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Saint-Gobain renews commitment to R&D with completion of major research center expansion

NORTHBORO, MA (July 31, 2009) -- Saint-Gobain marked the completion of the expansion of the company's largest international research center with a ceremony attended yesterday by Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, company executives from around the world, university representatives as well as state and local community leaders.

Started exactly one year ago, the \$15 million expansion of Saint-Gobain's R&D facility on Goddard Road in Northboro provides 60,000 square feet of new laboratory, office and meeting space for 200 scientists and engineers involved in cutting-edge research into building materials, plastics, ceramics and abrasives, as well as the development of state-of-the-art technology to promote energy efficiency in buildings.

"The opening of this new building is symbolically very important to Saint-Gobain," says Pierre-André de Chalendar, CEO of Saint-Gobain. "First and foremost, this investment underscores our commitment to research and development. We are determined to carry on investing in this area. That's because innovation is central to our long-term business strategy."

The Northboro site is the largest of Saint-Gobain's four worldwide research centers, which together employ 3,500 people.

The new building was designed by Boston architect Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott, one of the country's leading science and research architecture firms. When it is inspected later this year, the completed structure is expected to attain a Gold Rating in the U.S. Green Building Council's **LEED® "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" program** — placing it among the very few buildings in North America to qualify for this prestigious energy efficiency and sustainability rating. The building has also been designed to adhere to Saint-Gobain's rigorous international energy efficiency standards for new company buildings.

Another special feature is the unprecedented use of Saint-Gobain's own building products, particularly those of its subsidiary CertainTeed, which provided acoustical ceilings, gypsum wallboard, insulation, solar reflective roofing and foundation products. The window glass for new building has also been manufactured by Saint-Gobain.

Construction of the expanded building was managed by A.J. Martini, a leading construction company based in Winchester, Massachusetts.

The Northboro operation has been a major center for materials research since 1985. It joined Saint-Gobain in 1990 as part of the acquisition of Worcester-based Norton Company. In 2003, the site became Saint-Gobain's main research location for high-performance plastics and coated abrasives, and since then has grown and expanded its activities to include research Saint-Gobain's crystals and reinforcement businesses throughout the world. The 186,000-square-foot R&D Center is based in three buildings on a 26-acre site near I-290 in Northboro. The facility has approximately 330 employees from 27 different countries.

With more than 1,000 subsidiaries in 59 countries, Saint-Gobain is the world's largest manufacturer and distributor of building materials, and a leader in the production of high-performance materials and glass containers. Founded in 1665 and headquartered in Paris, Saint-Gobain had worldwide sales of \$64.4 billion in 2008 and 210,000 employees. In the United States and Canada, Saint-Gobain employs approximately 20,000 people, and had sales of \$8.1 billion in 2008. In Massachusetts, the company has approximately 2,300 employees, with major production facilities in Milford, Northampton, Norwood, Taunton and Worcester.

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