

# ALSTOM SWITCHGEAR PLANT EXPANSION COMPLETE

Charleroi, PA — A \$5 million investment and the nearly 65,000 square-foot expansion of Alstom T&D's high voltage switchgear facility in Charleroi is the most recent example of the company's commitment to the U.S. market and the escalating demands of the energy industry," according to Alstom worldwide T&D president Philippe Joubert.

Speaking at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the completion of a major expansion to ALSTOM's high voltage switchgear manufacturing facility in Charleroi, PA, the company president noted that the investment more than doubled the size of the existing plant and added state-of-the-art testing facilities for high voltage circuit breakers.

With the new 10,400 square-foot high voltage test laboratory, the factory is now equipped with the most advanced resources available for standard production testing as well as new product development and design type testing. New test capabilities include a 1.4 million-volt resonant test set, 2.6 million-volt impulse test set, 5,000 amperes continuous current test set, and a cold cell for cold-temperature testing down to 65°C.

These significant improvements to testing resources have enabled the company to extend its product line of high voltage dead tank circuit breakers beyond its traditional range of 72,000 to 245,000 volts up to 550,000 volts.

Additional enhancements to the Charleroi facility include a substantial

expansion of the production floor, creation of an indoor storage area, enlargement of the shipping bay, and doubling of office space.

"As a major utility supplier, we are prepared to assist our customers in modernizing the transmission grid," he continued, noting that the need for modernization had been dramatically underscored by the power outage and blackout event of last August. "Our investments in product development and advanced technologies are driven by U.S. requirements," he said, "and we remain fully committed to fast response and extraordinary service for every customer."

The company's high voltage switchgear facility in Charleroi opened in 1994. Sales have increased from \$2 million in its first year to \$60 million in 2002. In addition to dead tank circuit breakers, the plant also supplies high voltage disconnect switches, circuit switchers, generator circuit breakers, live tank circuit breakers, and surge arresters. Since the opening of the factory, more



[left to right] Philippe Joubert, Alstom worldwide T&D president; Bob O'Connor, director, Southwest Pennsylvania Regional Office; and Michael Kangas, retiring Managing Director, High Voltage Switchgear, U.S., Alstom T&D.

than 6,000 circuit breakers have been shipped to more than 700 customers in 43 countries. In the US, equipment manufactured in Charleroi is in service in 48 states. Employment has grown to 115 people, and as many as 50 new jobs may be created by this expansion. **ET**



Above: a type DT1-145 F1 dead tank circuit breaker rated 145kV, 3000A, 40kA.