

# Brookville Equipment Corp. celebrates expansion

By Laura Lynn Yohe

**BROOKVILLE** — Dalph S. McNeil stood before a large crowd assembled in the cavernous expanse of the Brookville Equipment Corporation (BEC) facility on Evans Street and welcomed all to a celebration. The special event was held on Friday, October 19th, to officially mark the dedication of 24,000



**DALPH McNEIL**

square feet of additional space to the plant bringing total production and warehouse capacity to 100,000 square feet.

"We'll be 90 years old on January 1, 2008," McNeil said referring to the company of which he is President and Chief Executive Officer.

At its beginning in 1918, Brookville Locomotive was owned by L. A. Leathers and installed flanged railroad wheels on gasoline powered trucks which P. Brosius Eisenman later expanded into production of gasoline and diesel locomotives. Joseph Horky changed the name to Brookville Locomotive Works in 1942 and added specialty rail equipment such as school buses, speeder cars, refrigerated cargo haulers, bullet-proof pay cars and ambulances.

John McNeil purchased the firm in 1974, naming it Brookville Locomotive - a Division of Pennbro Corporation. In 1977, his brother, Dalph, joined the company becoming just the seventh employee at that time.

Larry Conrad was hired in 1979 as Senior Engineer and the company went "underground", developing low height locomotives and personnel carriers for coal and hard rock mining as well as tunneling operations.

In 1988, Dalph purchased his brother's interests and assumed his current titles. He modified the name to reflect its diversity - Brookville Mining Equipment Corporation. There were then 31

employees. Housed for many decades in a complex along North Fork Creek, a major flood in 1996 saturated the buildings and equipment, but did not dampen the collective spirit of everyone at BEC.

By 1998, the company had relocated to its present hilltop venue adjacent railroad tracks which have serviced the Brookville area since the 1870's. The office area resembles a railroad station, the parking lot a locomotive turntable.

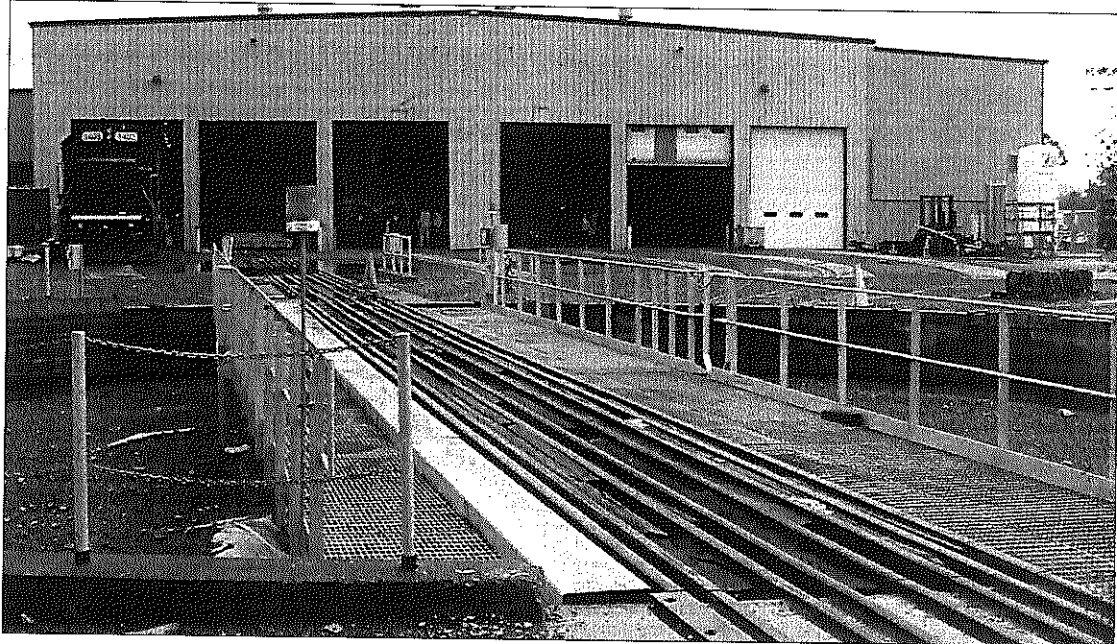
Purchasing the "Brookville Equipment Corporation" name of a former area business in 2001, the designation reflected the historic production of locomotives and the continuing expansion of products which moved into the reproduction and refurbishing of trolley cars.

The workforce tripled to more than 100 by 2004. Space was again becoming a problem and the nearby Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses was acquired. This structure had originally served as the Corporate Headquarters of the Pittsburgh & Shawmut Railway which remains a working partner of BEC.

Returning the worship site to offices allows accommodation for engineering, service, contract review, technical writing and financial personnel.

Citing a need to again expand the workforce from the current 160 to 200 employees, Dalph smilingly encouraged everyone to recommend BEC to prospective welders and other craftsmen. "We need good employees," he said.

Now Vice-President of Operations, Conrad said, "Take a look at these great products made by local people here in this area.



**ROOM FOR WORK** — The new addition to the Brookville Mining Corporation site on Evans Street can service numerous rail cars. The railroad turntable in the foreground allows multiple access for the cars into the shop. (Photo by Laura Lynn Yohe)

Honest, hard working people who enjoy quality work and work ethics."

Conrad, Design Director Larry Saver, and Production Manager Brent McNeil highlighted the steps from initial design through manufacture to finish and delivery of the variety of products BEC produces, all in cooperation with the individual customers.

BEC has trademarked the Co-Generation technology which can adapt older industrial railroad engines to modern emissions standards or be used in construction of new engines such as the

prototype BMEX 259 which was on display for the occasion.

The engine has proven itself on the nearby 5 Mile Run rail line and will soon be on an extended working demonstration with a railroad in the mid and western United States.

Nine years ago, BEC put the first 20 ton diesel mining locomotive in underground service. Today, it is "in the shop" being refurbished for continued use.

Any part needed for any piece of equipment ever manufactured in the last 90 years by BEC can still be obtained as all the drawings have been preserved.

## A special dedication

By Laura Lynn Yohe

**BROOKVILLE** - "I gave Dave Hook a rough sketch of what I wanted, and he made this," Dalph S. McNeil explained of the shining metal wreath centered with a facsimile of the "The Silver Star", the United States' third highest military award designated solely for heroism in combat.

McNeil was speaking at the Open House celebrating the 24,000 sq. ft. addition to Brookville Equipment Corporation and the introduction of the "BMEX 259" CoGeneration\* engine.

Although a festive event which drew a large crowd, the ribbon cutting was a poignant moment in tribute to a fallen soldier, Specialist Ross McGinnis

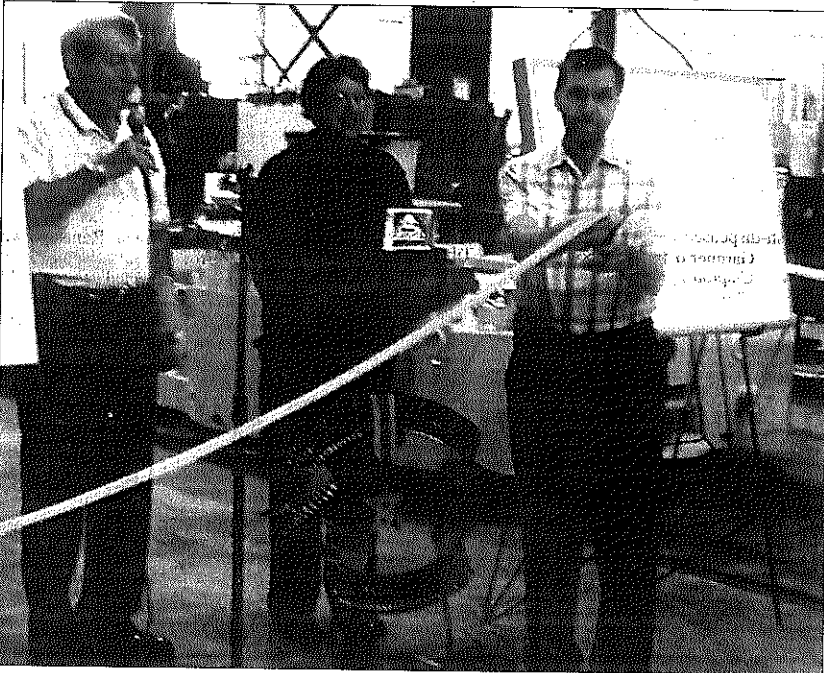
of Knox.

"We take for granted the peaceful economy we have," McNeil had said at the outset of the program, adding, "but we're at war."

McGinnis gave his life in Iraq on Dec. 4, 2006 shielding his comrades inside a Humvee from the explosion of a grenade.

Ross' parents, Tom and Romayne McGinnis, were introduced by McNeil who told them the memorial would be placed in front of the BEC offices unless they preferred to have it placed elsewhere.

Agreeing to having their son's memorial remain in front of the BEC offices, Tom then cut the ribbon to signal the dedication of the addition and introduction of the new railroad engine.



**SPECIAL DEDICATION** — President and CEO of Brookville Equipment Corporation, Dalph S. McNeil, left, watches Tom McGinnis, right, cut the ribbon to officially open the new 24,000 sq. ft. addition to the facility. Watching in the center is Romayne McGinnis. (Photo by Laura Lynn Yohe)

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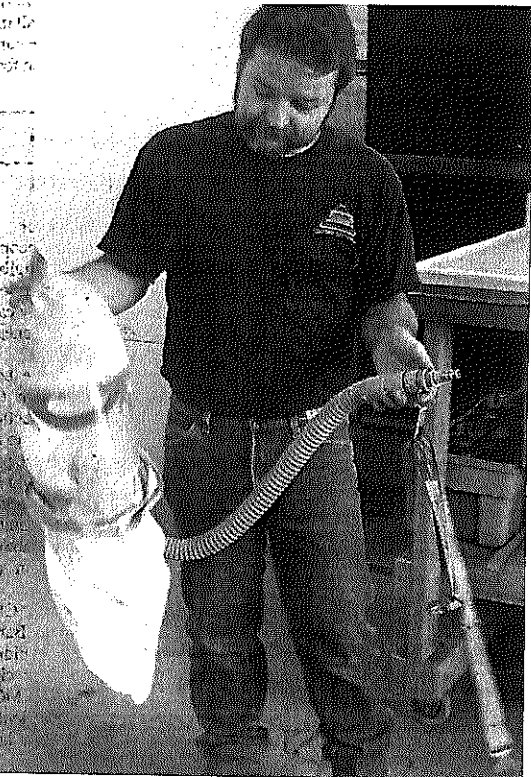
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**BREATHING APPARATUS** — Brookville Equipment Corporation employee Ron Wingard described his duties in the production process. Wingard is part of the crew who paints railroad engines, mining cars and other products manufactured in the Evans Street plant. He is holding one of the disposable hooded masks with attached fresh air hose he wears when painting in the special building at the complex. (Photo by Laura Lynn Yohe)