



On the Penobscot

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Watching the Future Roll by Along the Penobscot

Sue and Joe Pate believe they caught a glimpse of the future from their waterfront home along the Penobscot River one summer morning in late August after the Cianbro company completed another prefabricated construction job at its Eastern Manufacturing site in nearby Brewer.

On August 22, the Pates invited friends over to witness the barged shipment of prefabricated electrical buildings as it rolled past their backyard for the long journey to New Harbour, Newfoundland. The massive structures – some three-story, completely outfitted buildings weighing 490 tons – slowly eased past the Pates bound for the Atlantic Ocean for the journey to the Canadian Maritime. Again on October 4, the Pates were in their familiar spot as the last of the modules floated past to Newfoundland.

It wasn't long ago that the former Eastern Fine Paper Company in Brewer was shuttered as a result of the declining pulp and paper industry in Maine. Its rapid conversion from a contaminated site with no discernible future to a bustling manufacturing facility employing up to 500 workers is a future that the Pates envision for the former HoltraChem plant, adjacent to their property.



A tug pushes the last modules down the Penobscot River on the way to New Harbour, Newfoundland.

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The Cianbro facility in South Brewer just upstream from the former HoltraChem plant on the Penobscot River.

Cianbro opened its South Brewer module facility in 2008, after Brewer economic development officials targeted the former Eastern Fine Paper site for environmental remediation and redevelopment. Working with state and federal environmental officials and local boards, the site was quickly remediated and the economic development process soon followed. In 2009, the city won a national award from the Environmental Protection Agency for its work.

Mallinckrodt US LLC, the company that has taken responsibility for the environmental remediation process at the former Holtrachem site, is working with the town of Orrington to support the potential reuse of the former manufacturing site, which closed in 2001.



A barge loaded with prefabricated electrical buildings edges around the river bend as it makes its way to open ocean.

In 2010, the company agreed to help the town finance site infrastructure improvements, including roads and the extension of water lines, and to purchase from the town approximately 60 acres of the 240-acre wooded site where the environmental remediation will be done.

“We have a good and responsible neighbor that is working hard to clear the environmental regulatory hurdles so that this cleanup can be completed and the site reused for the community’s benefit,” said Sue Pate. “We are very supportive of what Cianbro has done in Brewer and there is no reason why we can’t have a similar future for Orrington.”

Joe Pate agrees, adding, “like every other community, we have a tight municipal budget and it isn’t clear how our tax base is going to expand to meet those budget challenges. If we do this right, we can bring new jobs and clean industry to this site and put it back on the tax rolls.”

Mallinckrodt has spent more than a decade and more than \$45 million at the site removing dozens of buildings, tanks and other structures for the eventual final remediation. Pending resolution of an ongoing appeals process, Mallinckrodt chose to move forward and build a new groundwater treatment facility (at a cost of approximately \$4.4 million) that is now operational (see related story).

Interested Orrington Citizens Get First Look at New Groundwater Treatment System

It may not have been the social event of the season, but an invitation to tour the new groundwater treatment plant at the former HoltraChem site brought out a small gathering of interested citizens in late August just as the new high-capacity treatment plant became operational.

The new state-of-the-art facility, located adjacent to the administration building on the former manufacturing site, is now fully operational and replaces the system that had been in constant use prior

to the 2001 shutdown of the former manufacturing plant. The groundwater extraction system is at the heart of ongoing efforts by Mallinckrodt US LLC to remove contaminants from the groundwater ensuring it is treated before being released into the Penobscot River after it has met the federal standards.

“A highly effective treatment system just got even better,” says Kathryn Zeigler, Director of Environmental Remediation for Mallinckrodt. “Because it has a far greater capacity for treating water, we do not expect to need to collect and store excess water during heavy rain events as we did with the older system. Both the new process and the new building are also very energy efficient compared to the older system that was housed in an older, inefficient building.”



(Left to Right) Robert Lobley and Dick Campbell of Orrington are joined by Kathryn Zeigler of Mallinckrodt and Karen Fussell, also of Orrington, as they listen to a presentation about the new groundwater treatment system from Jim Ekedahl, below, senior project engineer at Woodard & Curran.



The task of explaining the inner workings of the system fell to Jim Ekedahl of the environmental engineering firm Woodard & Curran. He held the attention of the local audience for nearly two hours. Among those attending were Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Kevin Allcroft; Town Manager Paul White; Hatfield Road residents Robert Lobley, Ed Campbell and Dick Campbell (now Maine State Representative-elect); Dow Road resident Karen Fussell, who serves as City of Brewer Finance Director; and Brewer Lake Road resident Pat Gero. Pate and Gero also serve on the Orrington Selectmen’s Economic Advisory Committee.

The new treatment system is currently running at twice the

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capacity as the former groundwater treatment plant and will easily run at three times that capacity flow if needed, said plant supervisor Paul McCusker. Because of the new plant's higher capacity, it is currently processing just two days per week compared to the older treatment plant which ran five days per week, said McCusker.

In response to questions from attendees about the status of the final site remediation, Zeigler and Mallinckrodt Director of Public Affairs JoAnna Schooler said that the company has made good progress on site demolition work and groundwater treatment while it hopes discussions can continue with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection on the final environmental remediation agreement.

Town Manager Paul White said the town remains eager to see the site cleanup completed so that the town's property can be reused for future potential development.

Dick Campbell talks with Town Manager Paul White (Top) about economic development opportunities at the former HoltraChem site. Paul White and Board of Selectmen Chairman Kevin Allcroft (Bottom - Left to Right) listen to a presentation on the operation of the new groundwater treatment system.

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