

As reported by Author: Tom Shean at The Virginian-Pilot, on April 25, 2007

PIPE MANUFACTURER PLANS EXPANSION

CHESAPEAKE — The slowdown in single-family home construction hasn't shaken Hanson Pipe & Precast. A major manufacturer of concrete pipes and other building products, Hanson is spending \$16.9 million to expand its plant in the Cavalier Industrial Park.

Robust demand from road building, ports and other publicly-financed projects has offset slackening sales of pipe for housing-related development, said Eric Wheeler, president of Hanson Pipe's northeast region. The company, he said, has stepped up capital expenditures at several of its U.S. pipe plants, including those in Houston and Phoenix.

The 62,000-square-foot expansion in Chesapeake will include installation of a concrete mixer and more sophisticated equipment for automating pipe production, said Wheeler, whose region is based in Columbus, Ohio.

The expansion, due to be completed in December, won't generate any additional jobs, he said, but the new machinery will enable the plant to produce elliptically-shaped pipe and increase the size of its pipes to 6 feet in diameter. The plant, which currently has 30 employees, makes round pipe in sizes ranging from 1 foot to 5 feet in diameter.

Hanson's Chesapeake plant sells pipe and other concrete products in eastern Virginia and North Carolina for storm water drainage, sewage and road construction. The plant, which occupies part of a 25-acre site, was built in 1985 by Concrete Pipe & Products. Hanson acquired the plant when it bought Concrete Pipe & Products 10 years ago.

Hanson Pipe & Precast is part of Hanson PLC, a major building-materials manufacturer based in the United Kingdom.

