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BUYERS SELECTIVE OPENING DAY - The opening sale of the Eastern Tobacco belt in Wallace was held at the Blanchard-Farrior Warehouse with 550 piles of leaf on the floor. According to warehouse officials, 226 of the piles of tobacco on the opening sale were purchased by the stabilization program. The sale averaged \$1.41, just one cent more than

the 1982 opening day average for the warehouse. This season 9,030,735 pounds of tobacco have been designated to the four Wallace tobacco markets. The Wallace markets averaged \$1.76 per pound in the 1982 season. Pictured above, the opening day sale at the Blanchard-Farrior Warehouse in Wallace.

Tobacco Market Continues To Slump

Eastern North Carolina Type 12 tobacco markets opened Wednesday with a chorus of dissatisfaction from farmers, who insisted their tobacco was not selling for enough money to cover production costs.

"It'll be a long cold summer at this rate and we won't even be able to get into winter," said Douglas Odum of Sampson County, who rejected the price offered for 18 piles of tobacco in Clinton and took them home for future sale.

As in the Georgia-Florida Type 14 and South Carolina-North Carolina Border Type 13 opening sales, an estimated 25 to 35 percent of the Eastern offering went to Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corp. because the tobacco failed to bring bids of more than \$1 per 100 pounds above the support level of the grade.

Companies seldom paid more than \$1 more than the support level Wednesday. Buyers also refused most of the more expensive grades. Nearly all the mid-stalk to-

bacco went to Stabilization, which operates the price-support program.

While the average tobacco support price is \$169.90 per 100 pounds, each grade carries a specific support price. This may be higher or lower than the overall average support.

Lower-stalk tobacco generally carries support levels lower than the average. Upper-stalk tobacco, unless it is damaged or unripe, carries support levels higher than the average.

Marvin Taylor of northern Duplin County said Stabilization received all 13 piles of mid-stalk tobacco that he offered for sale in Wallace. This grade carried support levels of \$170 to \$187 per 100 pounds.

Duplin County Tobacco Extension Agent J. Michael Moore observed, "The companies don't seem to have the money for the better tobacco grades yet."

While many piles of fair primings, comprising leaves from the lower portion of the tobacco stalks, went to Stabilization, most of these grades went to R.J. Reynolds

Co. of Winston-Salem, J.P. Taylor Co. of Danville, Va., Philip Morris Co. of Richmond, Va., and American Tobacco Co. of Durham. The principal fair priming grades are supported at \$132 per 100 pounds. Most sales of the grades were at \$133.

Unofficial preliminary reports indicated one Wallace warehouse averaged \$145.58 per 100 pounds, \$4.42 more than on opening day last year. In contrast, a Clinton warehouse averaged \$139.11 per 100 pounds, slightly less than on last year's opening.

Meanwhile, the Chadbourne market of the Border Belt posted an unofficial average of \$152.73 Wednesday, the second day of its season. That was a gain of \$12.19 per 100 pounds over its official opening day average of \$140.54 Tuesday.

"Farmers are taking a courageous step to freeze prices to make it competitive worldwide, and in return the companies ought to pay a good price," Gov. Jim Hunt said as he opened the Eastern Belt market in Wilson Wednesday. "The amount in stabilization has

got to come down. Farmers are having to pay every penny of the interest on the stored tobacco in stabilization, which hurts every farmer."

John Cyrus, tobacco affairs specialist with the N.C. Department of Agriculture, said opening rows at some markets contained some tobacco that he termed "sunbaked and sunburned" as a result of the period of extreme hot, dry weather in July.

Cyrus said he would be "awfully disappointed" if more than 39 percent of the crop goes to stabilization, surpassing last year's levels.

"There really is no reason for that much tobacco to go under loan," he said, because of the quality of leaf available.

Cyrus said a freeze on price supports came too late to be of much significance this year.

Meanwhile, Sen. Jesse Helms hopes to debate a tobacco bill before Congress recesses for the summer faded because of a deadlock over other aspects of 1983 farm legislation.

Beulaville Traffic Problems Unsolved

After some town citizens turned out to express dissatisfaction with traffic recommendations from the North Carolina Department of Transportation during the August 1 meeting of the town board, Beulaville Commissioners voted to request a re-evaluation of traffic problems on Smith, Lee and Railroad Streets.

Reviewing suggestions from DOT, Beulaville Commissioners had proposed the removal of parking on the north and south sides of Highway 24 from a point 25 feet west of Railroad Street to a point 25 feet east of Railroad Street and converting Smith and Lee Streets into one-way lanes.

"If the streets are made one way that may prevent some accidents but that may cause some, too," Willie White of Sandlin's Department Store said. "One-way streets could inconvenience more people than they would be worth."

"I don't want to upset any of my customers," Bobby Miller of Miller Hardware said. "But something needs to be done. What is best for the people traveling the streets should be considered, and no matter what the decision is, some will be upset."

"I don't believe one-way streets will run anyone out of Beulaville, when it's done with the safety of the town

citizens in mind," Cecil Lanier, a Beulaville auto businessman said. "I don't want it on my conscience to know we had a chance to change it (traffic problems) and did not. Especially if there is a terrible accident and someone is hurt bad."

"There is a real traffic problem and had the Department of Transportation not seen the need for changes they would not have made any recommendations," Lanier added.

Commissioner Rabon Maready stated the streets of Lee and Smith should be one-way. Maready said he had purposely travelled both streets a great deal since the Department of Transportation recommendations came before the Board in April and felt the safest solution to traffic problems on Lee and Smith would be one-way lanes. In a motion by Maready, the Board approved the recommendation to have the DOT re-evaluate traffic problems along Highway 24 in Beulaville. Commissioner Elvis Sumner voted against the motion.

Bids on a town computer system were opened by the Board. Computer Store of Jacksonville submitted a bid of \$12,846.95; Specialized Data Systems of Greenville, \$16,885; Northwestern Systems, Ltd. of Steamboat Springs, Co., \$12,138; and

IBM/Ormsby Associated of Wilmington, \$17,543. Bids by Northwest Systems, Ltd. and IBM/Ormsby Associated were not accompanied by cash bid bonds. Budgeted for the purchase of the computer system in the Beulaville 1983-84 budget is \$10,000. Listed in the specifications for the computer system are capabilities for billing water, sewer and trash collections fees and accounting incoming collections, tax billing, tax collections, fixed assets, budget preparation, special report generation, budgetary accounting, payroll and accounts payable. The bids on the computer systems for the town of Beulaville are to be evaluated by the Department of Urban Affairs at North Carolina State University.

The Beulaville Commissioners approved a recommendation from the town planning board. The planning board requested property of Earl Gresham be rezoned from R85 to R6. The town commissioners approved the request for a public hearing on the zoning change.

Duplin County Deputy Alfred Basden asked the town board to consider numbering the homes and commercial businesses in Beulaville to assist law enforcement officers and visitors to the community.

Tobacco Workers Are Excused From Duplin Schools

Duplin County public schools will excuse from school attendance students involved in tobacco production work at the request of their parents.

The students will be allowed to make up missed work when they return to classes.

The Board of Education took this action last week as a result of numerous requests from farmers.

The board also approved a \$1 increase in the annual premium for student health and accident insurance during the school day. The new rate will be \$10. The \$39 annual premium for 24-hour, 365-day student coverage remains unchanged.

The board also hired June Allen Davis as a vocational ag teacher at Wallace-Rose Hill High School. The first woman to teach vocational agriculture classes in Duplin County, she has a bachelor's

degree in agriculture and animal science from N.C. State University. She has been teaching in Onslow County.

During the discussion of the need for students in the tobacco fields during the harvest, Board Chairman Jimmy Strickland moved to delay the school opening for a week beyond the scheduled date, Aug. 22. The motion died for lack of a second.

Strickland said the tobacco crop is as much as three weeks later than usual and the harvest is the latest he can remember.

"We don't need 500 people to come by and tell us we have a problem. Some things you can see for yourself," Strickland said.

Boardmember Carl Pate said, "Some people are three weeks into their tobacco harvest and others have just knocked the bottom leaves off and haven't even started

harvesting."

"This is a farming community and people will take it for granted that we'll do something," Strickland said.

Supt. L.S. Guy protested the proposal by Strickland to delay the school opening. "The school calendar is a good calendar and schools are big business," Guy said.

"In the past we have excused students for harvest work and allowed them to make up missed school work."

Last fall students who worked in the harvest registered on the first day of classes and then were excused. Parents will be required to verify that their student children are needed in the harvest.

Guy said the schools need to register on the opening day all students, including those to be excused for harvest work. Otherwise, he said, the county system could lose some teachers.

New Employee Hired In Faison

Faison Commissioners approved the hiring of Dean Norris in the town public works department at the regular meeting of the Board August 3 at the town hall.

Norris will be employed full-time starting immediately on a 13-week probation period. He will fill the position vacated by Donald Oates in the Faison public works department. Norris begins at a salary of \$3.50 an hour. Upon the conclusion of the employment probation period Norris will be covered under the town's health and retirement programs.

Following a brief discussion Town Commissioner Helen Britt made a motion to strike a prior ruling to pay any town employee required to attend meetings of the

Faison Board. Town employees were paid at the same rate as Faison Commissioners under the old ruling. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board. The town clerk position was excluded from the ruling.

Commissioner Rachel Clifton informed the Board of the collection of \$4,400 by the Faison Cemetery Committee for perpetual care of the Faison Cemetery. According to Clifton \$1,500 had been banked in a 42-month certificate of deposit and the remaining \$2,900 comprised recent contributions to the perpetual care project. Property owners in the Faison Cemetery were requested to participate in the perpetual care project

with a one-time contribution of \$300.

A cemetery committee was established at the May meeting headed by Ann Taylor of Faison and included Rachel Clifton and Jane Precythe. At that time 74 property owners in the Faison Cemetery had agreed to participate in the perpetual care program and Taylor estimated the annual upkeep would be approximately \$2,000.

The town commissioners agreed to submit a resolution honoring Astronaut William Thornton to the Duplin County Board of Commissioners declaring the week of the space shuttle take-off as Thornton Week in Duplin. Thornton is a Faison native.



UNCLE REMUS TALES - The professional cast of the outdoor drama THE LIBERTY CART will present the last of three Sunday performances of LIVIN' DE LIFE at the William R. Kenan Memorial Amphitheatre August 14 at 3 p.m. This is a play adapted

from the tales of Uncle Remus and stars the critters of the Briar Patch. Pictured above, left to right, are Br'er Rabbit, Br'er Fox and Br'er Bear as they perform in LIVIN' DE LIFE at the amphitheatre in Kenansville.

Wallace Tobacco Market Opens

Tobacco companies purchased only a little more than 50 percent of the leaf on the warehouse floor. Herbert Whaley's seven sheets of tobacco were sold for one and two cents above the support price on the opening sale of the Eastern Belt in Wallace.

"I sold the same cropping last year for prices of \$1.78 to \$2," Herbert Whaley, a tobacco farmer from the Magnolia area said. "I think prices will be better as the season progresses. In a week or two if I were to sell the same tobacco as I had on the floor today, I feel like I would get 15 to 20 cents more. But, I just thought I needed to sell today to try and pay some of the crop expenses." Whaley grows 20 acres of tobacco which, he added, had encountered problems with drought, drowning, cold and heat during its growing season. He estimated the current crop to be one to two weeks later than the 1982 tobacco crop.

The opening sale in Wallace at the Blanchard-Farrior warehouse, August 3, auctioned 550 sheets of tobacco and 226 were purchased by the tobacco stabilization program. The sale averaged \$1.41 per pound, just one cent more than the 1982 opening average of \$1.40.

"The opening sale has let the farmer know that tobacco companies are not interested in tobacco which is not fully ripe and matured," Duplin Agricultural Extension Agent J. Michael Moore

said. "Tobacco companies can purchase poor quality tobacco in any country. The large amount of the sale purchased by stabilization will hold the average down, and farmers will not get good grades on their tobacco until the crops mature and are harvested when fully ripe." Early harvests have been due to the leaves burning in the field as a result of too little rain and excessive heat, Moore said. According to the tobacco agent, farmers are having to weigh the problem of unripe leaves burning up in the field or a premature harvest for no profit on the crop.

Whaley's 1982 tobacco crop averaged \$1.95. And, he expects to average about the same this season. According to the North Carolina Farm Market report last season 11,479,549 pounds of tobacco were sold in Wallace warehouses for an average of \$1.76.

"According to the other tobacco sold, I am pleased with the price I got for mine," Whaley said. "But, I feel like my crop always does a little better than most on the floor because I still harvest using the stick barn. And, I realize it cost more to do it that way, so when it sells a few cents higher it usually takes that extra to pay the expenses. I take pride in my tobacco and curing it in bulk barns takes the body out of the leaves and many times it won't even smell like tobacco."