

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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P.J. Keating Company paves the way for future success

LUNENBURG _ A recent \$4.5 million upgrade of P.J. Keating Company's asphalt plant in Lunenburg has put the company one step closer to being able to take advantage of more government contracts once the current economy improves. The upgrade, which was completed in July, was given a formal unveiling to Congressman John Olver (D-MA), ranking minority member of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, along with State Representative Jennifer Benson (D-Lunenburg); State Senator Jennifer Flanagan (D-Leominster) vice chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation, and other state and local officials on Sept. 1.

"We're excited P.J. Keating has made this investment in Lunenburg," Benson said.

The new asphalt plant replaces the old one, which had the ability to only make hot mix asphalt. The innovative warm mix asphalt technology unveiled at the PJ Keating Open House allows the plant to produce warm mix asphalt. This warm mix asphalt alternative will become protocol by 2012 for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation on all their interstate highways.

"Warm mix asphalt is the cutting edge of the future of highway paving," said Jim Reger, vice president of governmental and industrial affairs for Oldcastle Materials New England South, the parent company of P.J. Keating Company. "This represents a giant step in the greening of the asphalt paving industry."

Warm mix asphalt is manufactured at a much lower temperature than hot mix asphalt, thus reducing energy consumption by 40 to 60 percent; lowering emissions (greenhouse gas) and eliminating both smoke and smell.

"Warm mix asphalt is produced at temperatures of around 270 to 275 degrees vs. 310 degrees for hot mix," said John Keating, president and chief operating officer of the Eastern US for Oldcastle.

In addition to the new plant, additional silos were added, the electronics were upgraded in the control room, and a "Blue Smoke" package was added to the plant to help prevent the smell of asphalt from migrating into area neighborhoods.

Making an over \$4 million dollar investment into a new asphalt plant is something that did not come without serious consideration by the management of P.J. Keating Company. In the last year, the company has shrunk its work force from over 400 employees to 311 due to the decline in publicly-funded projects, the bulk of the company's work. Add to the mix the fact that the fiscal landscape for transportation is uncertain at best, and the expansion and revision of the facility seems even more daunting.

“I’m a strong supporter of putting the construction industry back to work in this country,” Olver said. “In my view, P.J. Keating has done exactly the right thing. It’s the right time to be making this investment. The interest rate is low for everyone who has to invest in these kinds of things. We’re going to realize revenue has to be raised and pass authorization bills of reasonable size to get people back to work. This is logical to me and must have seemed logical to P. J. Keating. Our infrastructure is our best way of getting people back to work.”

P.J. Keating Company and the Commonwealth will be holding its collective breath as a Sept. 30 deadline by Congress to decide on the federal gas tax looms ominously. The federal gas tax is used by states for transportation infrastructure needs.

“Congress needs to start looking at the gas tax. If we don’t get it, we will lose a lot of money coming to us. Where is the gas tax going is the question a lot of us have, and we need this to fund our projects. What happens in the federal government will affect us,” Flanagan said.

For now, P.J. Keating Company’s “leap of faith” has the attention of state and federal officials, and the company is optimistic that the future is bright.

“I’m very pleased to see this operation. The whole area, the whole state benefits from what you (P.J. Keating) are doing here in Lunenburg,” Olver said.

P.J. Keating Company was founded in 1923 and includes facilities in Acushnet, Dracut and Cranston, Rhode Island. The company became affiliated with Oldcastle Materials Inc. in 1999, and then became a part of a regional collaboration with Tilcon Connecticut, Inc. becoming Oldcastle Materials New England South in 2011. Oldcastle Materials, Inc. is the U.S. division of CRH, an international building materials company in Ireland that operates in 35 countries.

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