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MEXICO, Mo.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--An enthusiastic crowd of community members, elected officials and economic development advocates gathered here today to celebrate the announcement that Mid America Brick & Structural Clay Products, L.L.C. will begin operating the former A.P. Green plant as a face brick manufacturing facility. Mid America Brick is re-commissioning the plant on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 1910. The plant will provide approximately 80 new manufacturing jobs once it is fully operational in 2011, and it is expected to produce nearly 60 million bricks annually.

The A.P. Green plant, which closed in 2002, was at one time one of the largest refractory brick manufacturers in the United States. Mid America Brick will use the facility to make face brick for residential and commercial/industrial construction.

"After significant efforts, we are thrilled to be able to re-open this plant, produce a quality product, and provide good jobs in our community," said brick industry veteran and Mid America Brick CEO Frank Cordie. Mr. Cordie acknowledged the strong support at the local, state and federal levels of government, including the Mexico City Council, Missouri State Representative Steve Hobbs (R-21), Missouri State Senator Wes Shoemyer (D-18), U.S. Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-9), U.S. Senator Kit Bond (R-Missouri) and Missouri Governor Jay Nixon, directly and through the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

Speaking at the groundbreaking, Senator Bond, who resides in Mexico, lauded the re-opening and noted his family connection to the brick factory. His maternal grandfather, A. P. Green, operated the company at a pivotal time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it contributed significantly to the largest period of industrial growth in the United States. "The Midwest has lost tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs during this recession. And smaller cities, like Mexico, have felt the brunt of plant closings. So today's event is of special hope and importance as we look ahead to the future," said Senator Bond. "News about good jobs is the best news we can get during these tough economic times."

Governor Nixon also spoke at the gathering, stating his support for public-private partnerships like the New Markets development program, and noting that "a combined state, federal, and private sector effort has made it possible for Mid America Brick to re-open this plant. The federal and state New Markets programs drive capital into communities that need it most, creating the kind of high-quality jobs that are a top priority of my administration, and so critical to Missouri's long-term economic well-being."

Rosa Martinez, Associate Program Manager for the New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) Program at the U.S. Department of the Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions Fund in Washington, D.C., also addressed the crowd. Martinez spoke about the ways in which the highly regarded NMTC Program can be used to create rural manufacturing jobs, and noted that this program has been a success nationwide in directing much-needed investment dollars to underserved regions.

Earlier this month, Mid America Brick received \$21.9 million of financing, which will be used to re-commission the plant. Investors in the project include Advantage Capital Partners, [Rand Capital](#) (NASDAQ: [RAND](#) - [News](#)), real estate investment group [Environmental Liability Transfer](#) and a group of individual investors, many of whom reside in Mexico, Mo. [Community South Bank](#), based in Knoxville, Tenn., underwrote the senior debt facility through a USDA-guaranteed loan. The federal and state New Markets Tax Credit programs, and various other incentives, enabled the project financing.