

Greenwood Township Pipe Manufacturer Expands

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP — Increased demand — particularly from the oil and gas industry — has resulted in an \$8 million expansion at a Crawford County pipe manufacturing plant.

Los Angeles-based JM Eagle, a maker of plastic pipe that's used by the utilities, oil and gas and agricultural industries, Thursday celebrated completion of the project at its Greenwood Township pipe manufacturing complex. The expansion, which started this summer, also has raised the local employment level at JM Eagle's complex to almost 200, with 30 jobs added by the project.

It's part of more than \$62 million in investment in the local plant in the past 20 years, according to the company.

"Without a doubt," said Brian Shull, plant manager of JM Eagle's polyethylene operation, when asked if increased natural gas drilling activity in Pennsylvania and Ohio, prompted the expansion of the total number of polyethylene lines to nine. "It was a factor in the decision to add this capability to the plant."

Both high-performance polyvinyl chloride and high-density polyethylene pipe along with building products are made at the plant, Shull said. Both types of pipe are used across a variety of industries and applications including utility, solvent weld, electrical conduit, natural gas, irrigation, potable water and sewage.

Polyethylene pipe is used by the natural gas industry for gathering and collection of natural gas as well as for water transmission in drilling operations, he said. Polyethylene pipe also is used for water and sewer lines and irrigation as well as for power and communications applications.

The \$8 million expansion at the polyethylene plant now gives it a total of four solid and five corrugated polyethylene lines, Shull said. The plant produces 4-inch to 36-inch solid wall polyethylene pipe with plans to manufacture up to 63-inch water pipe and larger diameters in the future.

The plant also produces Eagle Corr PE dual wall corrugated polyethylene pipe that ranges from 4 to 60 inches in diameter.



In addition, the complex has 19 production lines that make high performance polyvinyl chloride pipe, and 12 production lines that make building products.

Burt Waite, mayor of Cochranton, said the expansion is a huge boost for his community which is located about six miles from the complex.

Economic studies have shown that for every basic manufacturing job there are about another four jobs created in other businesses, Waite said.

"That accounts for 1,000 (total) jobs in the Cochranton area," Waite said. "That's huge."

The region appreciates the long-term commitment JM Eagle is making to the area with the expansion, Waite continued. "It's important. It's successful and it's good news to celebrate."

The Greenwood Township/Cochranon area facility is part of JM Eagle's strategic investment to expand its polyethylene production, said Neal Gordon, JM Eagle's vice president of marketing and waterworks sales. The investment will enhance the company's distribution throughout the northern U.S. JM Eagle also has converted a plant in Sunnyside, Wash., to polyethylene pipe production at the same time, he said.

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