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# NEIGHBORS

A SERVICE OF ASH GROVE CEMENT COMPANY — CHANUTE PLANT | FALL 2011

## Ash Grove Hits \$20 Million Energy Reduction Goal

This August Ash Grove plants throughout the country achieved an ambitious goal to reduce energy costs by \$20 million – 15 months early – another Ash Grove energy management (AGem) success.

“Chuck Wiedenhoft always described the goal in terms of a three legged stool – reduce emissions, improve efficiency and reduce costs,” said Andy Lippert, Ash Grove corporate energy director, of the company’s then president and chief operating officer who died in 2010. “He got this started in 2007 and we set a five-year time horizon to make it happen.” *(continued on page 2)*



Ash Grove Chanute celebrated its Ash Grove Energy Management (AGem) award with a steak luncheon. From left is Tom Erickson, maintenance supervisor, and Joe Relp, repairman.

## A NOTE FROM RANDY PRYOR, PLANT MANAGER



Randy Pryor, plant manager

While the economy has yet to do its part to get things back on a healthy path, our employees are more than doing theirs. Team-oriented and loyal, Ash Grove Cement Chanute employees not only do well for the plant, they enjoy active involvement in our community as you will read in other stories here on projects such as the Take Charge!

Challenge, the Neosho County Community College golf tournament fundraiser for endowed scholarships and the American Legion Rodeo.

We have a great group of people that call southeast Kansas their home. Many of our employees are very active in the community with neighbors, friends, and family. That’s what makes Chanute and southeast Kansas a great place to live and work. Positive people working together towards positive goals. There are a lot of great things going on in Chanute, and it is fun to learn how others are stepping into leadership roles, making good choices to save energy, supporting our schools, and more.

Recently we heard the exciting news of a new business relocating part of their operations to Chanute. Spirit Aerosystems is bringing part of their manufacturing operation to Chanute in 2012. Projections of up to 150 good paying jobs are anticipated with Spirit’s move. This is huge for our community and its future! During tough economic times it is uplifting to see an American business doing well and coming to our community. We here at Ash Grove welcome Spirit to the Chanute community and congratulate the leaders of our community for making this happen. We all look forward to a long and bright future here in Chanute. ■

## There are a lot of great things going on in Chanute.

## Rodeo Donation Supports American Legion Post

July’s 31st Annual American Legion Rodeo attracted up to 1,000 enthusiastic attendees who watched friends, families,

neighbors and visitors in events like the bull riding, bare back riding and saddle bronc competitions and especially enjoyed watching the kids in the calf pull chase after the ribbons attached to the scrambling calves, hoping for a cash pay off! Ash Grove Cement Chanute’s donation in support of the riding events,

rodeo clown and the Kansas Junior Bull Riding Association event helps draw more competitors and attendees, said Jim Kinne, Old Soldiers Reunion chairman for more than 20 years. “It was a good event that raised money for the American Legion Post,” he said. “We really appreciate Ash Grove’s support.” ■

# ASH GROVE TAKES CHARGE!

## With a CFL Exchange and Energy Hog Roast

Ash Grove Cement Chanute joined the friendly competition on energy saving among four regions of the state of Kansas with a successful exchange of incandescent bulbs for compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). The goal was 1,500 bulbs and the exchange totaled more than 1,700. "Ash Grove is great to work with," said Rhonda McMillan, a city administrative assistant. "The CFL exchange was important because if each individual makes what seems like a small change in energy use, like switching to CFLs, then all of us making that small change together can make a big difference."

The Take Charge! Challenge, hosted from January through September of this year, is a Climate and Energy Project carried out in partnership with the Kansas Energy Office. The region that saves the most energy earns a prize valued at

\$100,000 for a renewable energy or energy efficiency project in the city.

At the June "Roast the Energy Hog at the Park" event, Ash Grove Cement's environmental manager Mark Ward, plant accountant Peggy Ward, plant manager Randy Pryor and senior sales representatives Eric Trytten and Bob Brooks joined 1,500 other Ash Grove employees, friends and neighbors for this carnival-style event with good food and fun games for the kids, all to promote energy efficiency. Mark and Peggy staffed the table with coloring books and hand molds of clay for the kids while Eric and Bob promoted energy efficient concrete ICF (insulating concrete forms) that are rated to withstand an F5 tornado. Randy said he was put to his best and highest use serving food and working clean up. "We definitely

made an impact on the awareness of the energy efficiency of cement and this product in particular," Brooks said. "People are learning that cement is not just in sidewalks but that they have the opportunity to use one of the most sustainable materials there is in their own home." ■

**"The CFL exchange was important because if each individual makes what seems like a small change in energy use, like switching to CFLs, then all of us making that small change together can make a big difference!"**



Photos left to right: Lunch celebration at the plant included cake; Jeff Welch, physical tester/analyst (left), and Matt Lewis, mix chemist (right), prepare their plates during a plant lunch to thank employees for exceeding their goal of changing 1,500 light bulbs; U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts (R., Kan.) at left, greets Chanute City Manager J.D. Lester during Roberts' visit to Ash Grove's Chanute, Kansas, plant.

## Ash Grove Hits Energy Reduction Goal

*(continued from front cover)*

To prepare, Lippert said that a team went through all the plants, five years of operating data and did some benchmarking. Then he joined Chuck, Ash Grove Chairman Charlie Sunderland, Vice President of Manufacturing Services Fran Streitman in meeting with senior staff and plant managers to design the program. In early 2008, the team held meetings at every plant with supervisors and hourly staff to talk it through and roll out the program.

"Employee suggestions have been gratifying," Lippert said. "Everything from turning on a conveyor belt only when it is moving material to putting motion detectors on lighting to installing heat exchangers and reclaiming heat off the clinker cooling process. We still are receiving ideas good enough to implement companywide."

The company already has begun writing goals and procedures for 2013 and beyond to continue to conserve energy and natural resources by improving the efficiency and performance of the plants. ■

## Sen. Pat Roberts Visits Ash Grove Cement Chanute

We welcomed Chanute native U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) when he came Thursday, June 2 to tour the plant operations and meet with our employees. With plant manager Randy Pryor as his guide Sen. Roberts got to see the plant and the work we do, spending most of his time speaking with and taking questions from our employees. ■

## EMPLOYEE PROFILE

### Brad LaRue's School Vocation



Brad LaRue

Brad LaRue is new to the school board, but not to the cause. He has served on the community advisory committee for the technical

education program since its inception five or six years ago, which is administered through Neosho Community College with facilities provided by Chanute High School. "One of the reasons I filed to serve on the school board is that I do think we can improve and expand our vocational education curriculum," said LaRue, Ash Grove Cement Chanute's maintenance manager for more than 18 years. "While our public school system is geared to prepare kids to go to college, plenty of people here are proof that developing a craft allows you to make a good living and provide for your family."

LaRue returned to his hometown of Chanute after working in the Kansas City area. "This is a nice town and a great place to raise kids," he said. "The fence around my yard is to keep the dog and kids in and not others out."

LaRue also has been active in Boy Scouts since the age of seven, enjoying its high adventure activities as a Scout, volunteering as his sons became Eagle Scouts and now serving as the institutional representative between his church and the Scout troop it sponsors. For his church, he serves as moderator of the church board, conducting the quarterly meetings and seeing that it stays in good fiscal health.

He says that "good fiscal health" is the state of the school district, too, "The previous superintendent left us in good financial shape and our new superintendent, Dr. James Hardy, runs an efficient operation. When you talk to people in our community, to staff and students, all are very proud of the system and I am, too." ■

## Working Together Toward a Common Safety Goal

"Not one individual department can do anything without the help of others," said Mike Byers, production manager. "From the time we crush the first rock in the quarry to getting the finished product out the door, we need to be looking out for each other." In talking with Byers, Tom Rutledge, waste fuel manager, and Brad LaRue, maintenance manager, you hear that this interdependence and programs like STOP (Safety Training and Observation Program) are a big part of what drives the consistently high attention to safety at Ash Grove Cement Chanute.

**"From the time we crush the first rock in the quarry to getting the finished product out the door, we need to be looking out for each other."**

"STOP breaks down barriers," said Rutledge. "You have 100 employees, with each assigned to do a STOP observation once a week and that's a lot of interaction. It may be awkward your first time, but it gives you permission to have a conversation about your concern when you see something is not being performed as safely as it could be."

"We all have areas in our work that, if not carried out responsibly, could be harmful," said LaRue. "We do a lot of different things to stay aware – task training, understand the hazards, integrate with STOP observations."

"Ash Grove has always emphasized safety," said Byers. "We are always looking for ways to improve it and everyone really buys into it and looks out for each other's safety." ■



Chanute plant.

## Leadership Chanute Comes to Ash Grove

Members of the 2010-2011 class of Leadership Chanute came to Ash Grove Cement Chanute to tour the plant and learn about our business. Leadership Chanute, a partnership between Neosho County Community College and the Chanute Area Chamber of Commerce & Office of Tourism, helps educate and develop local citizens into our future community leaders.

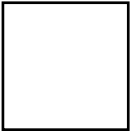
Requiring one day a month of participants for nine months, the program addresses leadership style, creating a vision, understanding government, economic development issues, change management and entrepreneurship. Each class is asked to work on a community service project, and all participants are encouraged to continue in a volunteer leadership capacity once their class term has ended.

"Ash Grove is Chanute's biggest industrial community member, and we got a glimpse of the kind of leadership skills it requires to operate a facility with its scope of operations," said Tim Fairchild, Leadership Chanute facilitator and vice president of Commercial Bank. Fairchild said it was an eye-opening tour and an example of why Leadership Chanute is an effective program that highlights the need to cultivate leadership in others wherever they are working, living and contributing. ■



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## GOLF TOURNAMENT FUNDS ENDOW ANOTHER SCHOLARSHIP

The Neosho County Community College (NCCC) Foundation Golf Tournament this year raised enough money to fulfill the requirements for an endowed scholarship in the name of Harold Turner, a stand out basketball player in the late 1960s. Interest from the \$10,000 scholarship fund is used to pay for books and tuition for a member of the basketball team.

“It takes us about two to two-and-a-half years to fund an endowed scholarship,” said Tim Heenan, foundation chairman and Ash Grove Cement Chanute’s human resources and safety manager. “We learned that this is only the second endowed athletic scholarship, after one for the baseball team. Our next scholarship will be in support of women’s basketball or volleyball.” NCCC is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year.

**“What is really great is how the college and Ash Grove work together to create with the endowed scholarships something that will last, giving students a strong foundation year after year into the future.”**

“We are very proud of our relationship with Ash Grove and all the donors who help our students,” said Dr. Brian Inbody, NCCC president and a member of Ash Grove’s Community Advisory Committee. “What is really great is how the college and Ash Grove work together to create with the endowed scholarships something that will last, giving students a strong foundation year after year into the future.” ■

*Both photos: Tim Heenan (right), human resources and safety manager at Ash Grove Chanute, and his stepson Nick Coy, played in the Neosho County Community College Foundation’s 2011 golf tournament.*