker Road, 44012
Avon Lake, Ohio (Zip Code)

(Address of principal executive offices)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code (440) 930-1000

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class Name of each exchange on which registered
Common Shares, par value \$.01 per share New York Stock Exchange

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:

None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant: (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer

Smaller reporting company
£

(Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes No

The aggregate market value of the registrant's outstanding common shares held by non-affiliates on June 30, 2012, determined using a per share closing price on that date of \$13.68, as quoted on the New York Stock Exchange, was \$1,127,110,420.

The number of shares of common shares outstanding as of January 18, 2013 was 89,520,537.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Part III of this Annual Report on Form 10-K incorporates by reference certain information from the registrant's definitive Proxy Statement with respect to the 2013 Annual Meeting of Shareholders.

POLYONE CORPORATION

PART I

CAUTIONARY NOTE ON FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

In this Annual Report on Form 10-K, statements that are not reported financial results or other historical information are “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995.

Forward-looking statements give current expectations or forecasts of future events and are not guarantees of future performance. They are based on management’s expectations that involve a number of business risks and uncertainties, any of which could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed in or implied by the forward-looking statements. You can identify these statements by the fact that they do not relate strictly to historic or current facts.

They use words such as “anticipate,” “estimate,” “expect,” “project,” “intend,” “plan,” “believe” and other words and terms of meaning in connection with any discussion of future operating or financial performance and/or sales. In particular, these include statements relating to future actions; prospective changes in raw material costs, product pricing or product demand; future performance; estimated capital expenditures; results of current and anticipated market conditions and market strategies; sales efforts; expenses; the outcome of contingencies such as legal proceedings; and financial results. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially include, but are not limited to:

- the effect on foreign operations of currency fluctuations, tariffs and other political, economic and regulatory risks;
- changes in polymer consumption growth rates where we conduct business;
- changes in global industry capacity or in the rate at which anticipated changes in industry capacity come online in the industries in which we participate;
- fluctuations in raw material prices, quality and supply and in energy prices and supply;
- production outages or material costs associated with scheduled or unscheduled maintenance programs;
- unanticipated developments that could occur with respect to contingencies such as litigation and environmental matters, including any developments that would require any increase in our costs and/or reserves for such contingencies;
- an inability to achieve or delays in achieving or achievement of less than the anticipated financial benefit from initiatives related to working capital reductions, cost reductions and employee productivity goals, an inability to raise or sustain prices for products or services;
- an inability to maintain appropriate relations with unions and employees;
- the speed and extent of an economic recovery, including the recovery of the housing markets;
- the financial condition of our customers, including the ability of customers (especially those that may be highly leveraged and those with inadequate liquidity) to maintain their credit availability;
- disruptions, uncertainty or volatility in the credit markets that may limit our access to capital;
- other factors affecting our business beyond our control, including, without limitation, changes in the general economy, changes in interest rates and changes in the rate of inflation;
- the amount and timing of repurchases, if any, of PolyOne common shares;
- our ability to pay regular quarterly cash dividends and the amounts and timing of any future dividends;
- our ability to identify and evaluate acquisition targets and consummate acquisitions, such as our pending acquisition of Spartech Corporation (Spartech);
- the ability to successfully integrate acquired companies into our operations, retain the management teams of acquired companies, and retain relationships with customers of acquired companies;
- the ability to achieve the expected results of any acquisitions, including the acquisitions being accretive;
- our ability to obtain permanent long-term debt financing in connection with our pending acquisition of Spartech; and
- other factors described in this Annual Report on Form 10-K under Item 1A, “Risk Factors.”

We cannot guarantee that any forward-looking statement will be realized, although we believe we have been prudent in our plans and assumptions. Achievement of future results is subject to risks, uncertainties and inaccurate assumptions. Should known or unknown risks or uncertainties materialize, or should underlying assumptions prove inaccurate, actual results could vary materially from those anticipated, estimated or projected. Investors should bear

this in mind as they consider forward-looking statements. We undertake no obligation to publicly update forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as otherwise required by law. You are advised, however, to consult any further disclosures we make on related subjects in our reports on Forms 10-Q, 8-K and 10-K furnished to the SEC. You should understand that it is not possible to predict or identify all risk factors. Consequently, you should not consider any such list to be a complete set of all potential risks or uncertainties.

ITEM 1. BUSINESS

Business Overview

We are a premier provider of specialized polymer materials, services and solutions with operations in specialty polymer formulations, color and additive systems, polymer distribution and specialty vinyl resins. Headquartered in Avon Lake, Ohio, we have employees at sales, manufacturing and distribution facilities in North America, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia. We provide value to our customers through our ability to link our knowledge of polymers and formulation technology with our manufacturing and supply chain capabilities to provide value added solutions to designers, assemblers and processors of plastics (our customers). When used in this Annual Report on Form 10-K, the terms “we,” “us,” “our” and the “Company” mean PolyOne Corporation and its subsidiaries.

PolyOne is incorporated in Ohio and headquartered in Avon Lake, Ohio. We employ approximately 5,000 people and have 59 manufacturing sites and 8 distribution facilities in North America, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia. We offer more than 35,000 polymer solutions to over 10,000 customers across the globe. In 2012, we had sales of approximately \$3.0 billion, 39% of which were to customers outside the United States.

We provide value to our customers with solutions built upon our ability to leverage our polymer and formulation expertise with our operational capabilities, being the essential link between large chemical producers (our raw material suppliers) and designers, assemblers and processors of plastics (our customers). We believe that our role in the value chain continues to become more essential as large chemical producers outsource or seek alternative channels to market to serve smaller, niche business; processors need more effective solutions to improve their profitability and competitive advantage; and international and OEM companies need reliable suppliers with global reach. Our goal is to provide our customers with specialized material and service solutions through our global reach, broad market knowledge, technical expertise, product breadth, efficient manufacturing operations, a fully integrated information technology network, and raw material procurement leverage. Our end markets are primarily in healthcare, transportation, consumer, packaging, electrical and electronics, industrial, building and construction, appliances and wire and cable.

PolyOne was formed on August 31, 2000 from the consolidation of The Geon Company (Geon) and M.A. Hanna Company (Hanna). Geon’s roots date back to 1927 when BFGoodrich scientist Waldo Semon produced the first usable vinyl polymer. In 1948, BFGoodrich created a vinyl plastic division that was subsequently spun off through a public offering in 1993, creating Geon, a separate publicly-held company. Hanna was formed in 1885 as a privately-held company and became publicly-held in 1927. In the mid-1980s, Hanna began to divest its historic mining and shipping businesses to focus on polymers. Hanna purchased its first polymer company in 1986 and completed its 26th polymer company acquisition in 2000.

Polymer Industry Overview

Polymers are a class of organic materials that are generally produced by converting natural gas or crude oil derivatives into monomers, such as ethylene, propylene, vinyl chloride and styrene. These monomers are then polymerized into chains called polymers, or plastic resin, such as polyethylene and polypropylene, in their most basic forms. Large petrochemical companies, including some in the petroleum industry, produce a majority of the monomers and base resins because they have direct access to the raw materials needed for production. Monomers make up the majority of the variable cost of manufacturing the base resin. As a result, the cost of a base resin tends to move in tandem with the industry market prices for monomers and the cost of raw materials and energy used during production. Resin selling prices can move in tandem with costs, but are largely driven by supply and demand balances.

Thermoplastic polymers make up a substantial majority of the resin market and are characterized by their ability to be reshaped repeatedly into new forms after heat and pressure are applied. Thermoplastics offer versatility and a wide range of applications. The major types of thermoplastics include polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride, polypropylene,

polystyrene, polyester and a range of specialized engineering resins. Each type of thermoplastic has unique qualities and characteristics that make it appropriate for use in a particular application.

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Thermoplastic resins are found in a variety of end-use products and markets, including packaging, building and construction, wire and cable, transportation, medical, furniture and furnishings, durable goods, institutional products, electrical and electronics, adhesives, inks and coatings. Each type of thermoplastic resin has unique characteristics (such as flexibility, strength or durability) suitable for use in a particular end-use application. The packaging industry requires plastics that help keep food fresh and free of contamination while providing a variety of options for product display, and offering advantages in terms of weight and user-friendliness. In the building and construction industry, plastic provides an economical and energy efficient replacement for other traditional materials in piping applications, siding, flooring, insulation, windows and doors, as well as structural and interior or decorative uses. In the wire and cable industry, thermoplastics serve to protect by providing electrical insulation, flame resistance, durability, water resistance, and color coding to wire coatings and connectors. In the transportation industry, plastic has proven to be durable, lightweight and corrosion resistant while offering fuel savings, design flexibility and high performance. In the medical industry, plastics help save lives by safely providing a range of transparent and opaque materials that are used for a vast array of devices including blood and intravenous bags, medical tubing, catheters, lead replacement for radiation shielding, clamps and connectors to bed frames, curtains and sheeting, and electronic enclosures. In the electronics industry, plastic enclosures and connectors not only enhance safety through electrical insulation, but thermally and electrically conductive plastics provide heat transferring, cooling, antistatic, electrostatic discharge, and electromagnetic shielding performance for critical applications including integrated circuit chip packaging. Various additives can be formulated with a base resin to provide it with greater versatility and performance. Polymer formulations have advantages over metals, wood, rubber, glass and other traditional materials, which have resulted in the replacement of these materials across a wide spectrum of applications that range from automobile parts to construction materials. These specialized polymers offer advantages compared to traditional materials that include processability, weight reduction, chemical resistance, flame retardance and lower total cost. Plastics have a reputation for durability, aesthetics, ease of handling and recyclability.

PolyOne Segments

We operate in four reportable segments: (1) Global Specialty Engineered Materials; (2) Global Color, Additives and Inks; (3) Performance Products and Solutions; and (4) PolyOne Distribution. In February 2011, we sold our 50% equity interest in SunBelt Chlor Alkali Partnership (SunBelt), which was a reportable segment in prior periods. Our segments are further discussed in Note 15, Segment Information, to the accompanying consolidated financial statements.

Global Specialty Engineered Materials

Global Specialty Engineered Materials is a leading provider of custom polymer formulations, services and solutions for designers, assemblers and processors of thermoplastic materials across a wide variety of markets and end-use applications. Our product portfolio, which we believe to be one of the most diverse in our industry, includes standard and custom formulated high-performance polymer materials that are manufactured using thermoplastic resins and elastomers, which are then combined with advanced polymer additives, reinforcement, filler, colorant and/or biomaterial technologies. This segment includes GLS Corporation (GLS), which we acquired in 2008. We believe GLS offers the broadest range of soft-touch thermoplastic elastomers in the industry. Our technical and market expertise enables us to expand the performance range and structural properties of traditional engineering-grade thermoplastic resins to meet evolving customer needs. Global Specialty Engineered Materials has manufacturing, sales and service facilities located throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and South America. Our product development and application reach is further enhanced by the capabilities of our Innovation Centers in the United States, Germany and China, which produce and evaluate prototype and sample parts to help assess end-use performance and guide product development. Our manufacturing capabilities are targeted at meeting our customers' demand for speed, flexibility and critical quality.

On December 19, 2012, the Company acquired Glasforms, Inc. (Glasforms), a leading manufacturer of glass and carbon fiber reinforced polymers and advanced composite products. Glasforms results are included within the Global Specialty Engineered Materials segment from the date of the acquisition.

Global Color, Additives and Inks

Global Color, Additives and Inks is a leading provider of specialized custom color and additive concentrates in solid and liquid form for thermoplastics, dispersions for thermosets, as well as specialty inks. Color and additive solutions include an innovative array of colors, special effects and performance-enhancing and eco-friendly solutions. When combined with a non-base resin, our solutions help customers achieve differentiated specialized colors and effects targeted at the demands of today's highly design-oriented consumer and industrial end markets. Our additive

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concentrates encompass a wide variety of performance and process enhancing characteristics and are commonly categorized by the function that they perform, such as UV stabilization, antimicrobial, anti-static, blowing or foaming, antioxidant, lubricant, and productivity enhancement. Our colorant and additives concentrates are used in a broad range of polymers, including those used in medical and pharmaceutical devices, food packaging, personal care and cosmetics, transportation, building products, wire and cable markets. We also provide custom-formulated liquid systems that meet a variety of customer needs and chemistries, including vinyl, natural rubber and latex, polyurethane and silicone. Our offering also includes proprietary inks and latexes for diversified markets such as recreational and athletic apparel, construction and filtration, outdoor furniture and healthcare. Global Color, Additives and Inks has manufacturing, sales and service facilities located throughout North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

On December 21, 2011, the Company completed the acquisition of all of the outstanding equity of ColorMatrix for \$486.1 million net of cash acquired. ColorMatrix is a highly specialized developer and manufacturer of performance enhancing additives, liquid colorants, and fluoropolymer and silicone colorants. On November 30, 2010, we sold our 50% interest in BayOne Urethane Systems LLC (BayOne), a joint venture between PolyOne and Bayer Corporation, which sells liquid polyurethane systems into many of the same markets. The equity earnings from BayOne are included in Global Color, Additives and Inks' results in 2010. On October 1, 2010, we acquired Polimaster Indústria E Comércio de Pigmentos Plásticos LTDA (Polimaster), which extended our presence in South America.

Performance Products and Solutions

Performance Products and Solutions is an industry leader offering an array of products and services for vinyl coating, molding and extrusion processors principally in North America. Our product offerings include: vinyl formulations and alloys, specialty vinyl resins, and specialty coating materials based largely on vinyl. We believe that Geon Performance Materials is the leading North American vinyl formulator, and the Geon name carries strong brand recognition. These products are sold to manufacturers of plastic parts and consumer-oriented products. We also offer a wide range of services including materials testing and component analysis, custom compound development, colorant and additive services, design assistance, structural analysis, process simulations and extruder screw design. Vinyl is utilized across a broad range of applications in building and construction, wire and cable, consumer and recreation markets, transportation, packaging and healthcare. This segment also includes Producer Services, which offers contract manufacturing services to resin producers and polymer marketers. As a strategic and integrated supply chain partner, Producer Services offers resin producers a way to develop custom products for niche markets by using our process technology expertise and multiple manufacturing platforms.

PolyOne Distribution

The PolyOne Distribution business distributes more than 3,500 grades of engineering and commodity grade resins, including PolyOne-produced solutions, principally to the North American and Asian markets. These products are sold to over 6,000 custom injection molders and extruders who, in turn, convert them into plastic parts that are sold to end-users in a wide range of industries. Representing over 20 major suppliers, we offer our customers a broad product portfolio, just-in-time delivery from multiple stocking locations and local technical support. Recent expansion in Central America and Asia have bolstered PolyOne Distribution's ability to serve the specialized needs of customers globally.

Competition

The production of compounded plastics and the manufacturing of custom and proprietary formulated color and additives systems for the plastics industry are highly competitive. Competition is based on service, performance, product innovation, product recognition, speed, delivery, quality and price. The relative importance of these factors varies among our products and services. We believe that we are the largest independent formulator of plastic materials and producer of custom and proprietary color and additive systems in the United States and Europe, with a growing presence in Asia and South America. Our competitors range from large international companies with broad product offerings to local independent custom producers whose focus is a specific market niche or product offering.

The distribution of polymer resin is also highly competitive. Speed, service, reputation, product line, brand recognition, delivery, quality and price are the principal factors affecting competition. We compete against other national independent resin distributors in North America, along with other regional distributors. Growth in the

polymer distribution market is directly correlated with growth in the base polymer resins market. We believe that the strength of our company name and reputation, the broad range of product offerings from our suppliers and our

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speed and responsiveness, coupled with the quality of products and agility of our distribution network, allow us to compete effectively.

Raw Materials

The primary raw materials used by our manufacturing operations are polyvinyl chloride (PVC) resin, vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), polyolefin and other thermoplastic resins, plasticizers, inorganic and organic pigments, all of which we believe are in adequate supply. We have long-term supply contracts with OxyVinyls LP, a former equity investment affiliate, under which the majority of our PVC resin and all of our VCM is supplied. These contracts will expire in 2014 and 2018, respectively. The PVC resin contract contains a year-by-year evergreen renewal provision unless terminated by either party with a one-year notice. We believe these contracts should assure the availability of adequate amounts of PVC resin and VCM. We also believe that the pricing under these contracts provides PVC resins and VCM to us at a competitive cost. See the discussion of risks associated with raw material supply and costs in Item 1A "Risk Factors".

Patents and Trademarks

We own and maintain a number of U.S. and foreign patents and trademarks that contribute to our competitiveness in the markets we serve because they protect our inventions and product names against infringement by others. Patents exist for 20 years from filing date if all fees are paid, and trademarks have an indefinite life based upon continued use. While we view our patents and trademarks to be valuable because of the broad scope of our products and services and brand recognition we enjoy, we do not believe that the loss or expiration of any single patent or trademark would have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial position or the continuation of our business. Nevertheless, we have implemented management processes designed to protect our inventions and trademarks. The acquisition of ColorMatrix significantly increased the number of global patents and trademarks which we own and maintain.

Seasonality and Backlog

Sales of our products and services are slightly seasonal as demand is generally slower in the first and fourth calendar quarters of the year. Because of the nature of our business, we do not believe that our backlog is a meaningful indicator of the level of our present or future business.

Working Capital Practices

Our products are generally manufactured with a short turnaround time, and the scheduling of manufacturing activities from customer orders generally includes enough lead time to assure delivery of an adequate supply of raw materials. We offer payment terms to our customers that are competitive. We generally allow our customers to return merchandise if pre-agreed quality standards or specifications are not met; however, we employ quality assurance practices that seek to minimize customer returns. Our customer returns are immaterial.

Significant Customers

No customer accounted for more than 2% of our consolidated revenues in 2012, and neither we nor any of our segments would suffer a material adverse effect if we were to lose any single customer.

Research and Development

We have substantial technology and development capabilities. Our efforts are largely devoted to developing new product formulations to satisfy defined market needs, providing quality technical services to evaluate alternative raw materials, assuring the continued success of our products for customer applications, providing technology to improve our products, processes and applications, and providing support to our manufacturing plants for cost reduction, productivity and quality improvement programs. We operate research and development centers that support our commercial development activities and manufacturing operations. These facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art analytical, synthesis, polymer characterization and testing equipment, along with pilot plants and polymer manufacturing operations that simulate specific production processes that allow us to rapidly translate new technologies into new products. Our investment in product research and development was \$41.9 million in 2012, \$36.9 million in 2011 and \$33.8 million in 2010.

Methods of Distribution

We sell products primarily through direct sales personnel, distributors, including our PolyOne Distribution segment, and commissioned sales agents. We primarily use truck carriers to transport our products to customers, although

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some customers pick up product at our manufacturing facilities or warehouses. We also ship some of our manufactured products to customers by rail.

Employees

As of December 31, 2012, we employed approximately 5,000 people. Approximately 3% of our employees are represented by labor unions under collective bargaining agreements. We believe that relations with our employees are good, and we do not anticipate significant operating issues to occur as a result of current negotiations, or when we renegotiate collective bargaining agreements as they expire.

Environmental, Health and Safety

We are subject to various environmental laws and regulations that apply to the production, use and sale of chemicals, emissions into the air, discharges into waterways and other releases of materials into the environment and the generation, handling, storage, transportation, treatment and disposal of waste material. We endeavor to ensure the safe and lawful operation of our facilities in the manufacture and distribution of products, and we believe we are in material compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

We maintain a disciplined environmental and occupational safety and health compliance program and conduct periodic internal and external regulatory audits at our facilities to identify and categorize potential environmental exposures, including compliance matters and any actions that may be required to address them. This effort can result in process or operational modifications, the installation of pollution control devices or cleaning up grounds or facilities. We believe that we are in material compliance with all applicable requirements.

We are strongly committed to safety as evidenced by our injury incidence rate of 0.54 per 100 full-time workers per year in 2012, an improvement from 0.57 in 2011. The 2011 average injury incidence rate for our NAICS Code (326 Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing) was 4.9.

In our operations, we must comply with product-related governmental law and regulations affecting the plastics industry generally and also with content-specific law, regulations and non-governmental standards. We believe that compliance with current governmental laws and regulations and with non-governmental content-specific standards will not have a material adverse effect on our financial position, results of operations or cash flows. The risk of additional costs and liabilities, however, is inherent in certain plant operations and certain products produced at these plants, as is the case with other companies in the plastics industry. Therefore, we may incur additional costs or liabilities in the future. Other developments, such as increasingly strict environmental, safety and health laws, regulations and related enforcement policies, including those under the Restrictions on the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances (RoHS), Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, the implementation of additional content-specific standards, discovery of unknown conditions, and claims for damages to property, persons or natural resources resulting from plant emissions or products could also result in additional costs or liabilities.

A number of foreign countries and domestic communities have enacted, or are considering enacting, laws and regulations concerning the use and disposal of plastic materials. Widespread adoption of these laws and regulations, along with public perception, may have an adverse impact on sales of plastic materials. Although many of our major markets are in durable, longer-life applications that could reduce the impact of these kinds of environmental regulations, more stringent regulation of the use and disposal of plastics may have an adverse effect on our business. We have been notified by federal and state environmental agencies and by private parties that we may be a potentially responsible party (PRP) in connection with their investigation and remediation of a number of environmental waste disposal sites. While government agencies assert that PRPs are jointly and severally liable at these sites, in our experience, interim and final allocations of liability costs are generally made based on the relative contribution of waste. However, even when allocations of costs based on relative contribution of waste have been made, we cannot assure that our allocation will not increase if other PRPs do not pay their allocated share of these costs.

We incurred environmental expenses, before recoveries, of \$12.8 million in 2012, \$9.7 million in 2011 and \$20.5 million in 2010. Our environmental expense in 2012, 2011 and 2010 related mostly to ongoing remediations. In 2012, 2011 and 2010 we received less than \$0.1 million, \$3.3 million and \$16.7 million, respectively, as reimbursement of previously incurred environmental remediation costs.

We also conduct investigations and remediation at certain of our active and inactive facilities and have assumed responsibility for the resulting environmental liabilities from operations at sites we or our predecessors formerly owned or operated. We believe that our potential continuing liability at these sites will not have a material adverse

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effect on our results of operations or financial position. In addition, we voluntarily initiate corrective and preventive environmental projects at our facilities. Based on current information and estimates prepared by our environmental engineers and consultants, we had reserves as of December 31, 2012 on our accompanying Consolidated Balance Sheet totaling \$75.4 million to cover probable future environmental expenditures related to previously contaminated sites. This amount represents our best estimate of probable costs for remediation, based upon the information and technology currently available and our view of the most likely remedy.

Depending upon the results of future testing, the ultimate remediation alternatives undertaken, changes in regulations, new information, newly discovered conditions and other factors; it is reasonably possible that we could incur additional costs in excess of the amount accrued at December 31, 2012. Such costs, if any, cannot be currently estimated. We may revise our estimate of this liability as new regulations or technologies are developed or additional information is obtained.

Refer to Note 12, Commitments and Contingencies, for further discussion of our environmental liabilities.

We expect cash paid for environmental remediation expenditures will be approximately \$11 million in 2013.

International Operations

Our international operations are subject to a variety of risks, including currency fluctuations and devaluations, exchange controls, currency restrictions and changes in local economic conditions. While the impact of these risks is difficult to predict, any one or more of them could adversely affect our future operations. For more information about our international operations, see Note 15, Segment Information, to the accompanying consolidated financial statements, which is incorporated by reference into this Item 1.

Where You Can Find Additional Information

Our principal executive offices are located at 33587 Walker Road, Avon Lake, Ohio 44012, and our telephone number is (440) 930-1000. We are subject to the information reporting requirements of the Exchange Act, and, in accordance with these requirements, we file annual, quarterly and other reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC relating to our business, financial results and other matters. The reports, proxy statements and other information we file may be inspected and copied at prescribed rates at the SEC's Public Reference Room and via the SEC's website (see below for more information).

You may inspect a copy of the reports, proxy statements and other information we file with the SEC, without charge, at the SEC's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, N.E., Room 1580, Washington, D.C. 20549, and you may obtain copies of the reports, proxy statements and other information we file with the SEC, from those offices for a fee. You may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. Our filings are available to the public at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>.

Our Internet address is www.polyone.com. Our Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Current Reports on Form 8-K and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act are available, free of charge, on our website (www.polyone.com, select Investors and then SEC Edgar filings) or upon written request, as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file or furnish them to the SEC. The contents of our website are not part of this Annual Report on Form 10-K, and the reference to our website does not constitute incorporation by reference into this Form 10-K of the information contained at that site.

ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS

The following are certain risk factors that could affect our business, financial position, results of operations or cash flows. These risk factors should be considered along with the forward-looking statements contained in this Annual Report on Form 10-K because these factors could cause our actual results or financial condition to differ materially from those projected in forward-looking statements. The following discussion is not an all-inclusive listing of risks, although we believe these are the more material risks that we face. If any of the following occur, our business, financial position, results of operations or cash flows could be negatively affected.

Demand for and supply of our products and services may be adversely affected by several factors, some of which we cannot predict or control, that could adversely affect our financial position, results of operations or cash flows.

Several factors may affect the demand for and supply of our products and services, including:

- economic downturns in the significant end markets that we serve;

product obsolescence or technological changes that unfavorably alter the value/cost proposition of our products and services;

- competition from existing and unforeseen polymer and non-polymer based products;
- declines in general economic conditions or reductions in industrial production growth rates, both domestically and globally, which could impact our customers' ability to pay amounts owed to us;
- changes in environmental regulations that would limit our ability to sell our products and services in specific markets;

and

inability to obtain raw materials or supply products to customers due to factors such as supplier work stoppages, supply shortages, plant outages or regulatory changes that may limit or prohibit overland transportation of certain hazardous materials and exogenous factors, like severe weather.

If any of these events occur, the demand for and supply of our products and services could suffer, which could have a material adverse affect on our financial position, results of operations and cash flows.

Our manufacturing operations are subject to hazards and other risks associated with polymer production and the related storage and transportation of raw materials, products and wastes.

The hazards and risks our manufacturing operations are subject to include, but are not limited to:

- explosions, fires, inclement weather and natural disasters;
- mechanical failure resulting in protracted or short duration unscheduled downtime;
- regulatory changes that affect or limit the transportation of raw materials;
- inability to obtain or maintain any required licenses or permits;
- interruptions and environmental hazards such as chemical spills, discharges or releases of toxic or hazardous substances or gases into the environment or workplace; and
- storage tank leaks or other issues resulting from remedial activities.

The occurrence of any of these operating problems at our facilities may have a material adverse effect on the productivity and profitability of a particular manufacturing facility or on our operations as a whole, during and after the period of these operating difficulties. These operating problems may also cause personal injury and loss of life, severe damage to or destruction of property and equipment and environmental damage. We are subject to present and potential future claims with respect to workplace exposure, workers' compensation and other matters. Although we maintain property and casualty insurance of the types and in the amounts that we believe are customary for the industry, we may not be fully insured against all potential hazards that are incident to our business or otherwise could occur.

Extensive environmental, health and safety laws and regulations impact our operations and assets, and compliance with these regulations could adversely affect our financial position, results of operations or cash flows.

Our operations on, and ownership of, real property are subject to extensive environmental, health and safety laws and regulations at the national, state and local governmental levels. The nature of our business exposes us to compliance costs and risks of liability under these laws and regulations due to the production, storage, transportation, recycling or disposal and/or sale of materials that can cause contamination and other harm to the environment or personal injury if they are released. Environmental compliance requirements on us and our vendors may significantly increase the costs of these activities involving raw materials, energy, finished products and wastes. We may incur substantial costs, including fines, damages, criminal or civil sanctions, remediation costs or experience interruptions in our operations for violations of these laws.

We also conduct investigations and remediation at some of our active and inactive facilities and have assumed responsibility for environmental liabilities at sites formerly owned or operated by our predecessors or by us. Also, federal and state environmental statutes impose strict, and under some circumstances, joint and several liability for the cost of investigations and remedial actions on any company that generated the waste, arranged for disposal of the waste, transported the waste to the disposal site or selected the disposal site as well as on the owners and operators of these sites. Any or all of the responsible parties may be required to bear all of the costs of clean up, regardless of fault or legality of the waste disposal or ownership of the site, and may also be subject to liability for natural resource damages. We have been notified by federal and state environmental agencies and private parties that we may be a potentially responsible party in connection with certain sites. We may incur substantial costs for

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some of these sites. It is possible that we will be identified as a potentially responsible party at more sites in the future which could result in our being assessed substantial investigation or cleanup costs.

We may also incur additional costs and liabilities as a result of increasingly strict environmental, safety and health laws, regulations and related enforcement policies, restrictions on the use of lead and phthalates under the Restrictions on the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances and the Consumer Product Safety Information Act of 2008 and restrictions on greenhouse gases emissions.

The European Union has adopted REACH, a legislative act to cover Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals. The goal of this legislation, which became effective in June 2007, is to minimize risk to human health and to the environment by regulating the use of chemicals. As these regulations evolve, we will endeavor to remain in compliance with REACH.

We accrue costs for environmental matters that have been identified when it is probable that these costs will be required and when they can be reasonably estimated. However, we may be subject to additional environmental liabilities or potential liabilities that have not been identified. We expect that we will continue to be subject to increasingly stringent environmental, health and safety laws and regulations. We anticipate that compliance with these laws and regulations will continue to require capital expenditures and operating costs, which could adversely affect our financial position, results of operations or cash flows.

Our operations could be adversely affected by various risks inherent in conducting operations worldwide.

As noted above in Item 1, "Business," we have extensive operations outside of the United States. Revenue from these operations (principally from Canada, Mexico, Europe, South America and Asia) was approximately 39% in 2012, 39% in 2011 and 36% in 2010 of our total revenues. Long-lived assets of our foreign operations represented 36% in 2012, 35% in 2011 and 36% in 2010 of our total long-lived assets.

International operations are subject to risks, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

changes in local government regulations and policies including, but not limited to foreign currency exchange controls or monetary policy; repatriation of earnings; expropriation of property; duty or tariff restrictions; investment limitations; and tax policies;

political and economic instability and disruptions, including labor unrest, civil strife, acts of war, guerrilla activities, insurrection and terrorism;

legislation that regulates the use of chemicals;

- disadvantages of competing against companies from countries that are not subject to U.S. laws and regulations, including the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA);

compliance with international trade laws and regulations, including export control and economic sanctions;

difficulties in staffing and managing multi-national operations;

limitations on our ability to enforce legal rights and remedies;

reduced protection of intellectual property rights; and

other risks arising out of foreign sovereignty over the areas where our operations are conducted.

In addition, we could be adversely affected by violations of the FCPA and similar worldwide anti-bribery laws as well as export controls and economic sanction laws. The FCPA and similar anti-bribery laws in other jurisdictions generally prohibit companies and their intermediaries from making improper payments to non-U.S. officials for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business. Our policies mandate compliance with these laws. We operate in many parts of the world that have experienced governmental corruption to some degree and, in certain circumstances, strict compliance with anti-bribery laws may conflict with local customs and practices. We cannot assure you that our internal controls and procedures always will protect us from the reckless or criminal acts committed by our employees or agents. If we are found to be liable for FCPA, export control or sanction violations, we could suffer from criminal or civil penalties or other sanctions, including loss of export privileges or authorization needed to conduct aspects of our international business, which could have a material adverse effect on our business.

Any of these risks could have an adverse effect on our international operations by reducing the demand for our products or reducing the prices at which we can sell our products, which could result in an adverse effect on our business, financial position, results of operations or cash flows. We may not be able to continue to operate in compliance with applicable customs, currency exchange control regulations, transfer pricing regulations or any other

laws or regulations that we may be subject to. In addition, these laws or regulations may be modified in the future, and we may not be able to operate in compliance with those modifications.

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We engage in acquisitions and joint ventures, and may encounter unexpected difficulties integrating those businesses. Attainment of our strategic plan objectives require, in part, strategic acquisitions or joint ventures intended to complement or expand our businesses globally or add product technology that accelerates our specialization strategy, or both. Success will depend on our ability to complete these transactions or arrangements, and integrate the businesses acquired in these transactions as well as develop satisfactory working arrangements with our strategic partners in the joint ventures. Unexpected difficulties in integrating recent and future acquisitions with our existing operations and in managing strategic investments could occur. Furthermore, we may not realize the degree, or timing, of benefits initially anticipated, which could adversely affect our business, financial position, results of operations or cash flows.

Natural gas, electricity, fuel and raw material costs, and other external factors that are also beyond our control, as well as downturns in the home repair and remodeling and new home sectors of the economy, can cause fluctuations in our margins.

The cost of our natural gas, electricity, fuel and raw materials, and other costs, may not correlate with changes in the prices we receive for our products, either in the direction of the price change or in absolute magnitude. Natural gas and raw materials costs represent a substantial part of our manufacturing energy costs. In particular, electricity and fuel represent a component of the costs to manufacture building products. Most of the raw materials we use are commodities and the price of each can fluctuate widely for a variety of reasons, including changes in availability because of major capacity additions or reductions or significant facility operating problems. Other external factors beyond our control can cause volatility in raw materials prices, demand for our products, product prices, sales volumes and margins. These factors include general economic conditions, the level of business activity in the industries that use our products, competitors' actions, international events and circumstances, and governmental regulation in the United States and abroad, such as climate change regulation. These factors can also magnify the impact of economic cycles on our business. While we attempt to pass through price increases in energy costs and raw materials there can be no reassurance that we can do so in the future.

Additionally, our products used in housing, transportation and building and construction markets are impacted by changes in demand in these sectors, which may be significantly affected by changes in economic and other conditions such as gross domestic product levels, employment levels, demographic trends, legislative actions and consumer confidence. These factors can lower the demand for and pricing of our products, which could cause our net sales and net income to decrease.

We face competition from other polymer companies as well as chemical companies, which could adversely affect our sales, results of operations or cash flows.

We actively compete with companies that produce the same or similar products, and in some instances with companies that produce different products that are designed for the same end uses. We encounter competition in price, payment terms, delivery, service, performance, product innovation, product recognition and quality, depending on the product involved.

We expect that our competitors will continue to develop and introduce new and enhanced products, which could cause a decline in the market acceptance of our products. In addition, our competitors could cause a reduction in the selling prices of some of our products as a result of intensified price competition. Competitive pressures can also result in the loss of major customers. An inability to compete successfully could have an adverse effect on our financial position, results of operations or cash flows.

We may also experience increased competition from companies that offer products based on alternative technologies and processes that may be more competitive or better in price or performance, causing us to lose customers and result in a decline in our sales volume and earnings.

Additionally, some of our customers may already be or may become large enough to justify developing in-house production capabilities. Any significant reduction in customer orders as a result of a shift to in-house production could adversely affect our sales and operating profits.

A major failure of our information systems could harm our business.

We depend on integrated information systems to conduct our business. We may experience operating problems with our information systems as a result of system failures, viruses, computer "hackers" or other causes. Any significant

disruption or slowdown of our systems could cause customers to cancel orders or cause standard business processes to become inefficient or ineffective, which could adversely affect our financial position, results of operations or cash flows.

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Disruptions in the global credit and financial markets could limit our access to credit, which could negatively impact our business.

Domestic and foreign credit and financial markets have experienced disruption in recent years, including volatility in security prices, diminished liquidity and credit availability, declining valuations of certain investments and significant changes in the capital and organizational structures of certain financial institutions. These market conditions may limit our ability to access the capital necessary to grow and maintain our business. Accordingly, we may be forced to delay raising capital, issue shorter tenors than we prefer or pay unattractive interest rates, which could increase our interest expense, decrease our profitability and significantly reduce our financial flexibility. Overall, our results of operations, financial condition and cash flows could be materially adversely affected by disruptions in the global credit and financial markets.

The economic downturn in Europe has had and may continue to have a negative effect on our business and operations. The economic downturn in Europe has caused, and continues to have, a negative effect on our business, results of operations, and financial condition. Many of our customers, distributors and suppliers have been affected by these economic conditions. Current or potential customers may be unable to fund purchases or may determine to reduce purchases or inventories or may cease to continue in business. In addition, suppliers may not be able to supply us with needed raw materials on a timely basis, may increase prices or go out of business, which could result in our inability to meet customer demand or could affect our gross margins.

The timing, strength or duration of any recovery in the European economic markets remains uncertain, and there can be no assurance that market conditions will improve in the near future. Such conditions make it difficult to forecast operating results, make business decisions and identify and address material business risks.

The agreements governing our debt, including our revolving credit facility, contain various covenants that limit our ability to take certain actions and also require us to meet financial maintenance tests, failure to comply with which could have a material adverse effect on us.

The agreements governing our senior secured term loan and senior secured revolving credit facility contain a number of significant covenants that, among other things, limit our ability to: consummate asset sales, incur additional debt or liens, consolidate or merge with any person or transfer or sell all or substantially all of our assets, pay dividends or make certain other restricted payments, make investments, enter into transactions with affiliates, create dividend or other payment restrictions with respect to subsidiaries, make capital investments and alter the business we conduct. In addition, these agreements require us to comply with specific financial ratios and tests, under which we are required to achieve specific financial and operating results. Our ability to comply with these provisions may be affected by events beyond our control. A breach of any of these covenants would result in a default under the agreements. In the event of any default, our lenders could elect to declare all amounts borrowed under the agreements, together with accrued interest thereon, to be due and payable. In such an event, we cannot assure you that we would have sufficient assets to pay debt then outstanding under the agreements governing our debt. Any future refinancing of the term loan or revolving credit facility is likely to contain similar restrictive covenants.

To service our indebtedness, we will require a significant amount of cash. Our ability to generate cash depends on many factors beyond our control.

Our ability to pay interest on our debt and to satisfy our other debt obligations will depend in part upon our future financial and operating performance and that of our subsidiaries and upon our ability to renew or refinance borrowings. Prevailing economic conditions and financial, business, competitive, legislative, regulatory and other factors, many of which are beyond our control, will affect our ability to make these payments. While we believe that cash flow from our current level of operations, available cash and available borrowings under our revolving credit facility will provide adequate sources of liquidity for at least the next twelve months, a significant drop in operating cash flow resulting from economic conditions, competition or other uncertainties beyond our control could create the need for alternative sources of liquidity. If we are unable to generate sufficient cash flow to meet our debt service obligations, we will have to pursue one or more alternatives, such as, reducing or delaying capital or other expenditures, refinancing debt, selling assets, or raising equity capital.

We cannot guarantee that our business will generate sufficient cash flow from operations or that future borrowings will be available to us under the revolving credit facility in an amount sufficient to enable us to pay our indebtedness

or to fund our other liquidity needs. We may need to refinance all or a portion of our indebtedness on or before

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maturity. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to refinance any of our indebtedness, including our term loan and revolving credit facility, on commercially reasonable terms or at all.

We have a significant amount of goodwill, and any future goodwill impairment charges could adversely impact our results of operations.

As of December 31, 2012, we had goodwill of \$405.5 million. The future occurrence of a potential indicator of impairment, such as a significant adverse change in legal factors or business climate, an adverse action or assessment by a regulator, unanticipated competition, a material negative change in relationships with significant customers, strategic decisions made in response to economic or competitive conditions, loss of key personnel or a more-likely-than-not expectation that a reporting unit or a significant portion of a reporting unit will be sold or disposed of, could result in goodwill impairment charges, which could adversely impact our results of operations. We have recorded goodwill impairment charges in the past, and such charges materially impacted our historical results of operations. For additional information, see Note 4, Goodwill and Intangible Assets, to the accompanying consolidated financial statements.

Poor investment performance by our pension plan assets may increase our pension liability and expense, which may increase the required funding of our pension obligations and divert funds from other potential uses.

We provide defined benefit pension plans to eligible employees. Our pension expense and our required contributions to our pension plans are directly affected by the value of plan assets, the actual rate of return on plan assets and the actuarial assumptions we use to measure our defined benefit pension plan obligations, including the rate at which future obligations are discounted to a present value, or the discount rate. As of December 31, 2012, we assumed a weighted average rate of return of 8.43% on pension assets.

Poor investment performance by our pension plan assets resulting from a decline in prices in the equity and/or fixed income markets could significantly increase the deficit position of our plans. Should the assets earn an average return less than our assumed rate, it is likely that future pension expenses and funding requirements would increase.

We establish the discount rate used to determine the present value of the projected and accumulated benefit obligation at the end of each year based upon the available market rates for high quality, fixed income investments. An increase in the discount rate would increase future pension expense and, conversely, a decrease in the discount rate would decrease future pension expense.

Based on current guidelines, assumptions and estimates, including stock market prices and interest rates, we anticipate that we will make cash contributions of approximately \$75 million to our pension plans, including \$50 million of contributions above our estimated required amounts, in 2013.

We cannot predict whether changing market or economic conditions, regulatory changes or other factors will further increase our pension expense or funding obligations, diverting funds we would otherwise apply to other uses.

Risks related to our pension and other post-retirement plans may adversely impact our results of operations and cash flow.

Significant changes in actual investment return on pension assets, discount rates, and other factors have and may continue to adversely affect our results of operations and pension contributions in future periods. U.S. generally accepted accounting principles require that we calculate income or expense for the plans using actuarial valuations. These valuations reflect assumptions about financial markets and interest rates. Changes in these assumptions have resulted in material charges to income in recent years and may continue in future periods. Funding requirements for our U.S. pension plans may become more significant. The ultimate amounts to be contributed are dependent upon, among other things, interest rates, underlying asset returns and the impact of legislative or regulatory changes related to pension funding obligations. For a discussion regarding the significant assumptions used to estimate pension expense, including discount rate and the expected long-term rate of return on plan assets, and how our financial statements can be affected by pension plan accounting policies, see "Critical Accounting Policies" included in "Item 7. Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations."

The failure to successfully combine the businesses of PolyOne and Spartech (which we refer to after consummation of the merger as the "Combined Company") may adversely affect future results of the Combined Company.

The success of the proposed merger will depend, in part, on the ability of the Combined Company to realize anticipated benefits from combining the businesses of PolyOne and Spartech. To realize these anticipated benefits,

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the businesses of PolyOne and Spartech must be successfully combined. If we are not able to achieve these objectives, the anticipated benefits of the merger may not be realized fully or at all or may take longer to realize than expected. The Combined Company may not be able to retain customers or suppliers. Customers or suppliers may seek to modify contractual obligations with the Combined Company, which could have an adverse effect on the Combined Company's business and operations.

As a result of the merger, the Combined Company may experience strain in relationships with customers and suppliers that may harm the Combined Company's business and results of operations. Certain customers or suppliers may seek to terminate or modify contractual obligations following the merger whether or not contractual rights are triggered as a result of the merger. There can be no guarantee that customers and suppliers will remain with or continue to have a relationship with the Combined Company, or remain with or continue to have a relationship with the Combined Company on the same or similar contractual terms following the merger. If any of the customers or suppliers seek to terminate or modify contractual obligations or dis