

Wheelabrator MILLBURY News

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Spring 2008



20/20 vision

Wheelabrator, Millbury will benefit from new contract

BY PAUL HALLORAN

The first 20 years went so well for both Wheelabrator Technologies and the town of Millbury, there was little doubt the relationship would be extended. That's exactly what happened late in 2007 when representatives of Wheelabrator and the town agreed on a new 20-year Host Community Agreement.

Under the new contract, the Wheelabrator Millbury waste-to-energy plant will make an annual in-lieu-of-taxes payment of \$1.9 million to the town. In addition, Wheelabrator will continue to provide Millbury free disposal of residential trash that is dropped off at the town transfer station. The free tonnage represents a savings of more than \$200,000 annually for the town.

"This is a win-win," said Robert

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From left, Selectman Joseph Coggins Jr., Selectman Francis King, Selectman Kenneth Schold, Wheelabrator's Bob Jacques and Fred Confalone, Selectman Chairman Bernard Plante, Selectman Michael Moore and Town Manager Robert Spain.

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Former selectman recalls Wheelabrator start-up

BY DAVID LISCIO

Harold Ostrowski keenly remembers the bind faced by 35 communities in Greater Worcester two decades ago as they struggled to find a regional solution to the growing problem of waste disposal.

Worcester city councilors were scrambling for nearby land on which to site a waste management facility and Millbury was among the possibilities.

Ostrowski, 81, a Webster native who moved to a waterfront home on Millbury's Dorothy Pond almost 50 years ago, was a member of the Millbury Board of Selectmen in 1975. He viewed Worcester's trash problem as an opportunity for Millbury.

"It basically came down to the fact that the Worcester area had a lot of tonnage and we had some breathing space in our town," Ostrowski recalled from his home,

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Harold Ostrowski

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Energizing Millbury for more than 20 years



**FRED
CONFALONE**

It's hard to believe more than 20 years has passed since our plant went online and started meeting the waste-disposal needs of residents of Millbury and surrounding communities. As you will read on page 1 of this edition of Wheelabrator Millbury News, late last year Wheelabrator and the Town of Millbury agreed on a new Host Community Agreement that will run through 2027.

We at Wheelabrator could not be happier than to remain a part of the Millbury community. Being a good corporate citizen and a good neighbor are paramount to our company's philosophy. We are fortunate to have been involved with a number of important community initiatives over the years, some of which you will find described in this edition of Wheelabrator Millbury News.

On the back page, you will meet a number of veteran employees, most of whom have been at the plant since day one – and some even longer. I think the fact that so many of our employees have stayed this long is testament not only to the positive working environment Wheelabrator tries to foster, but also to Millbury and the

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Of all the relationships
we have formed, our
partnership with Millbury
students is one of which
we are most proud.”

surrounding area. Many of our staff make their homes here and contribute to the fabric of the community.

Of all the relationships we have formed, our partnership with Millbury students is one of which we are most proud. We are pleased to work every year with science teachers John Hillier and Mark Sutphen and their students on a project for the Wheelabrator Environmental Symposium. The symposium is a company-wide initiative in which students identify an environmental issue in their community and devise a strategy to address it.

Students from Millbury Junior/Senior High and nine other schools in communities where Wheelabrator is located traveled to Florida the first

week in May to present their projects and receive recognition for their months-long efforts. It is truly an outstanding program and we at Wheelabrator Millbury were again proud to be represented by a group of outstanding students.

We are living in an age when environmental awareness is at the forefront of people's thoughts and actions. This includes everyone at Wheelabrator Technologies, Inc. At the bottom of this page you will find a story that details the success our company has had in reducing carbon emissions to the point that Wheelabrator is even better than carbon-neutral, a designation in which we take great pride.

I have had the good fortune to be part of the operation at Wheelabrator Millbury since before construction on the plant began. It has been a very gratifying 20 years – personally and professionally – working in this community, and everyone at the plant is re-energized as we head into our second score of years.

Fred Confalone is general manager at Wheelabrator Millbury.

Wheelabrator plays key role in reducing CO₂ emissions

BY PAUL HALLORAN

In an age when global warming has gained international attention and scrutiny, there has been a concerted effort to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, which are believed to contribute to a worldwide change in climate.

“Carbon neutral” refers to a net of zero carbon release into the atmosphere, which is brought about by balancing the amount of carbon released with the creation of a commensurate amount of carbon emissions reduced or avoided.

Waste-to-energy technology, such as that employed by Wheelabrator Millbury, has proven to be even better than carbon neutral. Here is how waste-to-energy is playing a key role in the fight against global warming: The trash that is burned by waste-to-energy facilities is comprised primarily of biomass organic material — i.e. food, wood and paper. The combustion of that type of material counts as zero carbon emissions.

Trash that is sent to waste-to-energy plants also includes plastics, textiles and other materials made from petroleum. They create carbon dioxide when burned, but only a small percentage of waste-to-energy's direct emissions fall

**According to the EPA,
of all the solid waste
management options,
waste-to-energy does
the most to reduce
greenhouse gas releases
into the atmosphere.
Industry wide,
waste-to-energy plants
annually prevent the
release of more than
30 million tons of
greenhouse gases such
as carbon dioxide.**

into that category.

Waste-to-energy plants such as Wheelabrator Millbury help avoid release of greenhouse gas emissions in three ways. First, waste-to-energy plants generate electricity by using the heat from the combustion of the trash to create steam in high-efficiency boilers. The steam in turn powers electric generators. Producing

electricity with trash avoids the greenhouse gas emissions associated with conventional electric power plants, which typically burn coal or oil.

Second, the trash that is converted into energy in a waste-to-energy plant, having already been subjected to recycling by households and businesses, would either go to a waste-to-energy plant or landfill. Waste that is placed in a landfill decomposes over time, creating methane gas, which is 23 times as potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Even well controlled landfills that collect the gas and use it to create electricity are not able to collect 100 percent of the methane. This uncaptured methane, however small a quantity, would be released as a greenhouse gas emission.

Finally, waste-to-energy plants also avoid greenhouse gas emissions by recovering ferrous metals, such as iron and steel, from ash residue left after combustion of the trash. These metals are sent off to recycling facilities. Making new iron and steel from that recycled material results in less carbon dioxide emissions.

The net effect of waste-to-energy technology when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions is that for every ton of municipal solid waste that is converted into electricity at a waste-to-energy plant,

approximately one ton of greenhouse gases, i.e., carbon dioxide, is avoided or offset. That figure was arrived at by researchers at universities and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Using this rule of thumb, in 2007, Wheelabrator Millbury was responsible for the avoidance of approximately 445,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Company-wide, Wheelabrator-operated waste-to-energy plants were responsible for avoiding the production of more than seven million tons of greenhouse gases.

According to the EPA, industry-wide, waste-to-energy plants annually prevent the release of more than 30 million tons of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors supports a seven percent reduction in greenhouse gases from 1990 levels by 2012 and recognizes waste-to-energy technology as a means to achieve that goal. Also, the Global Roundtable on Climate Change has identified waste-to-energy as a means to reduce carbon dioxide emissions as well as methane emissions from landfills.

Being even better than “carbon neutral” is another example of how Wheelabrator and waste-to-energy are helping to protect the environment.

Wheelabrator helps Lions roar

Plant supports Lions Club's efforts in promoting a healthier community

By DAVID LISCIO

Millbury Selectman Joseph Coggins Jr. has been a member of the Millbury Lions Club for 33 years. In fact, he was among the local chapter's original 25 founders.

Over the decades, he has participated in countless community fundraisers as well as events prescribed by the organization's national headquarters. On many of these occasions, Wheelabrator Millbury has lent a helping hand.

"The Lions Club does a multitude of things in the community, from raising money to fight diabetes to collecting used eyeglasses that can be turned in to make new ones. We also put on the annual

Fourth of July parade and fireworks display," said

Coggins, 65, who is semi-retired but still active in town politics.

"Every year, Wheelabrator makes a generous donation toward the parade and the fireworks. Without that money from Wheelabrator and some of the other donors, we wouldn't be able to pay the bands and buy the things we need for the event," he said.

Wheelabrator Millbury general manager Fred Confalone, a Lions Club member, said the partnership has been rewarding. "We try to give them what they need because what they do is very good for the community," he said. "The Millbury Lions play an important role in town and Wheelabrator is proud to support their efforts."

According to Coggins, the local Lions have broadened their horizons to take on additional causes. "We collect money and we collect used eyeglasses. The glasses are shipped to Lions International where they're crushed up and made into new lenses and frames," he said, dispelling a common belief that the organization attempts to match the vision prescription of a donor's eyeglasses to the recipient's and hope for the best.

"We don't just give people in need other

people's glasses as long as the prescription is close. Each year, we take in thousands of pairs of glasses and we ship them out. We also have a golf tournament and we do a lot of things for individuals in need."

The Millbury Lions are currently refurbishing the eyeglasses donation box, which resembles a post office box and is set in front of the Millbury National Bank. But contributions are also accepted by check or cash.

Coggins explained that only six of the original 25 founders are still in the club. "We have about 75-77 members right now, and we recently incorporated women into the club. For 32 years we didn't have women. They had their own organization, the Lioness Club," he said.

The Millbury Lions meet at the St. Charles Hotel on West Main Street, owned by longtime member Tom McKenney, the current club president.

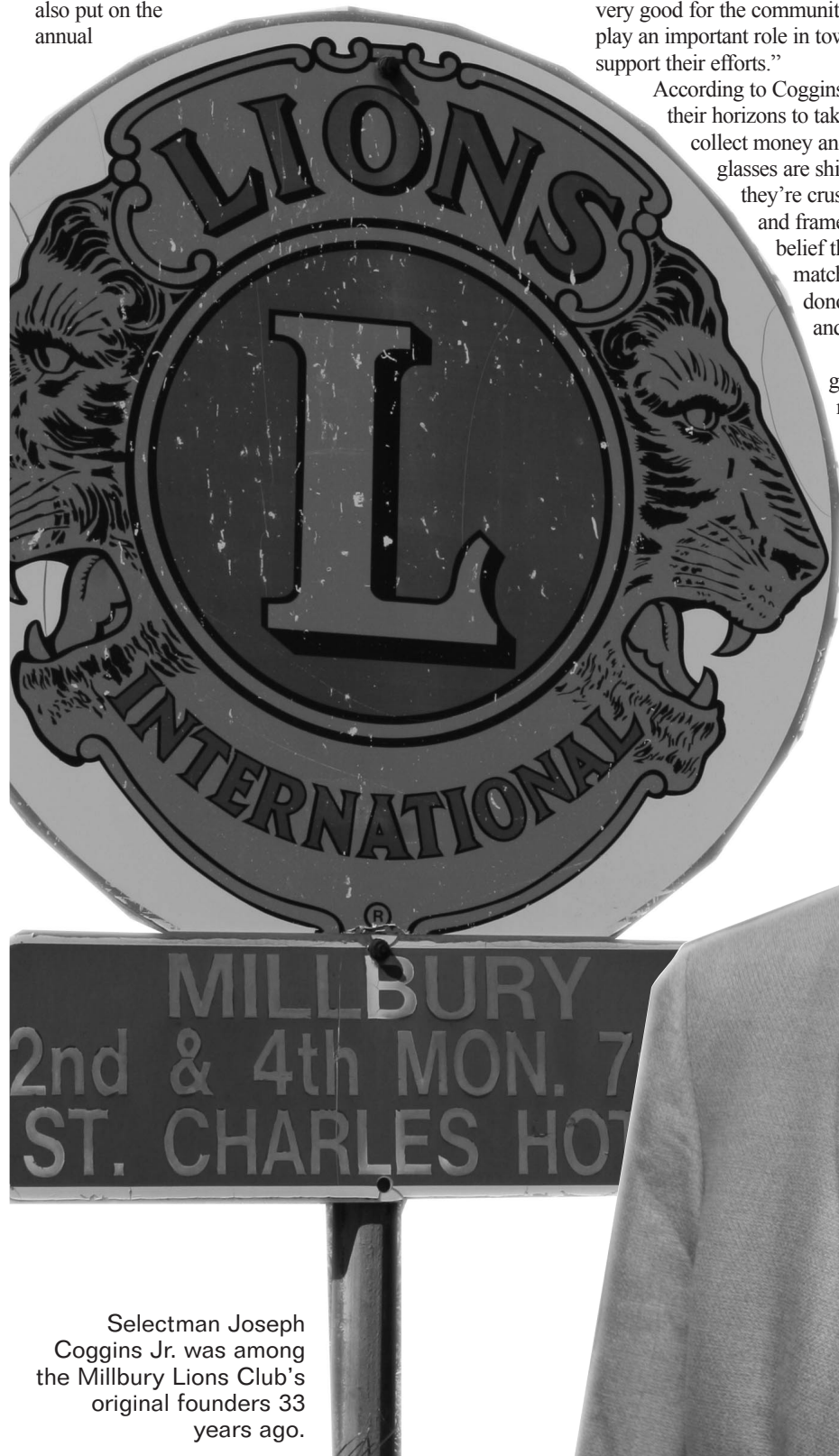
"Wheelabrator gives us a nice donation every year," McKenney said. "We have a carnival on Windle Field during the Fourth of July holiday and it's our largest fundraiser, so the donation is very important."

McKenney said the eyeglass collection drive has been a big success for as long as he can remember. "We take in a couple thousand pairs each year. People can drive up to the box and drop them in, and Lions International has a refurbishing program. But we don't help out with just eyes. Our main goal is to help people, and that also means those with hearing problems and diabetes," he said.

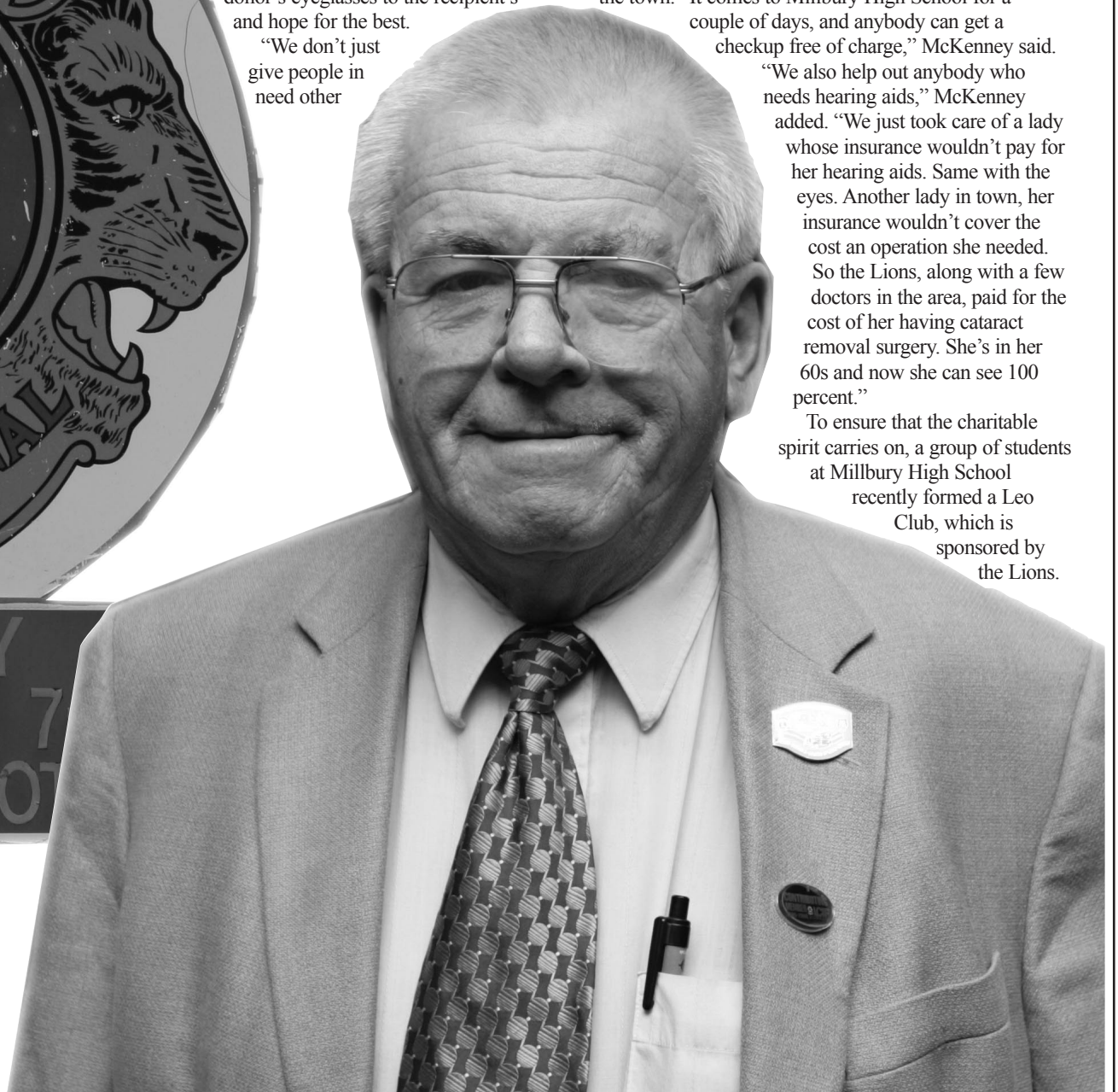
From funding provided by Wheelabrator and other donors, the Millbury Lions annually pay for the Sight Mobile to visit the town. "It comes to Millbury High School for a couple of days, and anybody can get a checkup free of charge," McKenney said.

"We also help out anybody who needs hearing aids," McKenney added. "We just took care of a lady whose insurance wouldn't pay for her hearing aids. Same with the eyes. Another lady in town, her insurance wouldn't cover the cost of her having cataract removal surgery. She's in her 60s and now she can see 100 percent."

To ensure that the charitable spirit carries on, a group of students at Millbury High School recently formed a Leo Club, which is sponsored by the Lions.



Selectman Joseph Coggins Jr. was among the Millbury Lions Club's original founders 33 years ago.





The nature of education

Millbury students aim to preserve bird sanctuary

By DAVID LISCIO

When a group of Millbury middle school students took a survey last year to find out how many school-age kids in town had heard of the Davidson Bird Sanctuary, they were astonished by the results: Only a small percentage even knew the place exists.

Given these circumstances, the seven students in the seventh and eighth grades decided to make it part of their environmental symposium project, an academic challenge annually sponsored by Wheelabrator Technologies, which operates the Wheelabrator Millbury waste-to-energy plant.

The science students concocted a plan last October to raise awareness of the 25-acre tract of wilderness within their own community, and to find a way to make it an integral part of the town. That included looking for ways to make the overgrown open space more accessible.

For guidance, the students relied on science teachers — Mark Sutphen and John Hillier.

“The 25 acres were deeded to the town in 1964, with the stipulation that the town agree not to develop the land, and to use it as a bird sanctuary,” said Sutphen, noting the property was a gift from Alfred and Henrietta Fay. “The town was not to take the land for other purposes, so it has remained in the old common area of town, covered with second-growth forest. It was a community resource, but few if anybody were taking advantage of it.”

The middle school students — Courtney Diamond, Sarah MacAdam, Nickie Machacz, Brandon Moseley, Danielle Richmond, Marirose Watters and Nicole Wright — decided to make it their mission to change that, and with Wheelabrator’s support, they got under way by identifying the problem and mapping out a solution. The students also participated in Wheelabrator’s Environmental Symposium in Florida May 5-8.

Sutphen and Hillier accompanied the students, as did Sharon Beausoleil, the mother of a former Millbury High student who graduated last year but was once a symposium participant when the event was held in Boston.

“Sharon came with us to help chaperone the girls because she understands the importance of the symposium,” said Sutphen. “This is an event that celebrates students who identified an environmental problem or difficulty in their

community and offered a solution for how to fix it. In this case, they talked to members of the Millbury Conservation Commission, they had discussions with one of the selectmen, and in the process they interviewed people who historically know the area, people who could tell them what the land was used for originally before it was deeded over.”

The brush-covered sanctuary, once known as the Fay Grant Sanctuary, may once have been pasture, as evidenced by a series of low stone walls. As part of the project, the students attempted to cut a few trails to make the area more accessible, but the main focus lay in getting the public to recognize the existence and value of the place.

“The kids saw the problem and tried to meet with state and local agencies who might be part of the key to fixing it,” said Sutphen. “That was the process — talk to the people, gather information, get the government to help.”

Talking to the people also included conducting a survey of 240 Millbury elementary school students.

“Most of the younger kids didn’t even know it was a sanctuary. Some didn’t even know it exists, which suggests that their parents might not know as well,” said Sutphen, noting that the students who conducted the research addressed the third-graders in April to explain the goal of the project, offer information about the sanctuary, and distribute a pamphlet describing what’s on the land.

“The students are going to re-do the sign that’s there to mark the sanctuary, and make a trail map,” Sutphen explained. “The kids want the pamphlet to hang in a box that visitors can access. The kids haven’t applied for any government grants, but a local sign maker has offered to make them a new sign for free.”

The students plan to meet this spring with the Conservation Commission to clarify what the town official envisions for the site.

“Do we want to mark the trails and put borders along them, or leave the woods more natural? That’s one of the questions the kids want to find out,” said Hillier. “No matter what the final outcome is, the kids have identified the sanctuary as a resource. And now is the time to mark this land as open public space as the population of Millbury grows.”

At left, Millbury students who will participated in the Wheelabrator Environmental Symposium, from left, Marirose Watters, Nicole Wright, Brandon Moseley, Courtney Diamond, Danielle Richmond and Nickie Machacz. Teachers John Hillier and Mark Sutphen are in the rear.

PHOTO: DAVID LISCIO



Wheelabrator Millbury General Manager Fred Confalone looks on as Selectman Chairman Bernard Plante signs the contract.

Wheelabrator, Millbury will benefit from new contract

CONTRACT: from Page 1

Jacques, manager of Business Development for Wheelabrator. “The relationship between the company and the town has been good for 20 years and the negotiations were amicable.”

“We’re grateful for how well we have been received in Millbury and we look forward to another 20 years of serving the community,” said Wheelabrator Millbury General Manager Fred Confalone.

Negotiating on behalf of Wheelabrator were Jacques, Confalone, Wheelabrator regional financial analyst Suzanne Nydam, Wheelabrator regional financial analyst, and controller Karen Courville. The town was represented by a solid waste committee appointed by the board of selectmen.

The original 20-year agreement, signed when Wheelabrator began operations in 1987, ran through last December. The new contract was

approved by selectmen Nov. 20.

Under state law, Wheelabrator’s payment to the town is based on the number of tons of waste it processes at the plant. That comes to approximately \$1.4 million a year, and the company agreed to pay the town an additional \$500,000 annually in the new agreement, according to Jacques.

“We were anxious to continue to provide substantial financial support to the town, out of gratitude for it being such a great host for our facility,” Confalone said. “This is consistent with our approach of getting involved in the community.”

“Wheelabrator has been a good neighbor,” said Harold Ostrowski, a former selectman who was instrumental in bringing the company to Millbury in 1987. “I’d say it was a good decision to bring the plant here, and may the new contract with Wheelabrator be as fruitful and enjoyable as the past 20 years have been.”

Former selectman recalls Wheelabrator start-up

OSTROWSKI: from Page 1

where he lives with his wife, Irene.

In those days, Millbury had no town administrator and was run by the five-member board of selectmen along with various specialized boards and committees. The regional trash disposal issue was in the hands of the Central Massachusetts Resource Recovery Committee, composed of representatives from the surrounding cities and towns.

“The committee was formed to develop a regional solution to solid waste management,” Ostrowski said. “After a few meetings, the communities involved dropped considerably for various reasons. Distance from the anticipated disposal site, towns not trusting regionalization, particularly with the City of Worcester, and the non-dedication of the representatives of the committee that left, were just some of the reasons. After much deliberation, disagreement and some distrust, we came together with respect and dedication to solving a problem on a regional basis.”

According to Ostrowski, the regional committee drew up a short list of possible sites and was met with varying degrees of opposition, mostly by public health advocates and environmentalists. By 1980, it seemed the plant might be built at the Norton Co. in Worcester, where local officials were eyeing the waste-to-energy operation as a way to address their own energy needs.

“You have to remember that these meetings of the regional committee went on for almost 10 years without any decision being made and Worcester had just about told us how it was going to be, like it or not. But they were also up against the state mandate to come up with a

plan on how they were going to get rid of their trash,” said Ostrowski, retired from his job as a machine drafting instructor at the Boston Trade High School for Boys, then known as the Hubert H. Humphrey Technical Center.

“Even though there was some opposition, Joseph Kasdin, who was a city councilor in Worcester, was still in favor of building the plant, regardless of what some people were saying. It was around that time I offered a site in Millbury that was owned by a fence company.”

In 1980, Worcester lost its funding for a feasibility study when its City Council passed a resolution prohibiting transfer stations, landfills and resource recovery facilities within the city limits. “That’s when I brought forth Millbury’s offer of two sites,” Ostrowski said.

Members of the regional committee visited the Millbury site and Ostrowski pitched the idea at a public hearing in town. “There was some opposition, but strangely enough, we had more opposition from people who didn’t live in Millbury than from the people who did,” he said. “Some of the ones who spoke against the idea were environmentalists and these people often don’t understand that there’s a limit. But in the end, their opposition

didn’t amount to too much. The money was the other part of the deal.”

One of the two sites was selected, giving Millbury host-community fees dictated by state law. “I also asked for free tipping. At the time, the size of the plant was going to be 650 tons per day capacity,” Ostrowski recalled. “The town agreed to raise the capacity to 1,500 tons to make the tipping fee more

palatable to the other communities. It was agreed that Millbury would be allowed up to 11,315 tons of free tipping each year. But after more discussion, the regional committee decided that we did not have the know-how to run this type of an operation.”

It was then that Wheelabrator Technologies entered the equation, offering to design, build, operate and own a resource recovery facility.

“Millbury agreed to a transfer station at the site to take care of disposal needs between the landfill closures and the facility’s opening. And after the facility did open, the transfer station could be used to handle demolition wastes and to serve as a backup for the resource recovery facility in an emergency,” said Ostrowski.

Millbury benefited nicely from the original 20-year contract with Wheelabrator once the

regional committee, the town and state officials approved it. “When the committee realized it had nowhere else to do, they said to themselves, ‘We should probably go to Millbury’, and that’s what they did,” Ostrowski said.

Getting state approval wasn’t a simple matter. “The state was out here all the time. Every time we wanted to do something, the state would come back and say we have to do this or that. One of the plants was failing in the north part of the state and they wanted to ship the solid waste to Millbury. That was an entirely different situation from getting rid of the trash in the Worcester area,” he said.

“But, the clock was ticking. Worcester still had to find a solution and they knew they couldn’t have a landfill. They knew they had to get the plant going in Millbury. And the towns also knew that the ones who got in early would get a better deal. For Millbury, it was an excellent deal. It worked out well for the town. We had lots of tons of free tipping in the contract, and when you don’t have that expense, you can hold down your property taxes.”

But all of that was 20 years ago, and the contract has since been renewed.

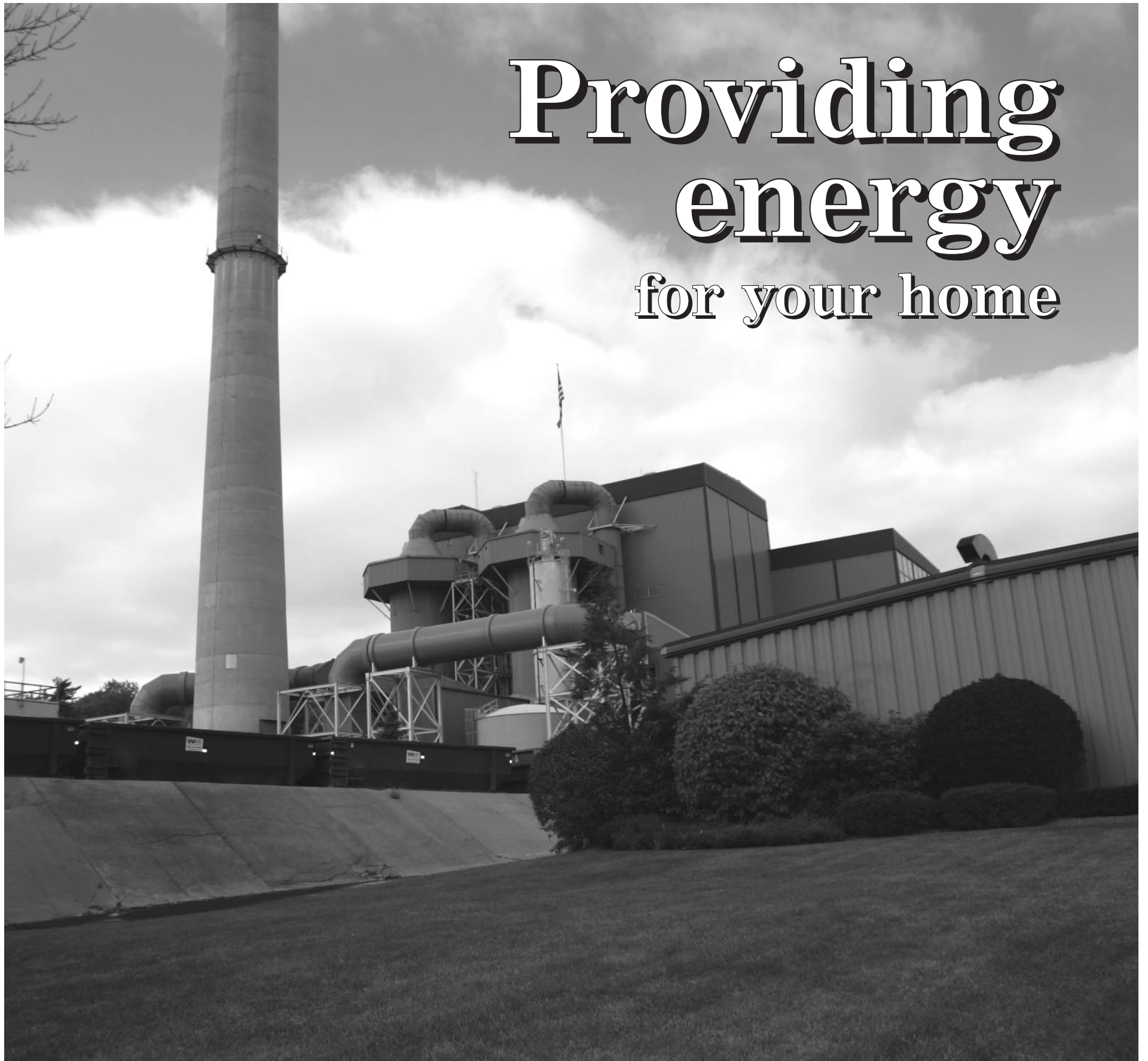
“Wheelabrator has been a good neighbor,” said Ostrowski, who served 13 years on the board of selectmen, six on the finance committee, and five as town assessor. “They help different areas in town, and with some big projects, from building the Victorian Garden at the senior center, which was a gift in memory of Dan Madigan (the late Wheelabrator regional VP) to restoring the historic Asa Waters House Museum to helping out the Lions Club with the annual Fourth of July celebration and fireworks.”

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“Wheelabrator has been a good neighbor. They help different areas in town, and with some big projects, from building the Victorian Garden at the senior center... to restoring the historic Asa Waters House Museum to helping out the Lions Club with the annual Fourth of July celebration and fireworks.”

Harold Ostrowski

Providing energy for your home



And a clean environment for theirs.

Preserving the environment has been part of the goal
at Wheelabrator Millbury for the past 20 years.



Wheelabrator Technologies Inc.

A Waste Management Company



Wheelabrator veteran employees include, from left, Karen Courville, John Kris, Roger Sabourin, Deb Gerber, Joe Braga, Bob Jacques, Fred Confalone, Hope Freeman, Carlos Barbosa, Jeff Carr, Ray Ante, Gerry Antrobus, Steve Pawelski and Stan Silun. PHOTO: DAVID LISCIO

Veteran employees nurture Millbury plant's growth

BY DAVID LISCIO

Unlike many workplaces in the new millennium where people stay for less than four years, many of the employees at Wheelabrator Technology's waste-to-energy plant in Millbury have toiled alongside one another for two decades.

As a result, the atmosphere can take on a chummy air, where there's plenty of razzing like you might find at family gatherings.

"When we started working here, most of us didn't have kids," said Ray Ante, an Uxbridge resident and maintenance supervisor who began working for Wheelabrator nearly 21 years ago. "We weren't even married. We were just a bunch of twenty-somethings and we liked going out after work."

John Kris of Worcester, the assistant plant operator, recalled those early days as well. "Now we're a bunch of forty-somethings," he said, chuckling. "We get out when we can."

Of the 53 employees, more than a few can remember when the facility was under construction. As Debra Gerber of Worcester, a clerk and scale house operator, put it, "At one point, when we were working from the trailers, I was taller than the stack, which was just going up."

Back then, Ante was a utility operator who worked for a local company and had some knowledge of boilers. He was quick to jump ship when Wheelabrator administrators recognized his skills.

Perhaps nobody is better equipped to describe what the site was like 20 years ago than Gerald Antrobus, Wheelabrator's director of construction.

During a recent visit to the Millbury facility, Antrobus, who started his career in 1974 with what was then Wheelabrator's Signal Division, carried a thick binder filled with photographs and drawings of the construction in various phases.

"The inspectors told me this was one of the safest and neatest worksites they'd ever seen," he said, proudly noting how his strategy of strengthening the building foundation with interlaced concrete buttresses and tons of soil saved the company \$380,000. "Some people thought it wouldn't work, but it did."

Robert Jacques, another longtime employee and now Wheelabrator manager of business development, began his career with Wheelabrator in 1989, but was associated with the company's operations in Millbury through his municipal job with the Town of Shrewsbury.

Fred Confalone of Shrewsbury, Wheelabrator Millbury general manager, joined the company in 1983

at its facility in Westchester County (NY). Three years later, he was transferred to Millbury, where he has remained. A native of Wakefield, Mass., Confalone initially interviewed for a job at the Wheelabrator plant in Saugus, near his hometown. Upon learning there were no openings, he accepted a job in Westchester.

Joe Bragna, a resident of Woodstock, Conn., just over the Massachusetts border, started working for Wheelabrator 20 years ago as a laborer. He eventually learned how to operate a crane and today is the plant's lead crane operator.

Carlos Barbosa of Taunton has logged nearly 21 years with Wheelabrator and currently works at lead laborer. Stan Silun of Millbury, a warehouse clerk, is another 20-year employee, while supervisor Jeff Carr of Thompson, Conn. is entering his 21st year. Roger Sabourin of Sutton, another 20-year employee, is among the plant's loader operators.

Others have been at the facility for equal time or longer, including Hope Freeman of Boston, the only woman who works inside the plant and an employee for 22 years; Karen Courville of Oxford, who joined Wheelabrator in 1988 and has since been promoted to facility controller, handling the day-to-day finances; and Stephen Pawelski, operations manager who has been with Wheelabrator for more than 20 years.