



Maple-Leaf News

Winter 2014

Laugh a little, learn a little & take a break from the daily grind



An exterior view of the recently completed Wilson Farm barn and vegetable storage facility.

An interior view of the facility as the fall harvest gets underway.

In Time For The Harvest

At the time this newsletter was being written, the days were getting shorter, the mornings were a bit cooler, and the fall foliage colors were beginning to appear. Thoughts had turned to pumpkin pies, apple picking and the new bright red barn at the Wilson's Farm Stand.

Opening just in time for the busy fall season, the Litchfield, N.H., farm had suffered a three-alarm fire in early March that destroyed seed, dozens of pieces of farming equipment, refrigeration coolers, and completely disrupted the normal spring routine.

Soon after the fire, Maple-Leaf Construction was referred to Wilson by his long-time acquaintance, Harry Carleton of Reeds Ferry Sheds, a recent Maple-Leaf client (see our Fall 2010 newsletter). As an interim measure in late April, Maple-Leaf was contracted to handle the site work and foundations for construction of a temporary dome-shaped structure that could be utilized until the new barn could be built. The dome held three black tubs to wash vegetables and seeds left over from the fire, a makeshift employee break room with picnic tables, and a storage area for tractors, etc.

With the help of family, friends and the entire community, including the fire department, building officials and the local schools, Wilson Farm owner Don Wilson continued to operate through the spring and summer, as plans and specifications were being prepared for the replacement barn.

By mid-June, the drawings, specifications and pre-construction planning for the new barn were complete and the damaged grounds were cleared as Maple-Leaf began construction of the barn in the same location as the previous building. The new building has a footprint of over 7,200 square feet and contains

a 1,200-square-foot structural-bearing mezzanine for additional storage.

Although some existing foundations walls were reused, new footings and foundations were poured for a 2,650-square-foot addition that would ultimately contain a new 27'x40' walk-in cooler, along with a new loading area and loading dock for tractor trailers.

Built to thwart similar tragedies in the future, the building was constructed with load bearing, insulated, smooth-faced dry block masonry. A wood truss system with a 5/8" layer of moisture-resistant drywall was used at the ceiling level to achieve a fire-rating, and all the trusses were braced to receive the new sloped metal roof, which covers the 40'x80' building and the addition.

Throughout the structure, all beams, columns, joists, mezzanine decking, a staircase to the mezzanine and the storage/break area were constructed of structural steel. In addition, the mezzanine was built with a 4" slab with a heavy load rating capable of supporting next season's seeds and fertilizers. The floor slab is 6" thick and reinforced with #5 rebar 12 inches on center to support forklift traffic and pallets of fruits and vegetables.



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Finally, the building includes four insulated overhead doors with electric operators, multiple pass doors, forced hot air heating units, restrooms, mop sink and a complete fire alarm system.

Since 1884, Wilson Farm has operated as a family business in Lexington, Mass. Founder James Wilson, along with farmers from



Lexington and nearby towns, would load Wilson's market wagon with their produce. Drawn by teams of road horses, the wagons were brought to Boston's Quincy Market, where their harvest was sold. On the return trip, the wagon stopped at Boston area hotels and picked up garbage to be used to feed the pigs.

James eventually turned the farm over to his two sons, who operated it until the early 1950s, when grandsons Donald and Alan took over and opened a retail farm stand. Today, the farm has expanded from 16 acres to 33 acres in Lexington, and the Litchfield, N.H., farm sits on 500 acres with its gleaming new barn for warehousing, storage, vegetable preparation and shipping and receiving.

All of us here at Maple-Leaf are proud to have been chosen by the Wilson Group to assist in overcoming the tragic events and, as always, being referred by owners of projects past is especially pleasing.

As an interim measure, Maple-Leaf completed a temporary storage structure during the planning and construction of the new facility.

On behalf of the entire Maple!Leaf Construction staff!

We wish you a safe and happy holiday season, and a healthy and prosperous 2014.



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