

Multi-million dollar expansion underway at McWane

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COSHOCTON - McWane Ductile showed its commitment to the future of the Coshocton plant with a \$17.5 million investment to expand its pipe finishing line.

General Manager Tom Crawford noted it's the largest investment McWane has made in its facilities.

McWane also owns plants in New Jersey and Utah.

"This is a testament to the confidence they have to entrust us with this investment," Crawford said. "It's significant because it shows that they believe in the quality of employees we have. It's also great for the community that (the company is) excited about the plant's future and giving us the ability to produce more and to do it safer."

The project will be done in three phases and is expected to be completed in 2019. The first phase is constructing a new \$70,000 square foot building by the end of this year.

The second phase will be the installation of cutting, grinding and welding stations and pressure testing areas, while the third phase will focus on cement lining, painting and bundling.

Pipes are pressure tested at 500 psi for five or 10 seconds, depending on specifications, and the cement lining is usually 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick and prevents the pipe from rusting.

On the current finishing line, ductile iron pipe is cut, ground, pressure-tested and prepared for shipment to customers. The new line will accommodate ductile iron pipe, ranging in size from 12 to 36 inches in diameter and up to 20 feet long.

According to the company's website, cast iron pipe has long been the standard material for conveying water and sewage in municipal, utility and industrial piping systems.

Ductile iron pipe, a product of advanced metallurgy, combines the physical strength of mild steel with the long life of gray cast iron. It is virtually unbreakable in ordinary service and has the benefits of long life, corrosion resistance, high structural strength tight joints and is readily machinable.

Engineering manager Steven Meisel noted the upgrades will lead to a safer work environment, while also meeting the needs of diversifying their products.

"The additions will keep workers safer, as they will touch the pipe less to reduce the potential of hand injuries," he said. "The diversity of our products are growing so this will allow us to handle those needs and be efficient with our production."

Crawford said the expansion won't lead to more jobs initially, but McWane is focused on using local and in-state contractors to complete the project, which is in the bidding process.

McWane Ductile currently employs 425 team members in Coshocton.

"We want to use people locally first and keep the work in the state of Ohio," Crawford said. "This allows us to keep the jobs we have. If the demand increases, we will be in a position to handle it and could add jobs if that happens."

Crawford said the employees understand the importance of this investment.

"Our relationships with the employees is as good as it has ever been," he said. "The union with steel workers signed a four-year contract last year with wage increases. Their consistency and production are being recognized."

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