

Montana Limestone addition ready to **ROLL**

By Daryl Hill and Erin Huntimer



Karl Lemmerman, project manager for Dakota Coal (left), and Mike Jones, fine grind plant superintendent at Montana Limestone, stand before the new truck dump. Montana Limestone's new facilities required 90,000 tons of limestone rock for construction.

The former town of Warren stands out as more than just a map dot in the state of Montana today. The addition of a new rail load-out facility at Montana Limestone Company makes a mark that can't be missed.

About 100 people were on hand June 10 to help dedicate the new facility that spans U.S. Hwy 310 about 55 miles south of Laurel. The facility will be used to load rail cars with limestone from a nearby quarry for shipment to Basin Electric's Leland Olds Station near Stanton, ND. Leland Olds requires limestone for its new wet limestone scrubbers, which will remove sulfur dioxide emissions from the power plant's flue gas. Montana Limestone is a part of the Basin Electric cooperative family. It is a subsidiary of Dakota Coal Company, which is a subsidiary of Basin Electric.

The load-out facility includes a truck dump on the east side of the highway

for trucks to deliver limestone from Montana Limestone's nearby quarry. The limestone is then conveyed across the highway to storage bins where it can be transferred to rail cars. Montana Limestone will use a unit train to deliver 100,000 tons of limestone to Leland Olds in the spring, and a like amount in the fall.



Limestone unloaded at the truck dump is conveyed across the highway to bins where it's loaded into rail cars.

In remarks during the ceremony, Doug Tucker, a commissioner for Montana's Carbon County, said, "People don't realize what we have here in this part of the county. The limestone industry is a big part of our economy. It's a hidden giant of an industry. This is truly an exciting day, where we have the ability to harvest natural resources in an environmentally sound manner."

Reuben Ritthaler, chairman of the

Montana Limestone board, said he is proud of the effort that's been undertaken for this project to make sure the cooperative's power plants run

efficiently and in an environmentally sound manner for many years to come. "We believe in the co-op philosophy that if we work together, we can accomplish great things that benefit us all. A long chain of co-op involvement brings us here today," he said.

Ron Harper, Basin Electric CEO and general manager, said a 2007 decision made by the directors of Basin Electric to install sulfur dioxide scrubbers at Leland Olds was the basis for this project. The scrubbers are a \$410-million addition to a power plant that was constructed for less than \$150 million. "But it is a worthwhile investment for our member cooperatives and North Dakota's environment. While Leland Olds has always been in full compliance with all its federal and state environmental permits, adding the scrubbers will better position Leland Olds to operate for an additional 20 to 30 years."

Commercial operation for the Unit 1 scrubber at Leland Olds is scheduled for the spring of 2011; the Unit 2 scrubber is planned to be operational in 2012. When both units are in operation, the scrubbers will require about 653 tons of limestone per day.

Construction of Montana Limestone's \$30-million load-out facility began in June 2008, and start-up operations began this spring.