



From left: Rep. Ray Warren, Commissioner Wes Bolick, Town Councilman Jack Lerner, Town Councilman Kenny Poole, Commissioner Larry Yoder, Mayor Guy Barriger, Town Councilman George Holleman, Commissioner Darrell Robertson, Craftmaster VP of Manufacturing Roy Bearden, Craftmaster President Roy Calcagne, Sen. Steve Goss, EnergyUnited Board President Jerry Durmire, and Commissioner William Hammer.

Groundbreaking conducted for Hiddenite Industrial Water, Sewer Project

Local officials and members of the community gathered at Craftmaster Furniture on Wednesday, April 23 for a groundbreaking ceremony for the \$1.8 million Hiddenite Industrial Water and Sewer Project.

Current plans for this project include installing three sewer pump stations in the Hiddenite area, installing approximately 9,200 feet of gravity sewer line, and installing approximately 16,800 feet of force main sewer line. The project also includes water system improvements which will enhance the fire protection system at Craftmaster Furniture as well as alleviate water system issues at the Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Too facility.

The project is being funded through various grants, and as a requirement of the grant funding, approximately 80 new jobs will be created between Craftmaster Furniture and Paladin Industries.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, a number of local officials made comments praising the new jobs created as part of this project as well as the cooperation among governments and participating agencies.

Funding for this project has been achieved with the assistance of Alexander County, the Town of Taylorsville, N.C. Department of Commerce, N.C. Rural Economic Development Center, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

The grant is administered by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments and Alexander County Economic Development Corporation.

"It's outstanding to get this many different agencies working together for the betterment of our county," said Commission Chairman Larry Yoder. "Projects like these are very important for the county to grow and prosper."

"This project proves that we can all work together and achieve something that's beneficial for many," said Commissioner William Hammer. "This project adds jobs to the county and helps expand water and sewer in the Hiddenite community."

Commissioner Darrell Robertson commented, "This project is possible with grant funding which we seek as much as possible for expansion and retention of industry. I wish the companies' well in stabilizing and creating new employment."

Commissioner Robertson also introduced special guests, Representative Ray Warren and Senator Steve Goss.

"I don't know of any better project than one like this that allows industry to grow, and I want to thank all those involved," said Rep. Warren.

Sen. Goss noted, "This is a great day, and it does show that this community can work together. Infrastructure is a key need, and leads

to new industry and jobs."

Also on the agenda was Town Councilman George Holleman who recalled some of the history of Craftmaster and the dedication of Jack Stokes, founder of the company.

Other's recognized during the ceremony included Craftmaster President Roy Calcagne, Craftmaster VP of Manufacturing Roy Bearden, Commissioner Wes Bolick, County Manager Rick French, Register of Deeds Ben Hines, Taylorsville Mayor Guy Barriger, Town Councilman Jack Lerner, Town Councilman Kenny Poole, EnergyUnited Board President Jerry Durmire, and Regional Manager Gene Haynes with the Engineering Firm of Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern.

Craftmaster Furniture was founded in 1972 and now employs approximately 500 at its Hiddenite facility.

Paladin Industries began producing furniture in 2002 in Hiddenite and employs approximately 100 people. In 2006, Entrepreneur Magazine ranked Paladin 59th of the top 100 fastest-growing businesses in America.

Construction on the project is expected to begin in the next several weeks. The contract for construction was awarded to Neill Grading and Construction Company, Inc. of Hickory.