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Lafarge Exshaw Plant - east ridge

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10 March 2017 at 14:50

Hello folks,

Following the quarry blast on the east ridge from Tuesday, February 28, there were some concerns that I feel should be addressed.

First, let me assure you that the safety and health of our employees and the surrounding community residents is paramount. We not only comply with government requirements on blasting standards, we often exceed expectations by leveraging industrial best practices from within our company. All of our quarry blasts, including this one from February 28, are carefully designed to meet safe-distance requirements from nearest residents and closely monitored to minimize vibration, noise, and fugitive dust. Unfortunately, one key variable we do not control, nor can we reliably predict, is the weather and wind direction. However, I have attached a summary document of our recent and ongoing efforts to reduce fugitive dust, including blasting dust. The results of our efforts are quite compelling, and although not cheap or easy to implement, you have our commitment to strive for continuous improvement.

Second, I am very happy that we can have dialogue about any of your concerns on a regular basis, and we continue to value our improved and now strong relationship with the residents. You can expect continued transparency from my team and me, so thank you for reaching out on this issue or anything else that might be of concern. To that end, on November 9, 2016, we proactively shared our east ridge development plans with local residents using 2-D photos and on-site visits. On February 3, 2017, we again followed up with 3-D schematics summarizing this same information, which is now attached herein for further distribution to interested residents. Please feel free to reach out to us directly with any concerns you may have.

Third, we actually have a very good story to share with the residents. Although our existing quarry has about 7-10 years of limestone reserves remaining, you have likely heard of our Quarry Phase II (aka "Back Mountain") expansion plans which will enable sustained operations for at least the next half-century. Back Mountain continues to the north along the existing ridge line which is immediately adjacent to Exshaw Creek. Traditionally, Lafarge has considered truck haulage as the primary transportation method for these continued limestone reserves. Recently, we have changed our focus toward utilization of conveyor transportation. This is not only a huge opportunity for the plant to further reduce fugitive dust and noise, but also a clear benefit for local residents. In short, there are a series of blasts on the east ridge at the southern end that are required to enable these positive future outcomes.

Lastly, as part of our continuous improvement process, we have implemented the following additional measures when blasting on the east ridge.

- 1) perform pre-drilling of blast holes on east ridge to enable opportunity to blast when wind direction is from east-to-west (away from Exshaw),
- 2) perform blasts on east ridge likely earlier in the day as wind direction tends to change around mid-day,
- 3) perform extended community notifications on days when east ridge blasting will occur.

Per regulatory requirements, once a blast hole is loaded with explosives it must be initiated before dark. So, even though we are taking these extra efforts on these remaining east ridge blasts, we will still be at the mercy of rapidly changing weather conditions.

I hope this long-winded email was useful and informative. If you have any other questions, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

Best Regards,

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Jim Bachmann | Plant Manager

Exshaw Cement Plant

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2 attachments

 **East Ridge Views.pdf**
1873K

 **BCEC Meeting 1-Mar-2017.pdf**
1450K