



JM EAGLE and Columbia University's Earth Institute Start Water Infrastructure Project in Senegal

LOS ANGELES – JULY 17, 2008 – JM Eagle, the world's largest plastic pipe manufacturer, announced today that it has launched a major initiative with Columbia University's Earth Institute to provide safer water to more than 11,000 of the poorest people in Senegal. JM Eagle has donated and delivered over \$800,000 worth of high-strength polyvinyl chloride (PVC) water pipe which is being installed in several Millennium Villages—projects designed to end extreme poverty in rural communities throughout Africa. The company also looks forward to expanding its current work with the Earth Institute into many more Millennium Village projects over the next five years to bring both potable and non-potable water to some of the poorest people in the country.

The initiative is focused on extending a severely inadequate water distribution system that reaches only one-third of the individual communities in the Potou area in northwestern Senegal. Upon completion this fall, the new water supply network will consist of more than 68 miles or 110 kilometers of PVC pipe that connects to 53 villages. Driven by pressure and gravity, the new pipelines will increase drinking water coverage to nearly 80 percent of the region and be the basis for a sustainable infrastructure that drives future health and prosperity.

The distribution infrastructure JM Eagle is providing will also transport non-potable water that can be used to irrigate crops. With the benefit of a stable water supply – versus relying on erratic rainwater – farmers can produce higher value foods that will ultimately enable entire communities to pull themselves out of poverty. Just as importantly, people will have the ability to be more productive because they'll no longer need to spend an exorbitant amount of their time and physical energy gathering water.

"Water is vital for life and for economic development," said Jeffrey Sachs, Director of Columbia's Earth Institute. "Thousands of families who live in the region will have reliable access to safe water for the first time. An expansion of irrigation will enable a significant increase in agricultural productivity. And the pipe will also be used to remove sewage, a primary cause of many water-borne diseases, and a reason why many communities in the region are caught in a cycle of disease and poverty".

Fighting Poverty

The Millennium Villages Project is focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals-- eight globally-endorsed targets aimed at fighting poverty, hunger and disease--in 12 African communities. Developed by the Earth Institute at Columbia University – in conjunction with Millennium Promise and the United Nations Development Programme – the initiative fights poverty at the village level through community-led work that is supported by a variety of public and private businesses and organizations.

"Now more than ever, water is the vital link to health and economic advancement across the globe," said Walter Wang, CEO of JM Eagle. "Unfortunately, the world is facing a crisis, not just in the availability of water, but in its management. By helping to develop the necessary water infrastructure in Senegal, we are fulfilling an immediate need, as well as providing the basis for long-term, sustainable solutions. The ultimate goal is to build a water infrastructure that will be the link to health and economic prosperity in communities throughout the region."



Wang added that most developing countries in the world are not water-deficient—they're infrastructure deficient. "These countries have water, but they don't have a way to get or transport it. Our objective is to change that," he said.

Delivering Life's Essentials

"JM Eagle's deep knowledge and expertise in delivering and transporting water makes them the perfect partner for this aspect of the Millennium Village Project. It's my hope that their good work in Senegal will also motivate other corporations to become more involved in reducing global poverty," said Sachs. "We need the support of more companies and organizations that not only have expertise related to water, sewage or irrigation, but are passionate about working on the ground in the poorest communities."

Although JM Eagle is providing the raw materials for building the water network, the company's contributions to the project also include funding two full-time engineers with expertise in rural drinking water. In addition to assessing the needs of the region and developing an action plan, the engineers are working in coordination with the village committees and other supporters and organizers in terms of implementation.

JM Eagle has supported efforts to bring clean water to communities in developing countries around the world, believing it is one of the essential needs to effectively address illness and poverty. Most recently, the company announced a relationship with The H2O Africa Foundation, a non-profit organization that's focused on creating widespread public awareness of the water crisis in Africa and support for solutions. JM Eagle has also provided plastic pipe and other materials to transport drinking water from a mountain spring to a community of 5,000 people in Honduras, and supported a project to develop water delivery and sanitation systems for needy communities in Northern Thailand.

About JM Eagle

With 24 manufacturing plants throughout North America and a workforce of over 2,300 employees, JM Eagle manufactures the widest array of high grade, high performance polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and high density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe in the industry across a wide variety of industries and applications including the utility, solvent weld, electrical conduit, natural gas, irrigation and water/sewage markets. JM Eagle is dedicated to developing the plastic pipe market by offering superior products, unparalleled quality, and ensuring that its business makes a positive contribution to the environment, the communities it serves, its customers, and employees. To find out more, go to www.jmeagle.com.

The Earth Institute at Columbia University is an interdisciplinary research institute that brings together talent from throughout the university to address complex issues facing the planet and its inhabitants, with particular focus on sustainable development and the needs of the world's poor. Under the direction of [Professor Jeffrey Sachs](#), the Earth Institute supports pioneering projects in the biological, engineering, social, and health sciences, while actively encouraging interdisciplinary projects, often combining natural and social sciences, in pursuit of solutions to the world's most pressing problems.