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N.J. pipemaker forging change

Joe Truini

A New Jersey cast iron pipe foundry, beleaguered with federal water pollution lawsuits, is making a few changes to improve its environmental performance.

Atlantic States Cast Iron Pipe Co. is restructuring its environmental affairs department, which includes hiring two environmental engineering and compliance industry veterans.

Dennis Zurakowski will serve as the director of environmental engineering for the Phillipsburg, N.J., foundry. Atlantic States also has brought on Jeffery Smith as senior environmental manager. The pair has more than 40 years of environmental engineering and compliance experience.

McWane Inc., which owns Atlantic States, has been the target of two federal court cases alleging dozens of counts of environmental violations. Those charges include a 35-count indictment against Atlantic States, unsealed Dec. 22, 2003, that alleges the company committed flagrant environmental abuses by discharging petroleum-contaminated wastewater into the Delaware River.

On May 25, 2004, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama handed down a 25-count indictment against McWane Cast Iron Pipe Co. in Birmingham, Ala., and four of its officers for violating the Clean Water Act.

Phillipsburg-based McWane has invested more than \$50 million in environmental capital improvements since 1997, said company President G. Ruffner Page Jr. The projects include a \$9.3 million emission control system to limit mercury and carbon monoxide emissions at Atlantic States' foundry, which should be ready in the first quarter of 2006.

Atlantic States will be the first U.S. foundry to substantially reduce mercury emissions, he said.

The company is undergoing a significant transformation, which includes infrastructure modification as well as the hiring of new personnel, said Mitchell Kidd, vice president and general manager of Atlantic States. The changes and investment demonstrates the company's commitment to environmental protection, he said.

Atlantic States makes ductile iron pipe for customers in the northeastern United States and Canada.

Contact Waste News reporter Joe Truini at (330) 865-6166 or jtruini@crain.com

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