

Maine Drilling & Blasting Celebrates Community

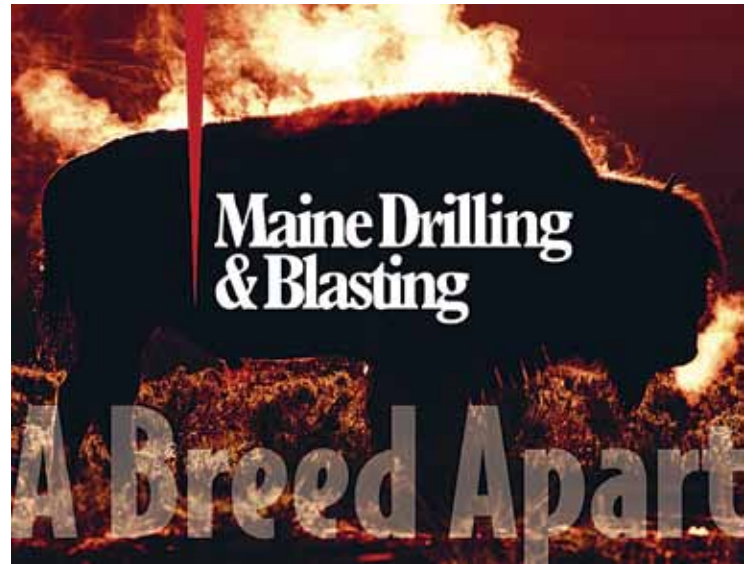
Maine Drilling & Blasting (MD&B), one of the nation's elite drilling and blasting companies, celebrates the importance of local service to its own success over the past 45 years by sharing its resources and wealth with various organizations that serve local community needs throughout the Northeast and across the country.

For MD&B, which provides drilling, blasting and related specialty services to the construction and quarry markets, it all started with service. Hard work, honesty and quality service were the bedrock upon which Ted Purington Sr. and his wife, Judy, founded the company in Gardiner, Maine, back in 1966. Throughout the years that followed, and the expansion of the company's footprint from Maine to New England, then on through the Northeast, from Pennsylvania to Virginia, these principles remained constant, along with a deliberate focus on local service. "We've always worked to grow regional markets with local people," explains company president and CEO, Bill Purington. "That means local employees and resources for supply and distribution. We've made it a point to commit to a local presence wherever we go."

MD&B has chosen to celebrate its 45th anniversary by stepping up its corporate-giving portfolio to in-

clude donations to an increased number of organizations. In addition to repeat recipients such as The United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters and Maine General Hospital, The Unity House of Troy, N.Y., received for the first time from MD&B, a major monetary contribution to help that 40-year-old service agency continue to make life better for those struggling in New York's capital region. Not neglecting hands-on, boots-on-the-ground aid, MD&B also contributed labor, equipment and finances to the Kids' Kove revitalization project, to help rebuild a community playground.

Among the additional organizations that MD&B is supporting for the first time this year are Bucksport Community Concerns, Bucksport, Maine; The Upstate Northeastern New York Chapter of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America; Connecticut Northern Lights Girls Sports Inc.; the Vermont Chapter of the March of Dimes; Camp Men-O-Lan, Quakertown, Pa.; Nativity School, New Bedford, Mass.; and Mothers Kitchen USA of the MA Center in California. "We're very pleased this year to be able to support more organizations, the causes they further, and the lives they change," says Purington.



Earlier in the year, the company canvassed a cross section of its customer base to elicit feedback on the quality of the services being provided. "We weren't after candy coating," notes Purington. "We wanted to know what's important to our customers – what we've been doing right and what we can improve upon. As part of our inquiry, we also asked them to identify community needs and local service organizations important to them. I'm happy to say their recommendations formed the basis for the majority of the new 45th anniversary donations we're making."

Leadership in Technology

Over the years, MD&B has taken the very mature business of explosives and mining, and applied new technology at virtually every turn. From being one of the first drilling and blasting companies to transition to hydraulic drills back in the mid-1980s, to most recently developing applications for electronic detonator technology, MD&B innovates with the singular purpose of productivity gains to benefit the company and its customers.

"Relevant technology can lead to expanded services and better service, which, in turn, spells success for all parties involved," notes MD&B vice president Mitch Green. "For instance, we've taken the performance of electronic detonators further than any other company in the country. This technology reduces vibration – making neighbors happy – and delivers improved quality in breakage and productivity gains in the way of expanded patterns, making customers happy."

At Maine Drilling & Blasting, technological innovation also means engineering proprietary solutions. Over the past seven years, bulk explosive has proven to be a good example. Pumping bulk



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emulsion instead of hauling and loading traditional stick or bag explosives can increase efficiency exponentially by saving manpower, energy and time. In 2004, the company became the first contractor in the country to construct and operate its own bulk blending and loading plant. By creating an internal, independent distribution network, MD&B is less vulnerable to supply disruption and pricing pressures associated with the traditional relationships with manufacturers.

Vertically-integrated Support

“Traditional drilling and blasting companies drill and shoot and call suppliers for product, for maintenance, etc.,” explains Green. “We, on the other hand, along the way during these past 45 years, have taken the key elements of support for drilling and blasting and strategically aligned these services by creating relevant internal departments so that our productivity isn’t enslaved by other companies’ business models.” That decision to vertically integrate has led to expanded services and efficiencies that MD&B customers have come to rely upon.

Maine Drilling & Blasting’s Product Services Group delivers mobilization and distribution services to the company. With in-house distribution, its own rolling stock, its own bulk trucks, and three major distribution facilities, MD&B is able to keep an average of 15 sites active each day. The company also created a technical services group to support its blaster training. Not only does this department deploy education to blasters, but also public outreach and customer training. This department offers an array of specialty services for MD&B’s customer’s projects, such as electronic detonation systems, laser profiling and bore tracking to increase accuracy, safety and production.

The company’s equipment services group supports all drilling activities, keeps the drill fleet and other machines in top condition, and also trains drill operators. MD&B customers are very vocal on how important it is to them that crews are not waiting for some other service provider to get out to a downed drill. MD&B me-

chanics are on-site, and know the equipment inside and out. This fundamental department has evolved into a diversified source of technology, knowledge and expertise that drives the company’s leadership in the industry.

MD&B staffs a very robust safety and risk management department that is responsible for the overall safety of its people and the regulatory compliance controls necessary to maintain its key licenses to operate. From audits and training to in-field pre-blast surveys and initial claims mitigation, this department makes sure the company’s “One Culture for Safety” develops, and is in line with its operating standards and vision and mission.

Full Circle to Local Service

MD&B has engineers local to each of its service areas throughout the Northeast, in keeping with its deliberate focus on local service. “We have eight regional operating divisions, based with local talent, lo-

cal people,” explains Purington. “Division managers develop their individual business plans in harmony with the corporate business plan. Each manager is responsible to run his/her business according to company standards, and develop the local market. Our focus is still on local markets. While we are interested in drilling and blasting at the highest level of large energy projects, for instance, we’re still very interested in the cellar holes in our backyards. We do both. We can do a project like the Holtwood Hydroelectric Plant Expansion in Pennsylvania, and also say we’ll be there at your house to drill and blast for your swimming pool because of our commitment to our local core business.”

Working Like Owners

Leadership in technology, vertically integrated internal support, a smart business model, and a pervasive commitment to local service all are part of Maine Drilling & Blasting’s business success. But in the end, executive management concedes, it all comes down to people.

“Our most important resource is our people – their knowledge and expertise, their work ethic, their passion and commitment,” says Purington. “In 2004, we began sharing the company’s success with those who are directly responsible for it by starting our Employee Stock Ownership Program. Today, we are almost 31 percent owned by our employees, employees who work with a new and strengthened owner’s sense of urgency and pride. This has given us a decidedly distinct competitive edge in our industry. Since 1966, our standards have been steeped in the tradition of being family-owned and operated. We’re still a close and cohesive group, but now we all work with the determination of owners. Many of our customers have seen the increases in production and quality that starts first within our organization and then translates to their own bottom lines. That’s a great source of pride for us, and a great complement to our local focus, both of which will sustain us beyond these first 45 years, well into the future.” **ND**

