

Making A Difference



Stories about heroic steps the Charter NEX | Next Generation Films team is taking to support customers and the nation through this difficult time.

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Mike Holmberg, SVP Elm Electrical and Co-Owner Columbia Manufacturing

As COVID-19 cases continue to climb in many regions around the country, **PPE for healthcare professionals remains in high demand.** In Massachusetts, the ‘Bay State’, Charter NEX / Next Generation Films is doing its part to help keep frontline workers safe.

In early May, **Marc Lombard, Plant Manager in Turners Falls, received an S.O.S. call from Mike Holmberg, SVP Elm Electrical and Co-Owner of Columbia Manufacturing.** Mike explained that Elm and Columbia were working with TechSpring, the innovation center for Baystate Health – an integrated healthcare system serving western New England – to develop PPE, like medical gowns, for area hospitals. **“Baystate Health’s procurement team expects gowns to be in short supply over the coming weeks,” said Mike. “They’re desperately looking for an interim solution.”**

Elm’s Engineering team had developed prototypes for the gowns (using off-the-shelf plastic sheeting) that were **vetted by Baystate’s Chief Infection Control Officer. Columbia Manufacturing was prepared to produce the gowns in quantity,** but they needed raw material.

“We provided Mike with samples of a few films,” said Marc. **“He worked with Baystate to qualify them and selected the one that worked best. We ran their order over the weekend of May 2-3 and Columbia began production of 50,000 gowns on May 5th.”**

Credit for the quick turnaround on this project goes to the team in Turners Falls, including: **Sheila Zewinski, Account Manager; Erin Propson, Pricing; George Kennedy and the entire Production Team; Shift Leads John Wheeler, Scott Stacy, Jim Duke and Gary Emond; Barry Smith** who handled rewinding; and **Bill Aubrey and the Shipping team.**

“The Charter NEX / Next Generation Films team jumped right on this project and provided numerous samples at no cost while we refined our approach and sought qualification through Baystate,” said Mike. **“To have local supplier chip-in during this time of need is a great illustration of collaboration and community spirit.”**

Marc says the team in **Turners is happy to support of its local healthcare community,** especially Baystate Health – the largest healthcare organization in western Massachusetts that includes five hospitals. Their contribution to this effort made a real difference.

“On behalf of Baystate hospital and the team at Elm Electrical and Columbia Manufacturing, I want to thank Charter NEX / Next Generation Films for helping us develop a product in just two weeks,” said Mike.

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