

Riding the mWAVE

Work begins on 22,000-square-foot building in South Windham that will house a high-tech manufacturing company

By Andrew Colvin

For decades, the L.C. Andrew Lumber Company manufactured building supplies in South Windham. Now the site of the mill, which was torn down several years ago, will continue its tradition of manufacturing — though the goods will be high-tech microwave antennas rather than lumber.

A crowd assembled at the site last Friday to break ground for a 22,000-square-foot building that will house mWAVE, which builds microwave antennas for cell-phone companies, Internet service providers and other clients around the world. Owners and officials said the new building would be beneficial to the growing mWAVE, the local economy and the neighborhood of South Windham.

"It's a good day for Windham," said Windham Economic Development Director Keith Luke, who led the gold-shoveled groundbreaking. Luke said the new building, which would hold mWAVE as well as other manufacturers in the future, fits with the town's plans to revitalize South Windham, once a bastion of industry in Windham. mWAVE

and other companies would create industry in a less intrusive way than in years past, Luke argued, while attracting other businesses to the area to serve workers. The other part of the revitalization plan is encouraging residential growth.

Luke said town investments helped make the project possible. The Windham Economic Development Corporation provided \$25,000 to conduct an environmental survey of the mill site. Despite appearances, Luke said, the test found no evidence of chemical contamination in the ground. The other investment Luke mentioned is one of infrastructure — the Little Falls Wastewater Conveyance Project that would increase South Windham's sewage capacity by connecting it to a larger treatment plant in Westbrook. The higher capacity allows for larger industrial buildings, Luke said.

Peter Anania, a Windham resident who heads up the group that owns mWAVE, said public sewer was a plus, but added the major reason for constructing the new building in Windham is that he already owned the property. He bought L.C. Andrew Log Homes,



mWAVE co-founder Peter Farnum gets ready to ship a specially made antenna casing the company designed and manufactured. Components of the case were made by fabricators all around Maine, he said. Photo/Andrew Colvin

which operates on the site, in 1998. (Since then the name has been changed to Maine Cedar Log Homes and business has grown, Anania said, with 35 homes built last year.) He acquired the mill property in the purchase.

Anania hopes the new building will help fuel the site's redevelopment. "It's a good location for workers," he said, adding that more space would allow the start-up mWAVE to grow. Though the company just had its third birthday, it has been looking for a new home for two years, Anania said.

mWAVE vice-president Mike Cahill said he started the company on July 1, 2004, with Chris Mosher and Peter Farnum. When Gabriel Electronics, the company the three had been working for, folded, Cahill said, "We felt there was a place for a company to enter." Anania invested in their idea and the trio also received a seed grant from the Maine Technology Institute to get off the ground.

Cahill said the business has done well so far and has outgrown the small workshop it shares with another of Anania's high-tech manufacturers, Mega

Industries, in the Gorham Industrial Park. It now has six full-time employees (counting the three co-founders) and will hire one more when it moves to the new building, he said.

"Our product is basically precision metal," said Cahill — microwave antennas used by defense contractors, cell phone companies, wireless service providers and other clients. Cahill said it has a line of products that has sold in South Africa, Eastern Europe and Mexico, and has manufactured specialty products in the U.S. "Right now, both sides are doing well," he said.

But Cahill said the company is currently hampered by its small space, which constrains the size and amount of products that can be made. Since clients want their products as quickly as possible, Cahill said the company doesn't attack big contracts that it can't handle ... yet. A larger space would allow for increased production, physically larger products and, in the future, a wider range of frequencies in the antennas it makes, he said.

As mWAVE grows, Cahill said it will create more industrial jobs, though some indirectly. The components mWAVE uses to build antennas come from around the world, such as China, or down the road, such as Standish. While the company might hire more employees, manufacturing more products will help sustain the livings of other fabricators all over the area, he said.

"It's interesting what it could do for Windham," said Cahill, excited about what might be a new chapter for both mWAVE and South Windham.

WI

**Driving record
have a few dents
and dings?**

The Maier Agency
AUTO • HOME • BUSINESS



Greg Maier

844 Roosevelt Trail
Windham, ME 04062
(Next to Pat's Pizza)
maierg1@nationwide.com

207-892-2188



Nationwide®
Insurance &
Financial Services

Nationwide Is On Your Side.®

Life insurance underwritten by
Nationwide Life Insurance Company,
Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company
and Affiliated Companies. Home Office:
Columbus, OH 43215-2220.



**Lawn Tractors Starting
at \$1,649.00**



HORSEPOWER AUTOCARE, INC.

"Quality is our Priority"

QUALITY REPAIRS • SINCE 1979

We perform manufacturer's
vehicle maintenance and scheduled services

CARS • LT. TRUCKS • SUVs
We service them all



Maine's AAA Approved
Repair Facility Since 1990

- Transmission Flushes
- Brakes, exhaust
- Engine performance
- Fuel systems
- Shocks, struts
- Chassis, alignment
- State inspection



Bob Merrill, 2004
Napa/National ASE
Technician of the year

Monday - Friday 8am-5pm

44 Roosevelt Tr., Rt. 302
Windham, ME

892-9420 • 1-800-339-9420
www.horsepowerautocare.com

**GRAY
HOME IMPROVEMENT**



Travis Kline at The Big Kahuna
Sunday at 8:30 PM



Local Alt. Country Artist Travis Kline and his backing band will be performing two 45 minute sets, beginning at 8:30pm & again at 10:00pm at The Big Kahuna Cafe, 270 Main Street, Bridgton. Doors open at 7:00pm. 18+ show
Visit www.traviskline.com for more info.