

President Barack Obama Visits M. Luis Construction

Points to M. Luis Construction as Example of American Dream

For immediate release

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BALTIMORE, MD, OCTOBER 3, 2013 – President Barack Obama spoke to a gathering of the press, employees and guests of M. Luis Construction today at their Rockville, Maryland asphalt manufacturing plant. With the plant as a backdrop, he used the public forum to pressure House Republicans to end the government shutdown, while highlighting the role of businesses like M. Luis in the economy’s recovery over the past three years.

“We’ve added 7.5 million more jobs, and more small businesses have gotten loans to grow and hire with help of the Small Business Loan Act I signed three years ago. That program is part of what allowed M. Luis to grow. We’ve made steady progress and we can’t afford to threaten that progress right now with a government shutdown,” the President said.

M. Luis’s plant produces up to 300 tons of asphalt per hour, while the construction division has laid over 750,000 tons of asphalt over the last three years.

“Because the majority of our work is publicly funded, the federal government shutdown will significantly – and quickly – impact our ability to keep our plant operating, our crews working, and our vehicles running,” said Cidalia Luis-Akbar, M. Luis president.

The President noted that M. Luis and government subcontractors like it across the country are worried their work will stop and are unsure of how the shutdown will impact the economy. One immediate effect is the inability to get Small Business Administration loans processed, a significant economic catalyst. Its non essential workers have been furloughed due to the economic shutdown.

“The SBA gives billions of dollars in loans to small businesses across the country, but right now they can’t be processed because there’s no one there,” he said.

M. Luis was the beneficiary of one of those loans. In 2010 they were awarded a \$2.5 million Maryland Industrial Development Financing Authority (MIDFA) loan guarantee made possible by the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI).

“The loan guarantee, and Eagle Bank, enabled us to continue to expand operations and integrate the previously construction-focused company with asphalt and aggregate manufacturing,” said Natalia Luis, M. Luis vice president.

The President called on Congress not to delay action, noting that the longer the shutdown goes on, the more businesses and the economy will be hurt. The solution, he said, is to allow a simple up or down vote on the bill. “Everyone could vote their conscience, it will pass, I will sign it, and then we can get back to the business of helping the American people.”

Having toured the plant and learning more of the company’s beginnings, the President held M. Luis up as an example of the American dream and of knowing that success depends on working together. “This is what America is all about. If you work hard, you put in the time, you pass on a better life to your children.”



About M. Luis Construction Co. Inc.

M. Luis is a Maryland-based, woman and minority-owned multi-generational Asphalt Manufacturer and Construction Services company that serves as an economic engine for the regional economy. They have successfully manufactured hundreds of thousands of tons of quality asphalt and paved thousands of lane miles of roads and highways, generating over \$60 million in annual revenue and employing 200 people.

Public officials and dignitaries who attended the event include:

- Robert Agarwal, Director, Executive Sounding Board Associates Inc.
- Phil Andrews, Councilmember, Montgomery County Maryland
- Sandy David Baron, Partner, Shulman Rogers Gandal Pordy & Ecker, P.A.
- Roger Berliner, Councilmember, Montgomery County Maryland
- Carolyn Blakeney, Deputy Chief of Staff/Board of Estimates Advisor, Baltimore City Council
- Melissa Boteach, Director, Half in Ten Campaign
- D. Gregory Cole, Executive Director, Maryland Industrial Development Financing Authority Department of Business and Economic Development
- Keith Compton, Chief, Division of Highway Services, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
- Lauren Crow, Manager, Aronson LLC
- Grace Denno, Division Chief, Office of Business Relations and Compliance, Montgomery County Department of General Services
- Sandra Eberhard, Executive Director, Women Presidents' Educational Organization-DC
- Marc Elrich, Councilmember, Montgomery County Maryland
- Valerie Ervin, Councilmember, Montgomery County Maryland
- Nancy Floreen, Councilmember, Montgomery County Maryland
- Jennie Forehand, Maryland State Senator
- Stephen Freeman, Vice President, M&T Bank
- Bridgett Frey, Communications Director to Chris Van Hollen & House Budget Committee Democrats
- Yulissa Guerra-Reyes, Vice President, EagleBank
- John Hall Jr., Councilmember, Rockville, Maryland
- Timothy Hamilton, Vice President, EagleBank
- Betty Hines, Women Presidents Organization
- Arthur Holmes, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
- The Honorable Helen Holton, Member, Baltimore City Council
- Zenita Wickham Hurley, Special Secretary of the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, State of Maryland
- Pless Jones, President, Maryland Minority Contractors Association
- Robert Katz, Managing Director, Executive Sounding Board Associates Inc.
- Michael Laracy, Director, Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Ike Leggett, County Executive, Montgomery County Maryland
- George Leventhal, Councilmember, Montgomery County Maryland
- Phyllis Marcuccio, Mayor, Rockville, Maryland
- Willis B. McDonald, Communications Director to Representative John K. Delaney
- Linda McDonough, President, 50 Words LLC
- Heather R. Mizeur, Maryland State Delegate
- John Monsif, Chief of Staff to Representative John K. Delaney
- Thomas Moore, Councilmember, Rockville, Maryland
- Thomas D. Murphy, President of Community Banking, EagleBank
- Nancy Navarro, Council President, Montgomery County Maryland



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- Dr. Kurt Newman President and Chief Executive Officer, Children's National Medical Center
- Esther Newman, CEO & Founder, Leadership Montgomery
- Bridgett Donnell Newton, Councilmember, Rockville, Maryland
- Tracy Pakulniewicz, National Director of Special Projects, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
- Mark Pierzchala, Councilmember, Rockville, Maryland
- Sharon Pinder, Director, Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Minority and Women-Owned Business Development
- Honorable Joan M. Pratt, CPA Baltimore City Comptroller
- Craig Rice, Council Vice President, Montgomery County Maryland
- Hans Riemer, Councilmember, Montgomery County Maryland
- Al R. Roshdieh, Deputy Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
- Martin Schaffer, Partner, Shulman Rogers Gandal Pordy & Ecker, P.A.
- Steven Silverman, Director, Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
- Dr. Rajwant Singh, Board Member, Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington
- Jeffrey Slavin, Mayor, Somerset Maryland
- Ryan Stiegel, Councilmember
- Candace Waterman, Chief of Staff, Certification & Program Operations, Women's Business Enterprise National Council
- David Wessel, MD, Executive Vice President, Chief Medical Officer for Hospital and Specialty Services, Children's National Medical Center
- Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director, Coalition on Human Needs



Media coverage:

- [Washington Post](#)
- [ABC News](#)
- [Washington Business Journal](#)
- [CNN](#)
- [The White House](#)
- [The White House](#) (video)



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