

Hot Springs Looking For Industry

New Building Awaiting A Tenant

There is a new building for rent, or sale, in Hot Springs. It sits on a large hilltop pasture off River Road near the northern edge of town. A single-story structure of attractive beige steel, it measures 130 by 250 feet to provide 32,000 square feet of space. The ceiling is 18 feet high at the eaves.

The structure has one purpose: to entice a new industry to Hot Springs.

"In the last two years," said William Whitten, president of the Hot Springs Development Corporation, "we've had about 50 industrial representatives visit here. Most of them said they wanted a new plant location with a building already in existence. 'Now we have one.'"

The floor has been left unpoured, so the industry which takes the building over can provide wiring and concrete thickness to meet its special needs. There is electrical service already at the site. City water lines are nearby, and sewage will be no problem Whitten said.

Whitten and Lawrence Ponder Madison County's industrial development chairman, are hopeful that the new building will be occupied by this fall.

Another industrial payroll in Hot Springs "would mean more people staying at home," Ponder observed.

Madison's population had been on the downgrade for years as residents were forced to leave the county to find employment, and had dropped to 16,003 in the 1970 census.

"Three years ago," Ponder said, "there were around 200 industrial jobs in the county. Today we have about 800."

"Our population is now back to 16,300. I think we have turned the corner, but we still need more industry."

There are three other local development groups in the county—two in Marshall, one in Mars Hill and the one here. Mars Hill is home to the county's larger employers, Microswitch, with some 550 workers, Shadowline, with more than 100 and Rosenstock, with 35. Marshall has the Derringer plant, which has plans to hike its payroll to 200, and the small Samatha-Lee plant.

Hot Springs now has a Burlington Industries spinning plant which employs about 160 persons.

"Our residents go every work day to Asheville, Greenville, to Newport, some even to the Enka plant at Lowlands," Whitten said.

Many of them have too much seniority where now employed to desire to change jobs, but there are many persons in the Hot Springs area without regular jobs and a continuing need to offer employment to young people graduating from high school and college, said Whitten, who also serves as postmaster for this community of 600 located six miles from the Tennessee line.

One of the recent industrial prospects, Whitten said, made a survey of available labor. The firm, Southern Devices of Morganton, received more than 600 job applications. "We have plenty of labor," Whitten said, "in a 30 mile radius."

Hot Springs is hopeful of winning this year's Governor's Award by improving its overall appearance and efforts to attract industry.

The Hot Springs Development Corporation originally was formed in 1962. It was reactivated last spring, Whitten said, and decided to put up a building as special inducement. The group approached the Northwestern Bank and was advised it could borrow up to \$100,000, Whitten said, if the corporation raised at least \$20,000 in stock and acquired 20 acres of suitable land.

Townpeople approached about the matter have been amazingly cooperative, Whitten said. The corporation raised nearly \$42,000 from

some 125 investors.

"We are not interested in making in one. All we want is to get our investment back," the development chief said.

Twenty acres of land have been purchased, and another tract about the same size adjoining it is available if needed. Rainy weather last fall and winter held off construction, but Bax-Steel Building, Inc. of Baxley, Ga., brought in its crew in April and completed erection in late May.

Not counting the land, the building has cost about \$72,000 to date, Whitten said. If a desirable industry rents the structure, funds are on hand to complete lighting, heating, paving of parking lot, flooring and other work.

If the new industry buys the building, Whitten said, the corporation would be in position to erect a second structure on a portion of the tract—or the nearby land—and seek still another plant.

The site is about a mile from the Southern Railway station

in town. Although on a paved road, it is also a mile from U.S. 25-70 which connects southward to Asheville and northward to Newport.

Serving with Whitten on the Hot Springs Development Corporation are three other officers: William J. Ferguson, vice president; the Rev. Jeff Burton, secretary; and James Gentry, treasurer; and nine members of the board of directors: Harold Baker, David West, Eugent Wills, Mrs. Mattie Ray Ramsey, W. B. Fowler, C. E. Mashburn, Lawrence Ponder, Burlin Ricker and Charles D. Norton.

Completion of the building, Ponder said, "speaks louder than words."

"It tells the industrial prospect that the people of this community have confidence in the town and in its labor force."

The local group, Ponder said working in cooperation with county, regional and state development offices, is confident that the right occupant soon will be found.



New Building and development chief William Whitten awaits industrial occupant.



Interior view of new industrial building at Hot Springs. (Staff Photos By June Glenn Jr.)

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We wish to express our appreciation to all those who have given us clothes and household items following the fire which destroyed our mobile home a few days ago.

MR. AND MRS. FOWLER MORTON

To everyone who expressed a love and concern for Greg during his recent illness, we would like to express our most sincere thanks.

We the family of Keith Calloway who passed away May 6, 1974 wish to thank everyone for all the many acts of kindness and sympathy shown us during this time.

For every prayer sent up on our behalf, the beautiful flowers, cards, and letters of encouragement, food, financial help and kind words of sympathy, we are truly grateful. Also for all the singers and everyone who was so kind to donate their time and money to help us by the Benefit Singing. Also all the churches and other organizations, words cannot express our thanks. May God bless you all.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul C. Burnett
Mrs. Addie Martin and family.

The cards, letters, love gifts, and especially the progress helped make this time easier.

We love you all and may God bless you and cause this experience to draw you nearer to Him as it has us.

Fletcher, Barbara, and Greg Brown

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ON DEAN'S LIST

Two Mars Hill students at N.C. State University, Raleigh, have made the Dean's List.

They are James L. Eller, nuclear engineering, son of Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Eller; and Randolph L. Zink, biological and agricultural engineering, son of Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Zink.

TAYLORS MOVE

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Taylor and three daughters have bought and moved into the Herbert Goforth house on

RECENTLY INSTALLED

Miss Judy Elam, of the Thomas Jefferson faculty of Winston-Salem and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. P.R. Elam of Mars Hill, has recently been installed as a new member of the Beta Mu Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society, an honorary teacher's society. She is a graduate of U. N. C., Chapel Hill.

Bear Creek near Marshall. Mr. Taylor is County Supervisor of the Farmers Home Administration.

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