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A REAL BLAST

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& BLASTING

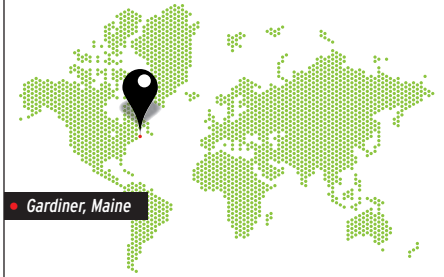
OIL & GAS AWARDS

The industry honors some of the best U.S. companies that are doing things 'the right way.' **P.18**



A Real Blast

Maine Drilling & Blasting has found success with a unique perspective in the drilling and blasting industry.



"We have a focus, and it's breaking rock. And, we do it well."

// MITCHELL GREEN, senior vice president



Maine Drilling and Blasting has been serving the Northeast since 1966.

[BY LORI SICHTERMANN]
Todd Barrett, regional manager at Maine Drilling & Blasting, says there's no lack of obstacles in his industry that might stop a lesser company in its tracks. This applies to completing com-

PROFILE

Maine Drilling & Blasting

www.mdandb.com | Headquarters: Gardiner, Maine | Service: Drilling, mining and blasting
 Employees: 360

plex projects, transporting explosives to remote locations, and ensuring the safety of employees, the public and the environment. It also applies to the numerous tough but vital internal measures on which Maine Drilling & Blasting currently is focused.

Regardless of the obstacles, the company has proven to be a solutions-based operation for nearly half-a-century. What started as a kitchen-table concept in 1966 has grown to become a tour-de-

force in the drilling and blasting landscape throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.

With local offices throughout the Northeast and corporate headquarters in Gardiner, Maine, the company provides clients with literally every aspect needed – from project start to completion – and under one roof. A distinguished engineering department, a proactive safety program, efficient distribution services, experienced blast-

The company says it places a high priority on creating a safe environment.



ing technical services, and equipment repair capabilities all come together seamlessly on every project, regardless of its simplicity or complexity.

As Maine Drilling & Blasting has expanded its capabilities, a new emphasis has been placed on the internal workings of the company. From cutting-edge safety initiatives to new lines of communication opened companywide, Maine Drilling and Blasting is proving that a strong and steady focus can have a big impact.

FORGING NEW GROUND

For many years, Maine Drilling & Blasting has expanded its footprint to projects outside The Pine Tree State. In January 2012, the company entered into a joint venture partnership with Dyno Nobel, the largest manufacturer of explosives in North America. As part of the agreement, Maine acquired Dyno Nobel's Northeast operations, consolidating these into the company's already established footprint in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions,

"Because we've diversified and grown in a very broad geographical area, maintaining a common culture is very important. It enables us to provide continuity in our operations."

// MITCHELL GREEN, senior vice president

and enhancing Maine's business to the Mid-Atlantic.

The partnership comes at the right time for Maine Drilling & Blasting, whose projects over the years have gotten more intricate. Plus, the stakes have gotten higher and there is more geographical land to cover. Even so, Senior Vice President Mitchell Green says the company's success and reach have allowed it to pursue new opportunities.

"We've worked hard to develop a common culture," he explains. "Because we've diversified and grown in a

very broad geographical area, maintaining a common culture is very important. It enables us to provide continuity in our operations throughout our levels of service."

Green notes that it is the mission of Maine Drilling & Blasting to offer the same brand of service to clients in Pennsylvania – and elsewhere – as clients receive in Maine. "Making it happen' is our value/service proposition," he adds. "It's a mindset we actively nurture that's all about consistency, synergy, ownership and our core values. We apply our basic core values of respect, fairness, honesty and responsibility to everything we do," Green continues. "It's at the base of how we interact with our customers, our suppliers, regulators, the general public, and with each other."

Although Maine Drilling & Blasting began as a family operation, it long ago outgrew the kitchen table where the business model was first sketched. Yet, as Green explains, upper management is

focused on keeping the family feel among the company's 360 employees.

"Even though the company has grown, we want to retain that tight-knit intimacy," he says. "To do this, we've spent the last three years focusing on the heritage of the company – letting employees know where the business came from and where it's going. This has made employees feel more connected to the operation."

Fostering the employee-company relationship is made easier by the fact that 30.5 percent of the company is employee-owned. Maine Drilling & Blasting calls this its "Work Like an Owner" initiative. "We want to leverage the investment that these folks have in the company, and by improved communications, liberate employees to work to the next level of productivity." Green adds. "We can purchase equipment, explosives, and have vertically integrated services, all great tools, but People are the fuel that 'Make it Happen' in the field every day."

ON AND AWARE

For Maine Drilling & Blasting, the rope that binds the company is safety. "For us, safety really is about taking care of each other," Green explains.

Safety Manager Rick Galletta says the Maine Drilling & Blasting faces unique challenges that illustrate the importance of safety. "We place a very high importance on safety because everything we do is hazardous," he notes. "It's not too often we arrive at a job site and take out the nice, flat, even ground. Instead, our people, equipment, and explosives have to travel on all types of terrain, let it be mud, slick rock, or in an extremely remote location."

Safety for Maine Drilling & Blasting is



Regional Manager Todd Barrett, Safety Manager Rick Galletta and Senior Vice President Mitchell Green bring experience to Maine Drilling and Blasting's management team.

more than just hard hats and protective eyewear. For nearly half-a-century, the company has taken great care to not only protect employees, but also clients, the public, and the environment. "Our employees are trained on environmental best practices for using explosives," Galletta explains. "We make sure we don't produce environmental concerns when we're on a job site."

In the past 12 months, Maine Drilling & Blasting has prioritized the advancement of safety in the company culture. As Galletta explains, the organization recently established a corporate safety committee to assess safety adherence throughout the organization. "The committee – which is comprised of departmental, divisional and executive

management – aligns our safety practices with our core values," he adds. "They perform corporate safety assessments, which help guide future initiatives."

According to Galletta, the most successful initiative to date has been the behavior-based safety observation program. "With help from the safety committee, we've trained more than 60 employees in job site observation and communication techniques, and those individuals have provided more than 1,200 formal safety observations in the last year," he says. "As we train more individuals in other divisions, we anticipate an increase in the number of formal safety observations."

Similar to the behavior-based safety observation program is the company's



The company says it is no stranger to complex projects.

Near-Miss reporting initiative, which encourages open dialog between field workers, supervisors and upper management. “We have great safety records out there, but unless something was broken equipment-wise, we rarely heard about incidents that happened in the different divisions,” Galletta explains.

“To increase transparency, we encouraged everyone to communicate with each other through the Near-Miss reporting initiative. This concept took off in a big way,” Galletta says. “We responded to even minor concerns made by employees. As a result, we’ve been able to identify a couple of reoccurring issues and provide better training, in short getting out in front through managing leading indicators. The whole concept gives a sense of empowerment to

employees, and it ties in with the companywide goal of complete cohesiveness.”

PROJECTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Maine Drilling & Blasting is no stranger to complex projects. Most recently, the company completed work on sinking a new foundation in what’s referred to as an “urban hole” – a site where the drilling and blasting activities are surrounded on all four sides by existing elements. In the case of the Stamford Gateway Plaza in Stamford, Conn., Maine Drilling & Blasting had to contend with railroad tracks to the north, commercial buildings on the east, residences to the south and a river to the west.

In addition to the Stamford project, the company was selected to join the largest drilling and blasting project in the state of Maine to date. Helping to se-

cure more than 100 miles of power transmission lines through more than 75 communities, Maine Drilling & Blasting is following the route, applying its expertise and state-of-the-art technology to ensure maximum project efficiency.

“One of the greatest advances we’ve applied to this project, and others in these remote conditions is our field data capture [FDC] system,” explains Ted Purington, COO of Maine Drilling and Blasting. “With this technology, every aspect of a project – from payroll reports, drill reports, blast reports, cost reports, and safety reports – is captured digitally. What was once documented on paper, and took up to two weeks to process, is almost instantaneous.”

The result of implementing this technology is more accurate, real-time information regarding every angle of a project. “The FDC system gives us precise information on the progress of a project, and it’s helping us to better manage production costs, which is better for our customers and our company,” Purington says.

In terms of mobility, Maine Drilling & Blasting also has expanded its BRAVO division – a best-of-the-best group that is dispatched for larger challenging projects, so as to not disrupt local service demands. As Todd Barrett explains, this specialized team is extremely apt and flexible. The BRAVO team moves from these large opportunistic projects, offering great personal development opportunities yet outside of local divisional management.

“This group doesn’t take away from our existing divisions or create an integrity issue within current operations,” he adds. “It provides excellent project and technical skill development that may not be offered in day-to-day operations. We really love the challenge of these large project opportunities.” **EMBI**