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Alabama Welcomes EPA Region 4 Administrator for Tour of Alabama Ductile Iron Pipe Manufacturing Facilities

Tours Highlight Alabama's Iron Manufacturing Heritage, Skilled Workforce and Leadership in Drinking Water Infrastructure

MONTGOMERY, AL – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 Administrator Kevin McOmber and Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Director Edward Poolos toured Ductile Iron Pipe and fittings manufacturing facilities across Alabama on Wednesday, October 28, and Thursday, October 29. The tours highlighted the state's central role in the nation's water infrastructure industry and the companies and workers who help deliver safe, reliable drinking water to communities across the country.

Birmingham and the surrounding region have been the epicenter of America's iron pipe industry for more than a century. All three of the nation's domestic Ductile Iron Pipe producers are headquartered in Birmingham, and the pipe and fittings they make in Alabama serve water and wastewater systems nationwide.

Over the two days, state and federal officials visited a manufacturing facility operated by each of the three companies: AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company, McWane, and U.S. Pipe. Officials saw firsthand how recycled scrap metal can become finished pipe and fittings and met the skilled workers making it. They also learned about the investments the companies have made in modern production and environmental controls.

"Alabama's Ductile Iron Pipe industry is a remarkable example of American manufacturing at its best with a skilled workforce and pipe made in America that carries drinking water to communities across the country," said EPA Region 4 Administrator Kevin McOmber. "Seeing firsthand how recycled scrap becomes finished pipe and fittings, and the investments these companies are making in modern production and environmental controls, underscores why domestic manufacturing matters — for jobs, for supply chains, and for the water infrastructure Americans depend on every day."

"Alabama has a remarkable manufacturing heritage, and its Ductile Iron Pipe producers are a central part of that story," ADEM's Poolos said. "These tours provide an opportunity to see that work firsthand and recognize the role Alabama plays in helping communities across the country build safe, reliable water systems."

David Cole, president of the Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association (DIPRA), noted the companies' commitment to producing quality products. "Behind every pipe is a skilled workforce, a significant investment in American manufacturing and a commitment to producing a product that communities depend on every day," Cole said. "Choosing the right pipe material matters for the long-term safety and reliability of a water system, and the strength and durability of Ductile Iron Pipe have made it a proven choice for utilities for decades."

Alabama's Water Infrastructure Workforce

Collectively, DIPRA's member companies operate 12 facilities in Alabama that provide more than 4,000-plus direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs statewide. Every $1 spent on domestic Ductile Iron Pipe and fittings creates both jobs and revenue in Alabama.

The tours underscored the importance of domestic manufacturing to the nation's water infrastructure goals. Manufacturing in the United States supports American jobs, domestic supply chains and the availability of materials for public infrastructure projects. Domestically produced Ductile Iron Pipe and fittings also help projects meet applicable federal domestic preference requirements, including the American Iron and Steel (AIS) requirements that apply to federally funded water infrastructure investments.

AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company

Founded in Birmingham in 1905, AMERICAN manufactures Ductile Iron Pipe, spiral-welded steel pipe, fire hydrants and valves for the waterworks industry, and steel pipe for the energy and carbon capture industries. It also produces fire pumps, structural casing and piling, castings for large machinery and specialty rubber products. In Alabama, the company manufactures Ductile Iron and steel pipe at its corporate headquarters in Birmingham, and industrial molded rubber products at Specification Rubber Products in Alabaster. Its C&B Piping facility in Leeds is a full-service supplier of Ductile Iron Piping systems, specializing in fabrications, linings and coatings.

"Water and wastewater piping systems, often out of sight, are critical components of our daily lives," said John Hagelskamp, senior vice president of sales, AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company. "For more than a century, we have manufactured iron and steel piping systems, fire hydrants and valves – products essential to our nation's water infrastructure. And with the support of the EPA's state revolving fund programs, municipalities are building and renewing our communities' critical water and wastewater systems. We're proud to be a partner in this important work."



Photo: *EPA Region 4 Administrator Kevin McOmber, fourth from right, ADEM Director Edward Poolos, to his right, with other EPA, ADEM and AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company staff at the company's plant in Birmingham. Credit: Joy Carter/AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company*

McWane

Founded in Birmingham in 1921, McWane manufactures many of the critical infrastructure products that underpin our daily lives, including Ductile Iron Pipe and fittings, valves and hydrants, plumbing products, fire extinguishers and fire suppression systems, and steel pressure vessels. Headquartered in Birmingham, McWane's Alabama operations also include M&H Valve and Tyler Union in Anniston, McWane Plant & Industrial in Calera, and Amerex in Trussville.

"McWane has spent more than 100 years manufacturing essential products that keep water flowing across the country," said McWane's Group President-Waterworks Kevin Bense. "Today's tour allowed us to demonstrate our focus on safe, environmentally responsible operations and highlight the skilled team behind our work. By aligning EPA priorities with domestically produced solutions, we're proud to showcase Alabama's impact in strengthening water systems in communities nationwide, now and for generations to come."



Photo: *McWane staff give EPA and ADEM officials tour of McWane's facility in Anniston. Credit: David Cole/Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association*

U.S. Pipe

Founded in 1899, U.S. Pipe manufactures Ductile Iron Pipe, fittings and gaskets for the waterworks industry. U.S. Pipe is a subsidiary of the QUIKRETE Companies, which manufacture commercial, residential and industrial building, repair and rehabilitation products. U.S. Pipe operates two foundries in Bessemer and has its headquarters in Birmingham.

"For 127 years, U.S. Pipe has proudly manufactured products in Alabama that are essential to our nation's water and wastewater infrastructure," said Ryan McCullough, president of U.S. Pipe. "Although our products are typically installed underground and out of sight, they play a vital role in delivering clean, safe water to millions of Americans. We are honored to welcome our colleagues from EPA Region 4 to showcase our dedicated workforce, our Alabama manufacturing operations, and the products we proudly produce.

"As our nation continues to invest in modernizing and strengthening its water infrastructure, U.S. Pipe remains committed to supporting these critical efforts. EPA programs, including the State Revolving Funds, provide important resources that help communities make these much-needed infrastructure improvements. We are proud to be part of this important work and to continue contributing to the communities and infrastructure that keep America running."

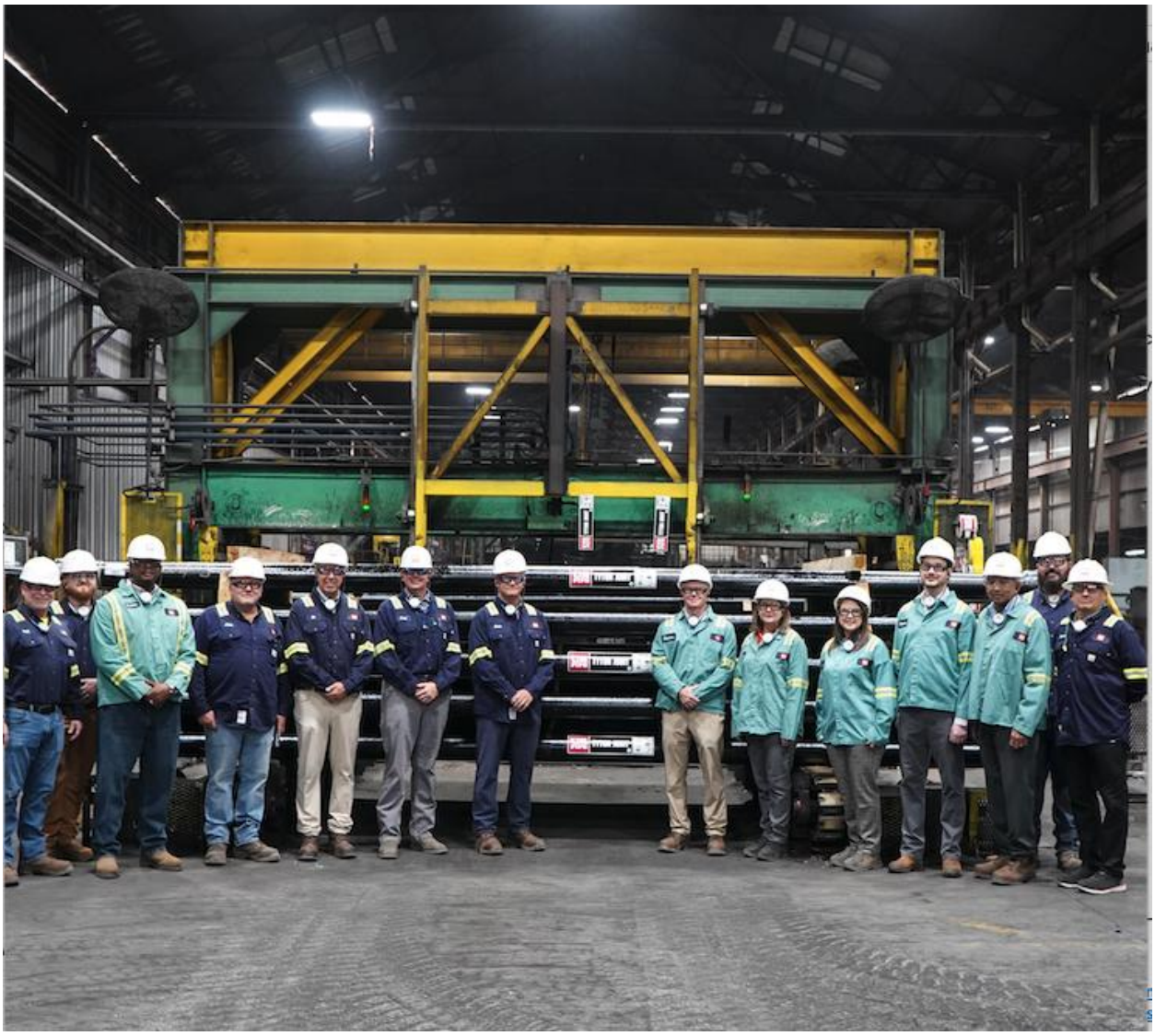


Photo: *EPA and ADEM officials tour with U.S. Pipe staff at company's mill in Bessemer. Credit: Elizabeth Schmidt/U.S. Pipe*

Water Infrastructure Investment and Environmental Stewardship

The visits also highlighted the connection between domestic manufacturing and the public investments needed to modernize aging water infrastructure. Federal and state funding programs help communities address infrastructure needs, improve drinking water systems, and make essential upgrades that support public health and economic development.

Through collaboration among regulators, manufacturers and water-sector stakeholders, Alabama continues to play an important role in advancing the infrastructure, workforce and domestic manufacturing capabilities communities need for safe and dependable water service.

Since 2022, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) has awarded more than $1.9 billion to municipal drinking water and wastewater systems across the state to repair and upgrade

their infrastructure to meet critical needs. The 905 projects – 467 drinking water and 439 wastewater – spanned all 67 counties in Alabama, and ADEM prioritized funding based on need.

The funding was provided through the State Revolving Fund, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the American Rescue Plan Act. Many of the water systems awarded funding faced infrastructure needs going back decades due to age, increased demand and the need to provide services to people who were unserved or underserved. ADEM has been providing funding to drinking water and wastewater systems through its SRF program since 1988.

“I am extremely appreciative of the substantial funding that flows through these programs to our water systems,” Poolos said. “They make possible the many projects that are essential to providing safe, reliable drinking water and wastewater services that our citizens depend on.

“I am also proud of the work of our staff at ADEM in analyzing the needs of hundreds of water systems in Alabama and helping to provide those systems the financial resources they need to improve their infrastructure.”

Alabama's Ductile Iron Pipe and fittings manufacturers operate under strict state and federal environmental standards and continue to invest in processes that reduce emissions, conserve resources and protect our environment. Ductile Iron Pipe is made with a minimum average of 90% recycled iron and steel. The tours gave regulators a closer look at manufacturing operations and the industry's approach to environmental stewardship.

“These visits provided a valuable opportunity to see how domestic manufacturers are investing in their operations to increase production while simultaneously meeting environmental standards,” said McOmber. “EPA values its partnership with ADEM and industry to support strong communities, responsible environmental stewardship, and reliable drinking water systems for families across the Southeast and the nation.”

About the Alabama Department of Environmental Management

The mission of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management is to assure for all citizens of the State a safe, healthful, and productive environment. ADEM administers and enforces state and federal environmental laws and regulations to protect and improve Alabama’s environment and public health. ADEM also oversees the State Revolving Fund programs that provide grants and loans to drinking water and wastewater systems for infrastructure improvements.

About DIPRA

Founded in 1915, the Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association (DIPRA) is headquartered in Birmingham and represents America’s three domestic producers of Ductile Iron Pipe. DIPRA serves as a resource and technical advisor to the water industry. DIPRA provides representation on standards-making committees as well as technical research on a variety of application-based topics. While DIPRA member companies have different names and locations, they share a common commitment to produce and deliver the finest quality water and wastewater pipe material in the world – Ductile Iron Pipe – at the greatest possible value to its purchasers. DIPRA also provides accurate, reliable and essential engineering information about Ductile Iron Pipe to a wide variety of utilities and consulting engineers.

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