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Michigan Sugar Company wraps up successful first season of public tours

Second season of public tours to begin in September, offering firsthand look at Michigan Sugar processing operations

BAY CITY – Michigan Sugar Company recently wrapped up its first season of public tours at its sugarbeet processing facility in Bay City and plans are now being made for season two.

“We have been so thrilled about the success of our expanded tour program for the Bay City factory,” said Elizabeth Taylor, Agriculture Communications Coordinator for Michigan Sugar Company, who oversees the plant tour program. “Interest in touring was even higher than we expected and the feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive.”

From September 2017 through February, 82 tours were offered at the factory, located at 2600 S. Euclid Ave. in Bay City. The company welcomed 735 guests during those tours, which give the public a behind-the-scenes look at how sugarbeets are sliced, how the sugar is extracted and how the packaging and warehouse facilities operate. There also are tasting stations along the way.

Taylor said planning for the next round of tours is underway and the company is looking to expand its offerings.

“Next season, we will be offering field trips for high school classes,” she said. “We have a unique opportunity to educate our community members on agriculture, food processing and food packaging all in one tour. Our Bay City factory has been part of the area’s landscape for more than 110 years and we are excited to show people what we do.”

The second season of public tours is set to begin in September. Michigan Sugar Company will begin scheduling tours in July and posting available dates online at michigansugar.com/factory-tours. Reminders also will be posted on the company’s Facebook page.

The guided tours last about 60 minutes and all those who take part leave with a special 2-pound bag of Michigan Sugar Company’s white granulated Pioneer Sugar.

With its corporate office in Bay City, Michigan Sugar Company is a cooperative owned by approximately 1,000 growers who annually plant and harvest about 160,000 acres of sugarbeets. The company processes those beets at factories in Bay City, Caro, Croswell and Sebawaing, producing approximately 1.2 billion pounds of sugar each year that it sells under the Pioneer and Big Chief brands.