



Ash Grove Texas, LP – Francisco Pinto, manager of community and environmental affairs, background front row (l-r) Cynthia Lim, Amy Keele, Joyce Keen, Moses Perez and Bill Butts, back row: Ulysses Crenshaw, Jason McBride, Jeff Ahlert, Rueben Garcia.

PHOTO BY KIM GRUBBS

Ash Grove puts green into cement manufacturing

By Betty Dillard | bdillard@bizpress.net

Environmental responsibility is the cornerstone of Ash Grove Cement Co., a pioneer and longtime leader in the lime and cement manufacturing industries. As the largest American-owned producer of cement and the sixth largest producer of cement in the United States, Ash Grove has had a strong commitment to environmental stewardship for 126 years.

From the beginning, Ash Grove was green before it was cool to be green. Its directors, as well as other leaders in the cement industry, have followed a principle that concrete is an important product in achieving sustainable development because its primary ingredient – cement – is a sustainable product.

As a result, a decade ago, Ash Grove's board of directors adopted an Environmental and Health and Safety Policy based on the company's priorities.

In 2004, Ash Grove furthered its commitment to sustainable development when it became the only U.S.-based cement company to join the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's

Cement Sustainability Initiative.

As a further testament to its sustainability commitment, Ash Grove manufacturing practices and products help architects earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification for their projects.

Founded in 1882 in Ash Grove, Mo., under the name Ash Grove White Lime Association, the company today has an annual production capacity of almost 9 million tons of quality Portland and

masonry cements used in the construction of highways, bridges, commercial and industrial complexes, single and multifamily homes and other business and retail structures.

In addition to its nine cement manufacturing facilities located across the country, Ash Grove, which is headquartered in Overland Park, Kan., owns two deep water import terminals, a major quarry operation in Blubber Bay, British Columbia, Canada, and subsidiaries consisting of ready-mix companies, aggregate companies, packaged materials companies and a paving company.

The company's longstanding tradition of service and quality and its significant investment in new technology to improve air quality by reducing harmful ozone-forming emissions is perhaps no where more evident than in its Midlothian plant.

Ash Grove acquired a stake in the North Texas Cement Co. in 1994, and in 2002, the company took full ownership of the Midlothian cement plant.

Almost from the fire-up of business in Midlothian, Ash Grove has worked to do its part in improving air quality in the North Texas area. The plant, which produces about 1 million tons of cement annually, is one of six that uses tire-derived fuel, which consists of discarded automobile and truck tires. Ash Grove's switch from coal to scrap tires puts it in the industry driver's seat for reducing the demand for imported fuels and decreasing the number of tires being tossed into landfills.

The company also has significantly reduced emissions at the North Texas plant, including a type of ozone-forming emission from the kiln called NOx (oxides of nitrogen), which is produced in combustion processes. Since 1995, Ash Grove has reduced NOx emissions at the Midlothian facility by more than 43 percent,

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according to Chuck Wiedenhoft, president of Ash Grove Cement Co. But the company has not stopped there.

New technology installed at the beginning of 2008 on all three of its kilns at the Midlothian operation will help reduce emissions even more.

Called Selective Non-Catalytic Reduction, the technology involves the injection of ammonia into the kiln's flue. This converts NOx emissions in the flue gas into elemental nitrogen and water. With the use of this technology, the company has the potential for an additional 30 percent to 40 percent reduction in NOx emissions.

The state-of-the-art technology also converts into Ash Grove Cement Co. continuing its winning ways.

"We are quite pleased to earn the North Texas Clean Air Coalition's 'Working for Cleaner Air Employer of the Year 2008' award. We value our relationship with the coalition and the opportunity to work with other Texas employers on its Business Community Outreach Committee," says Ash Grove Chairman and CEO Charlie Sunderland.

"This award validates our strong commitment to improve air quality in the Dallas-Fort. Worth region. We also hope that it draws attention to our successful results in reducing ozone-forming NOx emissions," Sunderland says.

Sunderland, whose family has guided the business for nearly a century, says Ash Grove was one of the first wet process cement plants in the world to install SNCR NOx control technology.

"Today, our Midlothian plant has the lowest NOx emission levels of any wet kiln in the U.S. and, to our knowledge, the lowest in the world. Our emissions are lower than nine of 13 dry kilns in Texas," he says, based on detailed information provided by each of the plants to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Sunderland says his company is equally determined to deliver the benefits of responsible manufacturing locally to customers, employees, shareholders and the communities where it conducts business.

"Ash Grove's entire staff is focused on working to do even more to improve our environmental performance, which is why we also adopted several other education initiatives about energy use and improving the environment for our employees," Sunderland says.

At the Midlothian facility, for example, the company offers financial

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– Charlie Sunderland,
Ash Grove chairman & CEO

incentives to any employee who leaves his or her car at home and commutes another way. Telework incentives and flexible scheduling options also are offered to all employees in an effort to reduce driving time.

Additionally, a new company policy has been implemented for scheduling off-site meetings after 10 a.m. during ozone season, and energy conservation measures were put in place at the plant in partnership with the local utility provider.

Ash Grove also is giving back to the community in other ways by providing support for dozens of local organizations in Ellis County, including fire and rescue teams, scouting programs, civic projects and youth sports. The company is a member of the Wildlife Habitat Council, a nonprofit group of corporations, conservation organizations and individuals dedicated to restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat. ♦

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Ash Grove Cement Company is proud our Texas employees earned the North Texas Clean Air Coalition's 2008 "Working for Cleaner Air" award.

The award recognizes Ash Grove's environmental commitment and the progress we are making to achieve sustainable development. Ash Grove values our participation in the North Texas Clean Air Coalition and fully supports efforts to further improve air quality.

Ash Grove's Midlothian facility was one of the first wet process cement plants in the world to install SNCR technology to lower ozone forming emissions. Today, Ash Grove's Midlothian plant has the lowest NOx emission levels of any wet kiln plant in the U.S. and, to our knowledge, the world. Because of the success we've had during the past year, NOx emission levels at our Midlothian plant are lower than at nine of 13 dry kilns in Texas, based on 2007 TCEQ data.

All of us at Ash Grove are continuing our hard work to further improve our environmental performance including several new education initiatives that are underway to protect the environment and reduce energy consumption.



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