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A SERVICE OF ASH GROVE CEMENT COMPANY – MIDLOTHIAN 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.”

To prepare, Lippert said that a team went through all the plants, five years of operating data and did some benchmarking.

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Bluebonnets bloom around the Midlothian plant every April. The bluebonnet is the Texas state flower.

A NOTE FROM KEVIN BLANKENSHIP, PLANT MANAGER



*Kevin Blankenship,
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. Efficient, productive and good spirited, Ash Grove Midlothian 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 Meals On Wheels, blood drives, fossil hunts, and board service for our senior citizens center.

We have a great group of people who love what they do and where they do it, knowing that our plant, much like our local construction companies, play a large role in supporting the growth of the surrounding communities. Having a local supply of quality cement at a good price plays a vital role in the stable, continuous growth of the greater Dallas-Ft. Worth area.

New federal regulations put forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires cement plants to meet lower emissions and increased monitoring standards by September 2013. Ash Grove Midlothian will continue to invest in its plant operations and will meet all the 2013 requirements. We all look forward to a long and bright future here in Midlothian. ■

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Sen. Birdwell Visits Ash Grove Cement Midlothian

Texas state Sen. Brian Birdwell, R-Granbury, toured the Ash Grove Cement Midlothian plant on Wednesday, August 3. With plant manager Kevin Blankenship as his guide, Sen. Birdwell had a thorough look at the plant and the quarry and met several of the plant’s employees along the way.



Kevin Blankenship with Sen. Brian Birdwell



Photos left to right: Kevin Blankenship, Midlothian plant manager (fourth from left), presents check to Meals-On-Wheels; Francisco Pinto searches for fossils with kids from the KIDS Care Center in the Ash Grove quarry.

Ash Grove Charitable Foundation Gives \$10,000 to Midlothian-Area Meals on Wheels

The Ash Grove Charitable Foundation recently donated \$10,000 to Meals-on-Wheels of Johnson and Ellis Counties for a capital campaign to build a regional kitchen facility. The 25,000-square-foot facility is expected to provide 1,200 meals per day when it opens in fall 2012.

“We are very appreciative of Ash Grove’s gift. This gift, along with others, will help us get closer to our fundraising goals,” said Vinsen Faris, Meals-on-Wheels executive director.

Currently, Meals-on-Wheels is serving breakfast and lunch to more than 700 elderly homebound in 22 communities. The organization has raised \$1.2 million of the \$4 million it needs for the facility’s construction. ■

Ash Grove Cement Midlothian Provides Cement In Vital Roadway Projects

The \$1.02 billion, 14.4-mile DFW Connector project will have 60,000 tons of our cement in the roadway under construction between Dallas and Fort Worth. Started in 2010, the project is intended to improve safety and mobility at the north end of DFW International Airport and improve air quality by doubling roadway capacity by adding general purpose lanes, toll-managed lanes and continuous frontage roads, according to a release by the Texas Department of Transportation and Northgate Constructors. The DFW Connector is scheduled for completion in 2014.

Another key roadway, the LBJ Express, is getting Ash Grove cement from our Midlothian plant. More than 100,000 tons of our cement is being poured for this \$2.7 billion, 17-mile roadway that is meant to relieve congestion on one of the busiest roads in the Dallas area. According to the project website, the project improvements stretch along IH-635 from Luna Road to Greenville Avenue, as well as on IH-35E between Loop 12 and Valwood Parkway. The project is fast tracked for completion in 2016. ■

Kids Discover Fossils in Ash Grove’s Own “Jurassic Park”

A class of budding archeologists set out to discover the next great find when children from KIDS Care Center arrived for several hours of hunting and finding cool fossils and artifacts in a designated area of Ash Grove Midlothian’s quarry. Quarry Supervisor Sean Harris, Environmental and Community Affairs Manager Francisco Pinto and Production Manager David Fisher helped the kids with the “dig,” which resulted in several findings of fossilized shark’s teeth.

Millions of years ago, this area where we have mined down to shale used to be the floor of the ocean.

Sean said the kids really enjoyed it, and he appreciated the decorated thank you note the class sent. “Millions of years ago, this area where we have mined down to the shale used to be the floor of the ocean,” he said. “In addition to working with places like KIDS Care Center, we open the quarry up a couple times a year to paleontologist, gem and mineral clubs and classes from area universities. They love coming out here and, every once in while, someone will come across fossilized bones.” ■

Midlothian Employees Donate Blood to Injured TXI Workers

In July and September, Ash Grove Cement Midlothian employees participated in blood drives coordinated by Carter Blood Care, Texas’ largest blood center that serves 54 counties in north central and east Texas. They donated a total of nearly 50 units to benefit TXI Cement Company employees recovering from injuries suffered in a May 19 accident at their company’s Midlothian plant.

We send our best wishes, too, for their continued recovery. ■

Midlothian Leadership Graduate Steps Up



Joyce Keen

The Midlothian Senior Citizen Center has a new board member.

Joyce Keen, Ash Grove Cement Midlothian plant accountant, began her board of directors position with the center this summer shortly after completing Leadership Midlothian.

The annual nine-month leadership program sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce attracts those interested in becoming involved in the community and educates them about local businesses, the school system and all the organizations that help Midlothian thrive.

“It was so eye-opening,” Joyce said. “You see how different companies operate compared to your own and learn that it takes everyone to make everything work in our community, not one person or organization, it takes all of us.”

Joyce said there were 12 in her Leadership Midlothian class, including City Councilman Joe Frizell, who sits on the center’s board and who nominated Joyce for a board seat. “This is my first board position, and I am excited to do what I can to serve our community’s only senior citizen center. Karen Cox is our director and she guides the staff and volunteers who make sure services and recreational activities are the best they can be while the board offers financial oversight and gives guidance as needed on policy matters.” ■

“...it takes everyone to make everything work in our community, not one person or organization, it takes all of us.”

Ash Grove Hits \$20 Million Energy Reduction Goal

(continued from front cover)

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. ■



Lloyd Bratcher



Romeo Carbajal



Paul Flores



Dwight Musfeldt



Virgil Thomas

FIVE EMPLOYEES HIGHLIGHTED IN RETIREMENT

Lloyd Bratcher, Romeo Carbajal, Paul Flores, Dwight Musfeldt and Virgil Thomas had more than 130 years of combined service to Ash Grove Cement Midlothian.

Virgil wore many hats during his 17 years with Ash Grove, according to HR/Safety Manager Brian Howell. He served in roles from sales to controller and took Brian under his wing when he first joined the company. “He was a great trainer,” Brian said. “He made sure I was on top of everything.”

Virgil admired his hard-working co-workers. “I loved working with the people who

were always willing to do whatever it took to get the job done, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And I’ll miss all the lunch adventures that occurred over the years,” he said.

For 15 years Dwight did important work in the lab making sure that the cement had the accurate composition and quality necessary to go into the mix. Doing work that tests strength, set times and composition, among other things, is essential to maintaining Ash Grove Cement quality. Dwight remembers the daily commitment put forth by employees at the plant. “There was only one person doing my job at any given time, and I was responsible for the quality of the product going out the gate,” he said. “I was always impressed with the level of responsibility maintained by all of the employees in every department.”

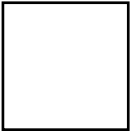
For Romeo, doing whatever was needed to get the job done was just standard operating procedure, according to Brian. Romeo worked in the quarry, giving Ash Grove 33 years. “I enjoyed operating the bulldozer and heavy equipment in the last six years I was there,” Romeo said. “I made many friends at Ash Grove, and I will miss the good people.”

According to Brian, Lloyd and Paul, together gave more than 65 years to the company, Lloyd in the store room and Paul as maintenance supervisor. Lloyd, an avid hunter, was quiet and unassuming, doing his work with exceptional efficiency. Paul, an excellent mechanic, really cared about the guys for whom he was responsible – a hallmark of all these men who spent their careers with us. ■



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Photos left to right: The Aurora solar car team; The Midlothian plant's Brian Howell, left, and James Owens, current James A. Holmes Safety Association chapter president; Ash Grove's Midlothian plant held a safety lunch on July 28, 2011, to celebrate having no lost time accidents or doctor reportables during June.

Ash Grove Cement Sponsors EXCITE

Just 45 miles from Ash Grove Cement Midlothian, students are engineering a solar car through Coppell High School's Pre-College Program, EXCITE (Exploring, sScience, Technology & Engineering) sponsored in part by Ash Grove Cement Company. The car, dubbed Aurora, was on display after doing laps at the Texas Motor Speedway in mid July. ■

RECOGNITION AND MILESTONES COME AS COMMITMENT TO SAFETY CONTINUES

Ash Grove Cement Midlothian passed the 1000-day mark with no lost-time accidents and, remarkably, could carry this record through its third year in a row in 2011. Last year, the plant was recognized with the L. T. Sunderland Safety Excellence Award for having the best overall safety performance throughout the entire Ash Grove plant community. Plant Human Resources and Safety Manager Brian Howell says the focus on safety is a combination of training, corporate-wide programs like STOP (Stop Training and Observation Program) and incentives unique to the Midlothian plant. "Everyone here is motivated every single day to do their job and help others do theirs in the most safe manner possible," Brian said.

Earlier this year, Howell was recognized as the outgoing president after a two-year term of the North Central Texas region of the James A. Holmes Safety Association (HSA), a non-profit organization founded in 1916 to promote health and safety in the mining industry. "Joseph Holmes was a pioneer in safety in the mining industry before any other such organization existed," Brian said. "It's a great organization that promotes our supporting each other throughout the industry with advice on doing whatever it takes to operate safely." ■