



# Happy 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Maine Drilling & Blasting

Contractor credits relationship with Atlas Copco as large part of its ‘safely aggressive’ sustainable productivity

In March 2016 Maine Drilling & Blasting marked the 50th anniversary of its founding by Ted and Judy Purington. What began in rural Gardiner, Maine, as a family startup run from the Puringtons’ kitchen to fracture rock for “cellar holes and swimming pools” has since grown to become the

country’s largest drilling and blasting services contractor in the construction and quarry markets.

Over the past 50 years Maine Drilling & Blasting has safely conducted over 2 million blasts throughout the Northeast and Mid Atlantic for highways, site development, quarries, housing lots,

utilities and marine work. The company also provides a variety of specialty services such as rock bolting, hoe ramming, engineering, public relations for blasting concerns, pre-blast surveys and packaged and bulk distribution. Still headquartered in Gardiner, Maine, the corporation has six construction and four quarry divisions

**Back L to R: Ted Purington, Jr., Executive Vice President; Bill Purington, Chairman and CEO; Front L to R: Mitchell Green, Senior Vice President; Dan Werner, President; John Capasso, MD President; Tim Maynard, CFO; Todd Barrett, Regional Vice President**

with offices in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Pennsylvania.

This year’s celebration of a half century of safety and growth in the blasting industry also marks the company’s 25th year of continuous profitability—in spite of several significant downturns in the national economy over that span of time.

**MAINE DRILLING & BLASTING** attributes its success to a relatively simple formula for such a complicated industry. Never stray from the core values the company was founded upon: honesty, respect, fairness and responsibility. Focus on doing quality work for the customer safely and productively. Base services at the local level, engaging local resources and people. Never stop improving.

Ted Purington Jr., executive vice president, also credits the company’s close collaboration with Atlas Copco, whose innovative drilling rigs, accessories and rock drilling expertise has played a key part in their success. “For this part of the world, our relationship has changed the drilling industry.”

Maine Drilling & Blasting has more than 75 of its own surface crawler drill rigs, approximately 50 of which are Atlas Copco, and has about 25 more through Atlas Copco Rental.

Mike Wentworth, product manager for Atlas Copco Surface and Exploration Drilling and key account manager to Maine Drilling & Blasting believes the company may be underestimating its contribution to the global blasthole drilling industry:

“Maine Drilling & Blasting is a leading



**Bill Purington,**  
Chairman and CEO,  
Maine Drilling & Blasting,  
son of founders Ted and  
Judy Purington.



**Ted Purington Jr.,**  
Executive Vice President,  
Maine Drilling & Blasting,  
son of founders Ted and  
Judy Purington.



**Terry Bower,**  
Equipment Services  
Manager, Maine Drilling &  
Blasting.

innovator whose input impacts design and technique not just for New England and the Mid Atlantic United States but globally. People from Sweden and India know about Maine Drilling & Blasting and will come here to see their operation firsthand. The world is watching for what Maine Drilling & Blasting will do next.”

Maine Drilling & Blasting prefers to be

the first company to try out new technology rather than wait to see if others have success with it. The company started out with two men running jackhammers and a crawler-mounted pneumatic drill rig running 38-series steel and towing a 750 cfm compressor behind it. They realized they’d rather be on the leading edge of technological capability. Maine Drill-

## Blasthole drilling’s revolutionary collaborators

**M**aine Drilling & Blasting never set out to be the biggest contractor, but its core values made that happen: continually strive to improve productivity, efficiency and quality through mutually beneficial working relationships

with customers, employees and suppliers. The company’s drillers and OEM-trained rig technicians stay in close contact with Atlas Copco and have been involved in the evolving design of rigs.

The collaborative relationship began

in the early 1980s when Maine Drilling & Blasting introduced the blasthole drilling industry to the efficiencies and productivity of a reliable hydraulic surface crawler drill rig. Their success with the Atlas Copco ROC 410 rendered pneumatic drills all but obsolete. ▶



**Dan Werner, President, and Will Purington II, Eastern Division manager, grandson of founders Ted and Judy Purington. Dan Werner, who assumed his role as company president May 1, is overseeing the goal of transitioning the company to 51 percent employee-owned within the next two years.**

ing & Blasting acquired increasingly more productive machines, graduating to 45-series steel and rigs with 1,100 cfm onboard compressors.

Ted Jr. described the sense of urgency his family had in their pursuit of greater efficiency: “It had been a struggle to get established, and now that we were there, we didn’t want to lose it. Competition was unbelievable. Profit margins were tight. Money was tight. We had no choice but to find more efficient ways to do things. We were inspired by our highway customers. We had seen them timing their crews’ processes. They were always trimming times, always cutting waste. They set high standards and expectations, and we met them. We learned from them.”

The company’s introduction to Atlas Copco came in the early 1980s. Maine Drilling & Blasting recognized the potential of diesel-powered hydraulic

technology for increased productivity at lower fuel expense.

The first two hydraulic rigs it tested from other manufacturers failed in the field. In spite of some in the industry who wondered if investment in hydraulic technology might lead to the company’s undoing, Maine Drilling & Blasting persisted in its quest.

Success with the third hydraulic rig they tried almost immediately revolutionized drilling for the construction and quarry industries. The Atlas Copco ROC 410H not only ran dependably but rewarded Maine Drilling & Blasting with the efficient productivity it had been looking for.

Ted said, “Initially the rate of penetration of the hydraulic rig was so much more aggressive than our pneumatic drills that we encountered deviation issues. It required a short period of adjustment.”

Once the company got the consistent

hole quality it wanted, Maine Drilling & Blasting was no longer merely competitive in a tight market—it was the region’s market leader.

Unable to keep up with Maine Drilling & Blasting’s productivity, some contractors simply began submitting their bids as “ten percent less than whatever Maine bid.”

In contrast, Maine Drilling & Blasting President Dan Werner said the company’s bids are always factually based on accurate assessments of what it takes to get the highest quality job done safely and efficiently: “We’re a value-added company. Our customers recognize that we are the lowest-cost provider because we minimize their financial risk throughout the project, beginning to end.”

**EFFECTIVE MAY 1, DAN WERNER** is the first non-Purington to hold the office of president for Maine Drilling & Blasting. However, Bill Purington, Maine Drilling & Blasting’s Chairman and CEO, said Werner embodies the core values of its founders, ensuring that the fundamental principles of the family-owned company carry far into the future even as it transitions to 51 percent employee ownership by 2018.

The Puringtons believe the original values of the company so fully permeate the company’s culture that they will continue to be its shaping force far into the future:

“While I was growing up,” Bill said, “the company was so much a part of family life that it was like having another brother in the house. And then when my brother and I were grown, it became our child. At some point your family isn’t just your own children but your second cousins, third cousins, fourth cousins, and all those married to them. You no longer know all the names

## 1980s

Maine Drilling & Blasting introduces reliable Atlas Copco hydraulic drill rigs with onboard air to its fleet: ROC 410, ROC 512, ROC 612H, ROC 712H, ROC 722HC, ROC 820H, 812HC

## 1990s

Adopts Atlas Copco’s 7 series as its workhorse drill rigs. The ROC 742R replaces the ROC 712H. By late ‘90s fleet includes ROC 860, ROC 642, ROC 748 HC-01 w/1850 cfm air package, ROC 748 and ROC F7 and F9 rigs.



of the extended family at the reunion.”

Everyone working for Maine Drilling & Blasting is part of its culture, sharing its history as family. Will Purington, Bill’s son, who is both Foundations Services Group business manager and Eastern Division manager, underscored the point. “When I was 12, there were maybe 40 people in the company I knew from traveling to the offices and jobsites with my dad and grandfather. That was family to me. They were my family. And now today, as a regional manager in a company with over 400 employees throughout the Northeast and Mid Atlantic, each region with its differences, no matter where I go in the company, I still have that feeling I’m with family. The Maine Drilling & Blasting culture unites us.”

Werner said in the 14 years he has been with the company he has been profoundly shaped by that culture. Werner came to Maine Drilling & Blasting in 2002 after four years service as an Army explosives technician. But he didn’t begin as a blaster. He began as all employees do at Maine Drilling & Blasting—as the owners themselves did—a laborer.

It is one more ingredient in the company’s recipe of success. Managers who have experience at all levels from the ground up give the company flexibility to endure tough times.

“I knew from the start I wanted a leadership position,” Werner said, “but looking back, I think I was a little naïve. I had no idea the journey it would take me on, the work it would take to get there.” Werner said opportunities kept opening up around him, and he eagerly pursued them all. “I had so much to learn.”

Werner also began taking night classes. “I would work all day and then go to school at night three times a week. Maine Drilling & Blasting encourages and supports those who want to advance.”



**Using radio remote control, an operator trams his FlexiROC T40 up a steep incline in a granite quarry. Always on a quest for improved efficiency, Maine Drilling & Blasting’s newest FlexiROC and SmartROC series drill rigs are getting up to 50 percent better fuel economy than earlier rig models.**

He earned his bachelor degree in business studies. By the time he earned his MBA he had already progressed through the ranks to an executive position.

Werner was also one of the first to graduate from Maine Drilling & Blasting’s newly established Leadership Development Program (LDP), an in-house corporate management training curriculum designed in large part by Bill. Initial levels of LDP are standard leadership courses. Higher levels are tailored to the needs of the enrollee. LDP ensures continuity of the principles and values fundamental to Maine Drilling & Blasting’s cultural identity and success.

The company actively seeks out candidates who are a fit for its culture. “We’re always looking for the next Dan Werner,” Ted said.

**TED SAID, “I’M VERY COMFORTABLE** with where we’re at and with where we’re headed. The next generation is not going to simply continue the Maine Drilling & Blasting culture. They’re going to take it to the next level.”

In addition to his commitment to the company’s values, Werner also shares an appreciation for the innovative collaboration with Atlas Copco. Maine Drilling & Blasting now uses Atlas Copco

## 2000s

North America’s first radio remote control rigs ROC D3RRC and ROC D7RRC replace tethered remote controlled rigs. Also introduces industry to the Atlas Copco ROC T15 wheeled drill rig for work originally done manually with a jackhammer.

## 2011–Present

Finds greater drilling efficiencies through computerized drilling optimization offered by FlexiROC and SmartROC series T30, T40 and T45. The latest models are up to 50 percent more fuel efficient than earlier rigs. Uses T30 models primarily for construction jobs and the T40 and T45 models in quarry work.



**In honor of both its commitment to service at the local level and to individual self advancement, Maine Drilling & Blasting has kicked off the year-long celebration of its golden anniversary with \$25,000 in scholarships. The money will be distributed as five \$1,000 scholarships to five institutions over the next five years.**

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Check out a video history of the company:  
Maine Drilling & Blasting—Strong Foundation, Bright Future

drilling accessories throughout its fleet. And he is closely studying the feasibility of replacing PowerROC series rigs with SmartROC rigs in various applications throughout the company's offerings.

Werner works with Atlas Copco's Mike Wentworth. "Mike is readily accessible and in constant communication with us regarding solutions," Werner said.

Maine Drilling & Blasting's equipment manager, Terry Bower, said, "We've been following the development of the SmartROC rigs for 10 years now. SmartROC rigs drill straighter, more precisely, with less fuel—in some cases 50 percent less fuel. But I believe we haven't even scratched the surface of what the SmartROC series can do."

Ted said, "The SmartROC series will be at least as great a revolution in the industry as the move from pneumatic to hydraulic was."

Ted pointed out that no longer can anyone judge a company's size or capabilities by its rig count. "We had at one time 113 rigs, but now we're down to 80. It isn't because we got smaller. It's because our current rigs efficiently do the quality work of the previous 113."

Bower said the capability of Maine Drilling & Blasting has been driven in part by Atlas Copco. "They give us rigs that are more powerful, more efficient, cleaner with improved fuel economy. The new SmartROC T40s and T45s have 30 percent better fuel economy, in some cases 50 percent. But it will never end. We will always want more powerful, more efficient, cleaner, quieter rigs. It's never-ending. That's the industry. We are



**Computerized rigs like this Atlas Copco SmartROCT45, says Executive Vice President Ted Purington Jr., will bring about a revolution in the drilling industry at least as big as the change from pneumatic to hydraulic drill rigs.**

always looking to improve. And so is Atlas Copco. We work hand in hand. They use our input and it's reflected eventually in the next generation of products."

Atlas Copco listens to drillers worldwide, and some rig design changes come as pleasant surprises for Bower's in-house technicians. "My technicians will actually call me up to say, 'Terry, have you seen what Atlas Copco's done?' raving about it. And I'm always amazed at how much more Atlas Copco can do with something they've made smaller. There's always something, even things like clean-

er hose management or, for instance, a shroud the techs no longer have to take off to get to a service point but that now has a removable section for easier access. There's just always something better."

Maurice Hunter, business line manager for Atlas Copco Surface and Exploration Drilling, said, "Atlas Copco's own principles complement those of Maine Drilling & Blasting. We are proud of our collaborative relationship with Maine Drilling & Blasting and look forward to its continuing success in the next 50 years." ■