

A SALUTE TO AN RMS CUSTOMER

COLD SPRING GRANITE

More than 100 years of innovation help Minnesota company produce a wide range of products



Josh Reitmeier,
Corporate
Purchasing
Manager



Jim Fuchs,
Engineering &
Quarry Equipment

When Cold Spring Granite built its new corporate headquarters, it immersed itself in the latest trend in the building industry by taking green, or sustainable, construction into account. The result is an innovative, eco-friendly building that's more efficient than the Cold Spring, Minn., company's previous headquarters.

The building is located on a large tract of land that also houses manufacturing operations and includes a diverse range of products that Cold Spring Granite produces from its quarries throughout the U.S. and Canada. The headquarters has been registered for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification through the U.S. Green Building Council.

"Our headquarters is the latest in a long line of innovative moves the company has made in its 110-year history," said Corporate Purchasing Manager Josh Reitmeier. "Our company has always prided itself on being an industry leader. That's true in the initial phase of our operations, which is getting the raw granite from our quarries, and it carries through to our long list of products. Our previous initiative was lean manufacturing, which Cold Spring implemented in the last decade to streamline operations so that we're doing more with less. It's shown positive results by allowing us to fulfill demand faster. In some cases, we've been able to reduce our lead time from weeks to hours or days by finding ways to be more efficient."

Being innovative and efficient has been a company hallmark since Henry Alexander planted the seed for Cold Spring Granite in 1898. He emigrated from Scotland in 1880 to work in the United States' stone industry. After returning to his native land in the

middle of the decade, he came back to the U.S., joining with other granite workers to form a small granite company. Eventually, he bought the others out and established the foundation for Cold Spring Granite with a focus on producing granite monument and building products.

Throughout the next century, Alexander and successive generations continued to build the company and take it in new directions. Today Cold Spring Granite is one of the largest granite quarrying and fabrication operations in the world, with five fabrication operations to go along with its 30 granite quarries. Alexander's grandson Patrick D. Alexander is Chairman/CEO.

Offering a diverse range of products

The company is split into two divisions: Memorialization and Commercial. The Memorialization group features several subsidiaries, including Royal Melrose Granites, which supplies standard and custom monuments, grass markers and other cemetery-type products from its fabricating facility in Cold Spring. Another subsidiary, Granit-Bronz, makes engraved and sculpted bronze products, as well as large family and community mausoleums. It's latest venture is the Architectural Accolade Collection, which has bronze plaques and signs for buildings and landmarks, among other uses. Cold Spring offers cemetery maintenance and construction as well.

The Commercial group handles orders for architectural building products, which include granite specialties, such as residential slabs for countertops, furniture and tile, landscape products, granite blocks, and granite for



Operator Ervin Klehr loads a granite block onto a trailer with one of Cold Spring Granite's newest Komatsu WA600-6 wheel loaders at the Rockville No. 2 Quarry. "Because we deal with large rectangular blocks of granite, we need machines that can lift at least 80,000 pounds," said Jim Fuchs, Engineering and Quarry Equipment.

industrial applications. Within the division, a subdivision, known as DiamondWright, manufactures such items as plated tools, drills, anchoring and other products for working with granite.

The building blocks for both of Cold Spring's divisions come from its quarries, which are located in Minnesota, Texas, New York, California and Canada. Each has unique properties that offer varying colors of raw granite the company harvests and ships to Cold Spring's headquarters for fabricating. It also imports granite from around the globe. The imports, along with domestic granite, allow the company to offer hundreds of color, style and finish combinations from the more than 1.5 million cubes of granite it quarries each year.

Its handiwork can be seen anywhere from countertops in private residences to headstones, mausoleums and markers in cemeteries to commercial and governmental buildings and monuments. Notable projects that include Cold Spring products include the Iroquois Theater in Chicago, columns at the Minnesota State Capitol and the finish and etching of the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"Customers turn to us because throughout the company's history, it's gained a reputation for delivering quality work within their time frame," said Reitmeier. "Cold Spring is able to do that because of our vast resources and our focus on streamlining the production process. Much of the credit goes to the company's



Operator Dean Forster uses a Komatsu WA600-6 wheel loader to put stone in a truck at Cold Spring Granite's Charcoal Quarry in St. Cloud.



employees, many of whom are second- and third-generation craftsmen. They take great pride in the work they do, and are willing to pitch in and help wherever necessary."

Komatsu equipment helps with efficiency

Many of the more than 1,400 employees of Cold Spring Granite work in the quarries, where dependable and productive equipment is a necessity. The company is focusing on turning over its aging fleet of wheel loaders

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Cold Spring Granite — a legacy of innovation

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with its initial purchase of Komatsu WA600-6s. It uses them, in conjunction with forks and specially designed buckets, to move and load granite blocks and “grout,” a waste product.

“There aren’t many manufacturers that have the type of machinery we were looking for,” said Jim Fuchs, who handles Engineering and Quarry Equipment. “Because we deal with large, rectangular blocks of granite, we need machines that can lift at least 80,000 pounds. We also considered several other factors, such as operator comfort, maintenance and fuel efficiency, among others. The WA600s definitely stood out from the competitive machines we looked at. They’re ergonomically better to operate, have better visibility and are more serviceable. By comparing them to what we had, we’ve seen a fuel savings of four to five gallons an hour.”



Jim Fuchs, Engineering and Quarry Equipment, checks on one of Cold Spring Granite’s new WA600-6 wheel loaders using Komatsu’s Vehicle Health Maintenance System (VHMS) on his computer at Cold Spring’s headquarters.

Cold Spring Granite Corporate Purchasing Manager Josh Reitmeier (left) meets with RMS Territory Manager Lyle Knutson at Cold Spring’s new headquarters in Cold Spring, Minn. “Cold Spring has worked with Lyle and RMS for many years,” said Reitmeier.



Fuchs tracks machine performance and maintenance with Komatsu’s Vehicle Health Monitoring System (VHMS) which allows him to log onto a secure Web site and access machine information via satellite.

“It’s a valuable tool, because it allows me to not only see the standard information, such as hours and maintenance intervals, but I can dig deeper and look at data that’s just as critical to performance as those factors,” said Fuchs. “I can track trends for all our mines from my desk in Cold Spring without having to go to the site or talk with someone on the phone to get the information. That’s time and money saved.”

Cold Spring Granite recently expanded its fleet by purchasing three new WA600-6 wheel loaders with the help of Road Machinery & Supplies Territory Manager Lyle Knutson. “Cold Spring has worked with Lyle and RMS for many years,” said Reitmeier. “In fact, some of the loaders we’re replacing were originally bought from RMS, as well as parts for them. They did an excellent job of setting up the new machines and Lyle’s been good about checking on our needs and seeing how the machines operate. With a Komatsu parts depot nearby, getting parts is going to be easier. We’re very pleased.”

Staying on the cutting edge

Reitmeier said the WA600-6s fit in with the company’s “green” outlook. “With the Tier 3 engines, there are fewer emissions and a significant savings in fuel, so they’re efficient. They fit in with our plans as we take into consideration our environmental impact and sustainability issues going forward.

“It’s part of Cold Spring Granite’s legacy to look for new and more efficient ways of doing business,” he added. “The company was one of the first to use wire saws to cut raw granite, among its other cutting-edge advances. We implemented lean operations in the 1990s and we’re still doing that. Now we’re committed to being more green in our operations, part of which includes the reuse of the grout material which was normally wasted before. As time goes by, we’ll continue to seek ways that will be beneficial not only to us, but to our customers as well.” ■