



Nestlé Purina Expands Cat Litter Facility

Nestlé Purina has recently completed a \$182 million facility expansion with the help of Waco, Inc. The Nestlé "LDEL Project" produces clumping-type cat litter from locally mined Bentonite clay substrate found in King William County, Virginia. Bentonite clay-based cat litter accounts for almost 82% of the North American market share, and this new facility will be producing a greater share of that demand. The low-dust, enhanced-clumping capability and its ability to be scented have made it a preferred product for many cat owners.

The new facility encompasses seven floors, five mechanical rooms, three electrical rooms, and thousands of feet of process and utility piping. In addition to the portion of the facility dedicated to production, there is office space, technical training facilities, research centers, and conference rooms.





Waco's scope of work included installing all the plumbing, the drain piping, and the HVAC system. The HVAC system required extensive ductwork for the plant ventilation system, which included connections to the many air handling units, VAV boxes, louvers, and exhaust fans. Waco had to rig and lower several large pieces of air handling equipment into place by cranes on the upper floors of the facility before the roof was installed. This required precise coordination with the structural steel contractors and general contractor during the early phases of the project, months before these units would be mechanically and electrically connected. The Waco team installed a 180-ton Trane chiller on a structural steel platform just outside of the production area with several hundred feet of chilled water piping connecting each of the mechanical rooms. Waco's insulation division provided the proper thermal insulation on all the ductwork, chilled water piping, plumbing, and process water piping. The process water piping required electric heat tracing, which Waco's insulation team designed and installed.

The entire project was completed with no recordable or lost-time injuries by any site contractors or Nestlé personnel. As with most plant expansions of this kind, equipment delivery co-ordination, critical crane lifts, mobilizations, and general construction activities all had to be done while the existing facility was in full operation.

The market for cat litter is expected to grow by 6% a year, with close to 2.4 million tons expected to be produced in 2024. This new facility will help Nestlé Purina capture a larger share of that demand.

- Project Name: Nestlé Purina LDEL Expansion
- Project Manager: James Davis
- Project Superintendents: Harold Downey / Israel Santos
- Project Value: \$3,020,000
- Completion Date: May 2023

