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# PIPELINERS

HALL of FAME NEWS



**55** YEARS

**M&B**  
Rock Steady at 55





When infrastructure is the topic, the conversation most often turns to the elements that keep a region running – public works, an orderly framework and underlying structure. But that’s only half of the story. What about the people and organizations that are the stewards of infrastructure? Those that keep resources moving, strengthen the flow, even move the earth. Literally.



One such organization is MD&B (Maine Drilling & Blasting) a valued contributor to the growth and improvement of infrastructure for 55 years. Based in Maine, the Company’s reach now stretches across New England, the Mid-Atlantic states, down the eastern seaboard and then turn right for business opportunities in Tennessee and southward. What started as a family business in 1966 is now one of the most respected drilling and blasting operations in the country. MD&B is rock steady with an employee team, the majority of whom are employee owners, that is 450 strong. Looking back on their history of success, the people of MD&B will mark their milestone 55th anniversary this year with the pride in knowing their expertise is in high demand for a multitude of above-ground and subterranean construction industry needs, and with the deep gratitude for what they have learned along the way.

The U.S. natural gas pipeline network, which moves natural gas throughout the continental United States, is a highly integrated network with about 3 million miles of mainline and other pipelines that link natural gas production areas and storage facilities with consumers. Transporting natural gas involves a complex system of gathering, processing, transmitting and delivering the gas.

With proven experience in pipeline construction support, MD&B entered 2021 as part of the Westbrook XPress Project (WXP) team on site in Westbrook, Maine. According to the Portland Natural Gas Transmission System (PNGTS), the market for natural gas in New England has been constrained for years by a lack of infrastructure to move the fuel to where it is needed. PNGTS proposed the project to increase New England’s natural gas supply.

The WXP to enhance PNGTS’ existing capacity is being achieved by the installation of facilities to compress and cool gas on the PNGTS system and modification of an existing meter station on land adjacent to the existing Westbrook Compressor Station. LMC Industrial Contractors of Dansville, New York, is contractor on the WXP project. MD&B is subcontractor for LMC.

Compressor stations are an integral part of the natural gas pipeline network that moves natural gas from individual producing well sites to end users. As natural gas moves through a pipeline, distance, friction and elevation differences slow the movement of the



gas, resulting in reduced pressure. Compressor stations are placed strategically within the gathering and transportation pipeline network to help maintain the pressure and flow of gas to market. Drilling and blasting rock and earth to clear the way for construction of the new Westbrook compressor station and pads, and allow connection of the existing compressor station to the new structure, was the role of MD&B on the WXP site.

A standard practice learned through experience, MD&B teams visit project sites months in advance of the start date to begin safety and blasting planning. “By getting out ahead of the project, we create synergy with the customer and are confident with our planning,” says Kyle Larrow, MD&B General Superintendent who paved the way for his team’s WXP role. “Advance planning helps us get familiar with the territory and terrain, putting us in a proactive rather than reactive position for the job.”



Challenges are inherent to drilling and blasting jobs, and the WXP was no exception. Because granite, which is extremely high in density, was the geology on the WXP site, it was determined during early meetings that four to five drill rigs would be needed. After time spent working the site, the crew discovered only two drills were necessary. The granite, “the kind of rock that lasts forever,” according to Blasting Superintendent Doug Brunelle, was successfully yielding to the one-two punch of MD&B’s drills and blasts. The crew was able to blast ample square footage per day with two drills, outperforming expectations.



Because the existing pipeline, and the sensitive cargo flowing through it, were within 50 feet of the blast site, other modifications had to be made. To minimize vibration, shot sizes were adjusted and reading limits were met or below the PPV (peak particle velocity) set for the project. “We pieced our steps, safety measures and sequence coordinates together like a jigsaw puzzle at the beginning of every day,” said Brunelle. “What we accomplished with the vibration levels on the WXP job taught us unique skills that we’ll use again in the future. The MD&B crew, from the Blasting Supervisor to the Laborers,

was great, each one of them giving the job all they had six days a week. We all left the job better and stronger.”

“Based on my years of experience working with Maine Drilling and Blasting on a wide range of construction projects that required precision blasting in order to excavate rock, LMC was very pleased to be able to award the drilling and blasting subcontract to MD&B,” said LMC Vice President/Projects Berkeley Gray. “In order for LMC to meet the project schedule, the drilling and blasting had to start in the dead of winter. MD&B was able to meet our schedule and budget with excellent results. This also allowed LMC to utilize a Maine-based work force on the WXP Project for this phase of the work as well as upcoming phases.”



Stewards of infrastructure and rock steady in their field, the future is long and bright for Maine Drilling & Blasting. Congratulations on your first 55 years!



Recognized as a leader in the industry and a long-term contributor to the local communities it serves, **MD&B** offers drilling and blasting services to both the construction and quarry markets, along with a variety of specialty services including foundation services, hoe ramming, engineering, public relations, pre-blast surveys, and packaged and bulk distribution. In addition to the corporate office in Gardiner, Maine, **MD&B** has offices in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Tennessee.