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# NEIGHBORS

A SERVICE OF ASH GROVE CEMENT COMPANY – MONTANA CITY 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)*



Montana City plant

## Montana City Builds on Strong Safety Record

Last year, Ash Grove’s Montana City plant celebrated an impressive safety milestone when it reached 10 years of safe operations. Today the plant is closing in on another safety milestone – stretching that streak to 4,000 days.

## A NOTE FROM DICK JOHNSON, PLANT MANAGER



Dick Johnson, plant manager

The economy may not have yet done its part to get things back on a healthy path, but our employees are doing theirs, and not just at the plant.

It takes a bit of effort on everyone’s part to make a strong community, and there are a lot of really great things going on in the Montana City area, as you’ll see from the stories here. Activities that include the Helena recycling effort and the annual blood drive.

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It’s fun to learn about where others are volunteering, what a difference we all can make if we do small things for the environment, how one person’s donation of blood multiplies to serve up to three people, and more.

You may have heard that new federal regulations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) require cement plants to meet higher emissions and monitoring standards by September 2013. Ash Grove Cement Montana City continues 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 Montana City. ■

Employee safety is important, but the plant’s commitment to protecting the things that matter isn’t limited to people. They also care about the environment.

Seven of Ash Grove’s plants, including Montana City, have earned ISO 14001 certification, an international standard for environmental control technology and

processes. As part of its ISO certification, Ash Grove asked the company conducting the inspections to select one of the plants as the best of the best.

And which plant did those environmental experts pick? Montana City. ■

## Plant Celebrates Retirement of Two 40-year Employees

The Ash Grove Montana City plant family recently celebrated the retirement of two employees, Dick Van Dyke and Jeff Howard, who both began their careers at the plant as laborers in 1971. When they retired 40 years later, Dick was responsible for planning and scheduling maintenance projects, and Jeff was responsible for testing finished cement to make sure it conformed to quality control standards.

Both men say they plan to relax and enjoy some time outdoors.

Dick has already taken a trip to Yellowstone National Park and has another trip planned to Glacier National Park soon.

Though he is looking forward to retirement, Dick said he will miss the tight-knit relationships among employees at the plant.

“Ash Grove was a really great place to work,” Dick said.

“Everybody I worked with, from management on down, I consider a friend. I raised a family of five working at Ash Grove, and I felt like I had another family at the plant.”

Jeff said he’s been taking it easy since leaving Ash Grove, but he’s planning a big three-week hunting trip with family. He also plans to travel to Phoenix to visit his brother, Jack, who retired from Ash Grove as office manager.

Jeff also says he is looking forward to having more time to focus on his golf game. Coincidentally, the golf course is the spot where Jeff recalled one of his funniest memories with Dick.

“We were out at the Bill Roberts Golf Course playing from the white tees,” Jeff said. “Dick hit this worm-burner that barely got off the ground. The ball bounced off the red tees, came right back at

**“Ash Grove is a really great place to work. Everybody I worked with, from management on down, I consider a friend.”**

him, and caught him in the face. It knocked him down and he had no idea what happened. He got up and turned around and said, ‘Why did you hit me?!’ I told him what happened, and thankfully the ball didn’t hit his eye so we could laugh about it. But I swear, you could see the dimples of the golf ball on his cheekbone.”

The Ash Grove family wishes Dick and Jeff many relaxing days, good fishing trips and incident-free rounds of golf in their retirement. ■



Photos clockwise left to right: The Montana City plant held a double retirement party Aug. 12, 2011; Jeff Howard (left), quality control technician, and Dick VanDyke (right), maintenance planner – both were hired in 1971, and both retired in 2011; Montana City 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. ■

## LAST CALL: Schiller Retires From Firefighting After 33 Years of Service



George Schiller

You might say George Schiller was born with service in his blood. For 33 years Schiller, whose day job is working as a machinist at Ash Grove,

served as a volunteer firefighter. In June 2011, he answered his last call as a first responder.

“My dad was really involved in the community. He was on the school board and a member of the fire department,” Schiller said. “I remember when I was little running to open the door to let him out when the fire whistle sounded. When I was older, the fire whistle was my cue to go man our family’s service station while dad was out on the fire call.”

George began a firefighting career of his own in 1978 with the East Helena Fire Department, just a couple months after starting at Ash Grove. In 1994, he moved to Montana City and joined the Montana City Fire Department, where he continued to serve until his retirement this summer. When asked about memories he has from his years of service, Schiller said it was a mixed bag.

“There are no fond memories when it comes to responding to wrecks and fires. You just try your best to make something good happen in a bad situation,” Schiller said. “But at the same time, the camaraderie of the fire department is unmatched. You’ll never have better friends than you do when you’re a firefighter.”

George is one of the dozens of Ash Grove employees who serve as first responders in communities across the central and western United States. Ash Grove is grateful for their service and proud to call them friends and coworkers. ■

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## Ash Grove Fills Prescription | Two Medicine Bridge

Just east of Glacier National Park on U.S. Highway 2, a new bridge is rising to span the Two Medicine River. It will replace a narrow, structurally deficient steel bridge built in 1941. All of the concrete in this safe and modern bridge is being made with high-quality cement from Ash Grove’s Montana City plant. ■



Bridge construction on U.S. Highway 2, spanning Two Medicine River.

## Helena Raises a Glass to Ash Grove Recycling Effort

Each year, residents in and around Helena recycle hundreds of tons of glass. Although recycled glass, known as cullet, has many uses, the environmental benefit of recycling is diminished if it has to be shipped great distances to be reused.

Headwaters Recycling Cooperative often struggles to find nearby companies and other organizations that can put the cullet to good use. One way to recycle the cullet is by using it as a substitute for some of the silica that is used to make cement.

In 1997, Ash Grove received a permit from the state of Montana to begin blending recycled glass with the silica used in the plant’s raw mix. Unfortunately, a discrepancy between two different sets of regulations forced the plant to stop the program until the rules were clarified. It took more than 10 years for federal officials to fix the glitch in the rules and get the recycling program restarted.

**“Since beginning recycling glass again, we’ve used about 175 tons of glass which would have been sent to local landfills.”**

Since the rule was fixed in 2010, Ash Grove’s Montana City plant is Headwaters’ best customer, taking between eight and 15 tons of cullet each month.

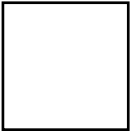
“Our permit allows up to 250 tons of recycled glass to be used as a raw material each year,” said Jeff Briggs, the plant’s environmental health and safety manager. “Since beginning recycling glass again, we’ve used about 175 tons of glass which would have been sent to local landfills. This also results in a reduction of about 260 tons of mined silica needed for the process.”

The partnership between Headwaters and Ash Grove has been so well received it was recently profiled in a news story by KXLH-TV. ■



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Photos, top to bottom: Mike Crowley, maintenance man, donated blood during the Montana City plant's blood drive held July 20, 2011; Ken Bujok, quarry truck operator, was all smiles after donating blood.

## MOSQUITO FOOD SUPPLY REDUCED Courtesy of Ash Grove Blood Drive

Generally speaking, Ash Grove frowns upon the practice of employees lying down on the job. But they made an exception to that policy on July 20, when Ash Grove hosted its annual blood drive. Employees rolled up their sleeves as technicians from the American Red Cross collected donations. For each unit donated, up to three people can be helped – and countless mosquitoes will go hungry.

As the holiday season approaches, blood donations tend to drop off as busy schedules make it harder to find the time to give.

As the holiday season approaches, blood donations tend to drop off as busy schedules make it harder to find the time to give. Though the blood supply drops, the demand can increase as more cars on the road traveling to grandma's house means more traffic accidents.

While you're thinking of the perfect gifts to share with loved ones, please consider sharing the gift of life with a stranger. To learn more about giving blood in our area, call the Red Cross at 406-495-1293, or visit <http://www.redcrossblood.org/locations/helena-donor-center>. ■