

Ridgemount Quarries Update

Production at the Ridgemount Quarries started up in February after the winter shutdown, and crushing is expected to resume through the end of this year, according to superintendent Mark Harmsworth. "Business will be good this year," he says, pointing to a number of major construction projects in south-east Niagara, including the construction of the new Fort Erie high school (see "Where the Rock Goes"), some housing subdivisions and area road works.

Last year was another banner year for the quarry's safety record, with no lost-time accidents in 2015.



Walker Aggregates has refurbished the bridge that crosses over the quarries on Bridge Street.

Motorists who travel along Bridge Street, between Ridge Road North and Ridgemount Road, will notice the refurbished bridge over the roadway entrance to the quarry. While Bridge Street is owned by Town of Fort Erie, the bridge

itself is owned by Walker Aggregates. The wood decking on the bridge was beginning to rot and has recently been replaced, along with new structural supports added underneath.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Ron is Having a Blast Working for Walker Aggregates

Ron Swick has only been employed with Walker Aggregates at the Ridgemount Quarries for the past two years, but he's been a sandblaster for almost a decade – having previously worked in small Niagara sandblasting and paint shops.

Ron's job is to remove old paint and rust on Walker equipment – and the equipment of Walker's customers – to prepare it for a fresh, new coat of paint. The work is done outside the Ridgemount Paint Shop, as long as the weather isn't rainy or snowy.

He heard about the Walker position through friends, handed in a resume, had an interview and was hired within a week of that interview.

"It's great here; I love the atmosphere," Ron says of his job. "Everybody's happy to be here, and it's an awesome place to work. I can't say anything bad about it."

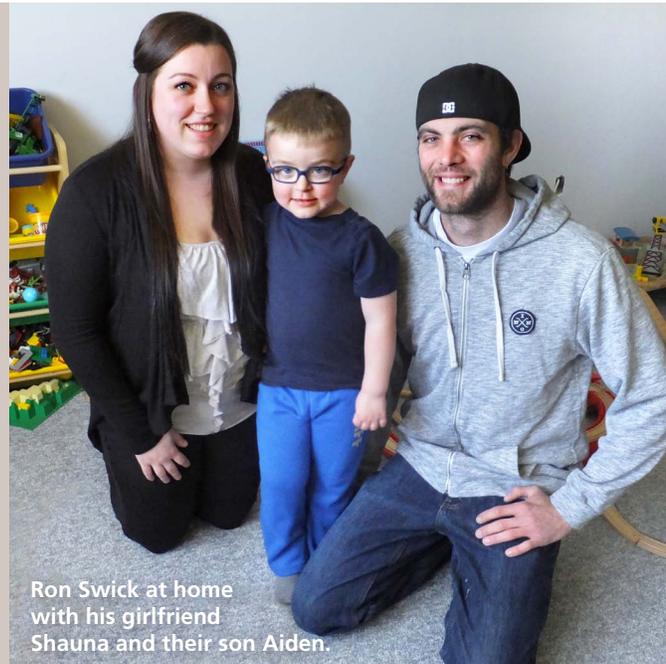
Ron most enjoys the variety of his work. "Nothing is ever the same. There's always something new and different to take apart

and put back together." When he's not sandblasting, he covers for another employee during his vacations in the paint shop, and helps with jobs that need to be done in the quarry.

He says it takes him just over 20 hours to sandblast a 50-tonne rock truck. Before the old paint is removed, trim and mirrors need to be removed and windshields covered over.

Ron says one of the most interesting pieces of equipment he has ever worked on was a mobile rail car mover. This piece of equipment has wheels that can operate on both roadways and rail lines. Ron sandblasted the mover for a company that supplies equipment to the railway industry.

Ron lives in Port Robinson with his girlfriend of five years, Shauna, and their



Ron Swick at home with his girlfriend Shauna and their son Aiden.

four-year-old son Aiden. They are looking forward to the spring and summer seasons when they can be found most weekends at local stock car races. Even during his time off, Ron loves the dust. Stock car racing is dirt racing. "It's dusty and that's the whole fun of it," he exclaims.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Construction is a Family Affair for Demar

Demar Construction is a family business in the truest sense of the word. Founded 16 years ago by George Marianos, the Thorold business also employs his wife, two sons and, at one time, his daughter as well. The family emigrated from Greece to Canada in 1985 with a history in the construction business. George's father himself was one of the first general contractors in Athens.

Demar is a general contracting company that specializes in water main, sewer and road reconstruction projects.

According to estimator and project manager Dimitri Marianos, much of the work done by Demar is done for municipalities. A previous major project involved the excavation and site servicing for the two towers and parking garage of the Hilton Hotel in Niagara Falls.

The company has also been involved with numerous methane gas recovery projects across Ontario, installing piping in landfills to generators that convert the gas into a useable energy source. This includes working on the methane collection



The Demar construction crew takes a quick break from a road works project in Niagara Falls to pose for a group photo.

system at Walker's Thorold landfill, as well as landfills in the Ottawa, Ingersoll, Windsor and Cornwall areas.

Demar purchases aggregates and asphalt from Walker Aggregates, and has placed orders of up to 40,000 tonnes for one particular project. The company is also a supplier to Walker, bringing recycled asphalt and concrete to the quarries to be reprocessed and reused.

"We have a great relationship and Walker is great to work with," Dimitri says.

"We like to form relationships with our suppliers, and the team at Walker is very organized and steady. We always know what to expect."



Where the Rock Goes



New Fort Erie High School

Stone extracted from the Ridgemount Quarries is being used in the construction of the new Greater Fort Erie Secondary School on Garrison Road. Some 60,000 tonnes of gravel is being used for the school footprint, to backfill the foundation walls, and for the construction of roadways and parking areas of the site.

Project of the Year



The District School Board of Niagara Walker Living Campus at Woodend was awarded the 2015 Project of the Year award from the Niagara Construction Association (NCA) in December. Accepting the award from NCA past president Tyler Green (left) were Greg Redden of MZE Architects, John Koeman of Walker Environmental Group and Bert Poort of the District School Board of Niagara.



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