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Stoneco happy with local construction boom

By ED GEBERT
Times Bulletin News Writer

SCOTT - It has been a time of change for Stoneco Quarry in northern Van Wert County. The plant on Richey Rd. has been home to a wave of economic development with paving and wind farm projects increasing business at an incredible pace.

The Scott Plant of Stoneco Quarry invited the public to come take a look Monday afternoon during Ohio Aggregates and Industrial Minerals Awareness Week. Several local residents took the quarry up on the offer to have a tour and see what happens at the plant.



Right now, according to Lyle Snyder, general manager of contracting, products from the Scott quarry are being used in many local projects. "We have the Shannon St. reconstruction in Van Wert, U.S. 30 with four-lane paving going on right now, some work on Lincoln Highway around Middle Point, and obviously the wind farms," listed Snyder. "With the wind farms we had a lot more in pre-construction from the paving standpoint because they treated the roads up front. But there is more to go on that, and a little work in southern Paulding County on a set of wind turbines."

Without a doubt, the Blue Creek Wind Farm has improved the economy at Stoneco. "It's big, a big boon for this quarry," stated John Dibert, vice president of the aggregate division. "This quarry will probably do over a million tons over a 12-month period. Normally we do about a quarter of a million tons out of here each year. Traffic has increased a phenomenal amount."

"You don't have to look very far to see activity going on around here," added Snyder.

Although the project did not create any new jobs at Stoneco, it did help retain the jobs that were already present, and in fact turned them into full-year positions rather than simply seven or eight-month jobs. Robin Kraner, who heads quality control, noted that in her 18-year tenure at Stoneco, this is only the second time she worked during the winter.

"I know it's helped out a lot of the area businesses. You can't go anywhere anymore without seeing Blattner Energy trucks or the power and electric trucks," said Kraner. "I'm hoping this is a good shot in the arm, preparing people for when they are all finished."

The Scott quarry dates back to 1898, when John Bagwell Carey found rock very close to the land surface, so he purchased 20 acres to develop a quarry. It became the Union Stone Quarry in 1923 with only three acres of land, but stone mined down to 25 feet below the surface. By 1980 when Maumee Stone Company bought the operation, 95 acres were developed with a depth of 80 feet. Then in 2003 Shelly Materials bought the mine and has retained it to this day. The Scott plant now has 250 acres of ground with just over 80 acres developed. It is one of 90 facilities in Ohio owned by Shelly.



On Monday, many displays were set up to show what happens at the quarry and beyond. Video of a blast was shown. Many company officials were on hand to serve refreshments and to answer questions. Education is an important point for the company, as shown by the parade of field trips to the quarry from area schools.

"All the third grade students of Van Wert County come out here to learn about rocks and minerals and all the things that are made," Kraner pointed out. "It's very hard these days to meet anybody who hasn't had a child come out here, and I know that they are going to take the information back to their parents. The backbone of that program is to teach them safety, not coming in here without permission and getting hurt. We want to show them in a supervised environment."

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