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Group Announces Contract to Utilize Waste Granite

Barre Area Development Outlines Plan To Use Trains To Transport Granite From Vermont to Florida

BARRE, Vt. – A local granite firm and economic development officials are pleased to release details of a new contract that will use a mostly untapped natural resource, support and sustain local jobs and create new need for increased rail in Central Vermont.

On Friday, May 7, Rock of Ages hosted a meeting at its offices in Graniteville with officials from the affected communities to announce the contract between Northeast Materials Group, a company working with Rock of Ages to find uses for ROA's riprap and crushed granite, and the Army Corps of Engineers in a project that will necessitate increased rail activity on the section of Washington County Railroad that runs from Montpelier Junction to Barre Town.

"The purpose of the meeting was as a courtesy to the four municipalities to inform them that Northeast Materials Group has secured a contract to utilize the excess granite that is waste material from the quarries for a project in Clewiston, Florida," said Darren Winham, Executive Director of Barre Area Development.

Representatives from Barre Town, Barre City, Berlin and Montpelier, as well as from the State of Vermont Rail Division, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation and Barre Area Development were briefed by officials from Northeast Materials Group and Rock of Ages.

"This initial project, in what we hope will be the first of many such endeavors, will see roughly 54,000 tons of granite shipped all the way down the Eastern Seaboard for use as armor rock for the Herbert Hoover Dyke System in Lake Okeechobee," Winham said. "It is quite an endorsement for not only the quality of Barre granite for multiple uses, but also the multimodal ability of our region to be competitive on a project so far away," he furthered.

Northeast Materials Group is seeking to provide granite for use in large-scale marine structures, such as retaining walls and breakwaters that would be built by the Army Corps of Engineers on the United States coast using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

Since rail is the most efficient and cost effective method of transport for these materials, the granite would be transported by rail from Barre Town to Montpelier Junction through Barre Town, Barre City, Berlin, and Montpelier.

The amount of rail activity will be determined by the volume of granite required to fulfill such contracts and use from other area businesses. In addition, some upgrades to the rail line might be made.

“Barre Area Development has been contacted by several local businesses that would be interested in rail use should the track be used more frequently,” Winham said. He went on to describe the anticipated increased rail traffic. “We expect to see 10 car trains 5 days per week for 3 months at this time. Montpelier and Berlin will see a morning and afternoon train with 10 cars included. Barre City and Barre Town will see additional trains between the yard behind Main Street, Barre City and Websterville. At this time we are hoping these can be 5 car trains.”

We look forward to increased rail use along the Washington County Railroad because of the economic benefits that it will bring,” said David Dill, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Transportation. “Transporting this type of heavy product via rail is also environmentally friendly and has long been an agency goal because use of the railroad prevents the need for the alternative, heavy trucks that not only stress our roads and bridges, but also rumble through our historic downtowns.”