

# Maine Drilling & Blasting celebrates 50 years of excellence

by Jon M. Casey



Maine Drilling and Blasting's most recent addition is their new facility near Bethel, PA.

The year 2016 is an anniversary year for a number of remarkable entities. The 50th Super Bowl will have been played by the time this article reaches print. The science fiction television show Star Trek, marks its 50th year, as well. More importantly, in March 2016, Maine Drilling & Blasting (MD&B) of Gardiner, ME, will mark 50 years of service excellence as an industry leader serving quarries and construction since 1966.

Bill Purington, president and CEO of MD&B,

recalled how his father Ted, Sr. and his mother Judy, began the company with a loan, co-signed by three others, so Ted could purchase a jackhammer and a compressor to start his business. That was in 1966. Together they embarked on a journey that has grown to become one of the largest drilling and blasting companies on the east coast.

Bill said he remembers growing up with his three brothers and one sister, and recalls the desk in one corner of the family kitchen that served as his Dad's

company "office." "He kept the drilling supplies in a shed behind the house. Beyond that at a distance of about one hundred feet, there was a metal magazine building housing the high explosives, ANFO and detonators. How things have changed!"

Today, Bill and his brother Ted, Jr., along with an extremely capable staff, head up this third-generation company. For a period from the early 80's through the turn of the century, all four of the brothers were a part of the business. Bill was the last to join the business. He had gone off to college to pursue a different career, however when Bill graduated from college his family asked him to return to the business, to help them with some challenges at the time. He returned to help the company "temporarily." "That was 34 years ago. I'm still on temporary assignment," he said with a chuckle. Today, Bill and Ted, Jr. are on staff full time and Bill's son, William II, works as part of the management team.

Bill said the fledgling company got traction very quickly because of the principles that his father held dear, principles that the company continues to uphold faithfully to this day. The culture at MD&B fosters a devotion to hard work, honesty and quality of service. Employee's business cards are printed with the four main MD&B principles: Respect, Fairness, Honesty and Responsibility.

The company works diligently to recruit new employees that adhere to these principles as well. Currently, they employ approximately 400 people, all who are eager to continue with this work ethic. "We operate as one large family," he said.

"When our Dad bought his first drill rig, he made the commitment on a handshake," he said. "He grew the business, getting the children involved, all while a Maine business. The business began to grow outside Maine when the interstate system began to expand in New Hampshire to provide service to contractors working on those projects."

Over time, growth of MD&B has come from both acquisitions of other blasting companies as well as opening new areas. Through the years, MD&B acquired nine other companies as part of their



Bill Purington, president and CEO of Maine Drilling and Blasting, enjoys carrying on his father's business throughout New York, New England and the Mid-Atlantic States.



growth and success. Today, the company's growth continues and their services extend throughout New England, New York, Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic. There are six regional offices and 13 distribution centers that service MD&B's market area.

As part of their growth process, MD&B strives to create a local image for local markets comprised of experienced relocated current employees and local people to work in the new locations. This establishes the company culture of excellence that has made MD&B successful over time.

In the realm of quarry blasting, Bill said they have developed a turnkey approach to the services that they provide. They look to be a business partner offering comprehensive drilling and blasting service, including a 100 percent crushable guarantee when desired, requiring a more coordinated and price specific approach.

"We offer a per ton pricing structure for customers who would like this kind of pricing. Similarly, our quarry services team has the ability to help with quarry planning providing an overall perspective. We collectively manage their product on the ground at a price per ton, helping our customers manage their overall risk and cost."

Ted Purington, Jr., serves as the company's executive vice president, working with the regional executives and division managers to assure that the company operating culture is maintained. He acknowledged that the company's growth has been in part



Ted Purington, Jr. MDB executive vice president.

because of the foresight and structure that his brother Bill has had in planning. "He has been able to see what was needed to take the company where it is today and into the future as well. He has had the determination to stay the course despite downturns and other challenges."



Dan Werner, MDB vice president.

Ted, who works out of the Auburn, NH office, said that at the end of the day, the company strives to maintain an attention to detail, a sense of urgency and a respect for customers and employees alike. He said the newer employees are fortunate to have the mentors at MD&B in place who are there to help them learn the drilling and blasting industry and the core values that the company upholds. "Our sense of drive to find more effective ways has helped us find better ways to drill and blast," he said.

Ted said that the regional executives are generally responsible for a two to four state region, overseeing the quarry and construction work within that region. Ted works with them on larger projects and helps with keeping an eye on the details to help make the product we deliver better than the competition. He looks to make sure that safety is always first priority while maintaining the company culture of hard work, honesty and quality of service.

Mitch Green currently serves as Sr. vice president Business Development. He has been associated with MD&B for over 26 years, formally coming on board in 2003. "MD&B has been a company that has stood the test of time and been able to evolve and thrive in an ever increasing regulatory and safety environment that is demanding".

Mitch has worked in most areas of the company during his tenure helping to organize and bring various divisions and departments to the standards that MD&B expects. Echoing the Puringtons, he says the company has high expectations of its operations to perform in the areas of safety, productivity and reliability to the customers, while developing a local market presence steeped in the MD&B culture.

Safety and Regulatory compliance are key areas on which the company focuses. "The expectations of the general public, as well as the regulatory agencies, will only increase in the future. At MD&B, we see this as an opportunity to improve our operations and services." Further he states, "Embracing this opportunity is important to our future success."

Dan Werner, Sr. vice president is currently responsible for overseeing divisions that serve quarries and construction in the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. He provides executive leadership for the distribution group, which stores, transports and warehouses the company's explosives and the equipment mobilization team.

Dan started with the company in May 2003, joining the company after a tour of duty in the military where he specialized in explosives engineering. He worked his way up to his current position through the MD&B Leadership Development Program, earning his bachelor's degree and MBA.

Dan is especially impressed with the professionalism of MD&B. To be a large company and yet maintain its founding principles means a lot to Dan. The family oriented nature of the company remains grounded in its values in spite of its growth. The Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) is also an aspect that he finds beneficial in many ways. "The Employees of the Company recognize value annually and for the long haul as we all work together as owners of the company, how fair is that?"

"When it comes to people, we have the best in the business," he said. "We invest in the best equipment and resources to get the job done. From drills, excavators, to explosives, whatever we need, it is first in class."

Todd Barrett is a regional vice president for the Mid-Atlantic and the Western Regions of the company consisting of Vermont and New York quarry and construction, while the Mid-Atlantic is made up of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland. Todd started with MD&B twenty years ago as a driller, then blaster, much in the same way as everyone in management.

"This company is all about the people," he said. "Customers appreciate our company's values and principles. And when we make a mistake, we take



Todd Barrett, regional vice president for the Mid-Atlantic Division, has worked his way up from laborer to driller to blaster over the past 20 years with the company.

responsibility for it and work through it with our customers."

Most recently, MD&B opened a new facility in Bethel, PA, in keeping with their desire to maintain a local presence in all its regions of operation. The new facility opened in November 2015, right off I-78.

"We have our own engineering staff that allows us to make lump-sum bids on jobs. The Tech Services Group helps us improve operations through new explosives and blasting applications, as well as training our current and future blasters."

Bill further states, "Some of the greatest challenges that every business faces in the future include the succession of leadership in a successful way. At MD&B, with the commitment to our Leadership Development Program and future talent, the future leaders of our Company are going to come from within." He also stated that this is a tough business with many risks. "Safety needs to be a priority and MD&B is working to make safety a way of life within the company. With a strong foundation and key elements in place, the future of MD&B is bright and looking to another 50 years of excellence in the industry."

For more information about Maine Drilling & Blasting, visit their website at [www.mdandb.com](http://www.mdandb.com).



Mitch Green, senior vice president, has been a part of Maine Drilling and Blasting since 2003.



# Brox Enterprises has been trusting MDB with their blasting needs for years

by Jon M. Casey

When it comes to a working relationship with a drilling and blasting company, quarry operations are looking for a company that they can trust. For Brox Enterprises, Inc., Methuen, MA, Maine Drilling and Blasting (MDB) tops the list. "We have been working with Maine Drilling and Blasting for nearly 30 years," said Doug Perry, Brox Materials division manager, during a recent visit to the company's Dracut, MA facility. "We use them in all four of our quarries, this one in Massachusetts and our three in New Hampshire."

Perry explained that all of their drilling and blasting work is sub-contracted to MDB because of the unfailing way that MDB meets their drilling and blasting needs. "We haven't run out of rock (for production needs) since we began using MDB. They are extremely reliable. They use the latest technology and if they need to bring in more drills to meet our production needs, they have them on site promptly. They were the first blasters in the area to use electronic detonators."

"MDB does pre-blast surveys and seminars for the neighbors surrounding our operations," he went on. "They hold consumer conferences to help educate the residents near our quarries. They've even created training videos that they have provided to nearby home associations on our behalf; so that the residents would have a better understanding of what was taking place when we were blasting. At this location, we have three nearby associations. There are approximately 250 homes in the area. We have 130 people on our call list that receive calls to let them know that a blast will be taking place. We also have local fire department officials here as observers. MDB is extremely safety conscious. If there are any complaints from people in the area, an MDB safety person contacts the individuals to handle the inquiry for us."

When it comes to laying out the blasting patterns and doing the onsite drilling, Perry said Brox makes the suggestions as to what they are wanting to do at any particular site and then they follow MDB's lead. "They are the experts," he said. "They determine the pattern size and drilling specs, the timing of the shot, the products they will use, that sort of thing. We trust them completely."

Perry said MDB has someone on site daily from

mid-March to the end of November to do the drilling and blasting. As we approached a new bench that has been under development for a short time, Perry said the surface work will be completed in early 2016 and that area of the pit will begin being mined at that time. A driller was busy drilling a pattern for the next blast.

"Much of the aggregate from our plants goes to supply the ten asphalt plants that we have at nine locations throughout out the region," he noted. "Maine Drilling and Blasting will be drilling and shooting about 2.5 million tons of material for us in the coming year, with over one million tons coming from Dracut plant alone. They do a great job. We really trust them to get the job done."



Plant superintendent, Bob Norkiewicz, oversees daily operations at the Brox Dracut plant.

## H&K Group Dalton, PA quarry uses MDB for challenging geology

by Jon M. Casey



Jeff Strohl, Quarry foreman at H&K's Dalton quarry, appreciates Maine Drilling and Blasting's skilled reliability when it comes to meeting the challenges at his operation.



Drilling and blasting in this kind of formation, makes successful blasting more difficult than in more solid geology.

Jeff Strohl, quarry manager at the H&K Group Dalton, PA facility, took some time recently, to show us the results of some challenging blasting that Maine Drilling and Blasting had done at H&K's Dalton operation. Heading down into the pit, we could see the most recent shot rock, lying at the base of a bench of fractured rock. The working face of the bench looked to be in good shape as a loader operator filled haul trucks with the material.

"We started using Maine Drilling and Blasting this year (2015)," said Strohl as we stopped a good distance from the workers. "We had this difficult, broken area to mine and we wanted to see how well MDB could handle it. They did a great job."

Strohl said the crew responded quickly to their request to do the blasting. Since the first event, H&K has used MDB at this site twelve times. "In all, we've produced about 15,000 tons of material from this most recent area of the pit. Our blaster, Gary Metzinger, has done a fine job. Throughout the year, we've had three different drillers, and they all have done an excellent job."

Pep Hunsicker, H&K director of materials agrees. "We have been extremely pleased with the drilling and blasting that we've contracted with MDB," he said at the recent open house event at MDB's new facility near Bethel, PA. "They do an excellent job."

"We started with Maine in the 4th quarter of 2014. My interest in starting a relationship with them is the fact that they are like a turnkey company. They have the ability to drill and shoot within their own group," he said.

"We started at our Atkinson Materials location in 2014. After analyzing a couple of their shots at Atkinson we felt they did well, overall. Looking into our 2015 drilling and blasting (needs) for our northern region, I felt it would benefit our company to use their (drilling and blasting) package at our other locations. We currently use them at Pikes Creek Quarry, Hazleton Materials, Hilltop Quarry, Atkinson Materials and ABE Materials Easton. At this point, we are only using them for a drill/shoot application. I feel our relationship will build as time goes on."



Broken geology makes for more challenging blasting at Dalton.



An MDB drill rig operator works atop a bench in a newer area of the pit.