



SUPPLY ELEMENTARY students Jeremy Horn (left, on floor) and Jon Hill "mass" pennies to give some to Tosha Willers (left foreground) to count.

## Supply Students' Penny Collecting Will Soon Pay Playground Dividend

BY SYBIL MITCHELL SIMMONS  
For The Brunswick Beacon

Pennies. To be exact, 476,613 of them.

Or, if you are a Supply Elementary School student, that equals a lot of counting lessons, problem solving activities and "real" math in general.

Better still, in a few more weeks it will equal a much better well-equipped playground.

Students, parents and the community in general have worked to collect pennies since fall, with the goal of accumulating a million pennies, or \$10,000. Members of third grade teacher Shelba Thornton's Sunday School class at Sabbath Home Baptist Church sent a batch of 37,609 pennies, which the students sorted in various ways.

"We tried 'massing' using a balance," said Thornton. Massing refers to distributing equal amounts by weight. "But some people had more pennies than others. We concluded that massing didn't make equal amounts. Some of the pennies seem to have been used more. They must have had more wear on them than others. That

meant that the same amount by mass could have been more or less in dollars and cents."

The problem of distribution was solved: Thornton and Gloria Foss, her teaching assistant, ended up passing the pennies out by the glassful.

Students throughout the school have calculated graphs based on the pennies they counted, worked to understand place value (Thornton's class, for example had \$376.09), and enjoyed the hands-on lessons that evolved from the experience.

According to Marty Mentzer, physical education teacher and playground committee chairperson, the first playground equipment order was processed on Dec. 17. Orders are expected to begin arriving around Feb. 1.

When completed, the school playground will have three play areas for students according to their grade level.

Swings, horizontal hand-over-hand ladders, a physical fitness center, tether ball sets, slides and other play equipment will be available to students as a result of their penny-gathering that began at the start of the fall term.

## MAY ADD 100 NEW JOBS

# ElecMech Manufacturing Marks Opening At Leland Industrial Park

A new Brunswick County company has started shipping direct current electric micromotors to a Big Three automaker.

ElecMech Manufacturing Inc. held a grand opening Tuesday at its plant in the Leland Industrial Park to mark delivery of its largest order to date.

The ceremony included comments from the county economic development and governmental officials and a plant tour conducted by ElecMech staff.

In recent years, Pacific Rim suppliers have dominated the worldwide and U.S. market for small DC motors.

"We heard lots of reasons why we couldn't compete with offshore sources—but we are," explained Frank Slightom, ElecMech president. "Our goal is to be the highest-volume, lowest-cost producer of subfractional horsepower electric motors in the U.S."

More than two years in the planning, the ElecMech plant began operation in October with advanced equipment capable of conducting 25 operations simultaneously.

ElecMech considered locations across the country before deciding the Wilmington area best fit the company's short- and long-term needs, Slightom said. Availability of

a skilled labor force, a low-cost tax structure, cooperation of nearby community college, easy access to port facilities and interstates and overall quality of life made Leland the choice for the new plant, he said.

The plant's first product is a DC motor designed into windshield wiper systems in millions of U.S. cars. Ahead are new orders for expanded automotive applications, appliance and power tools.

ElecMech officials say they anticipate eventually adding as many as 100 new jobs at the plant. The company is working with Brunswick and Cape Fear community colleges and the N.C. Employment Security Commission.

Slightom said the company intends on being a good corporate citizen, too, having become the first manufacturer in its area to participate in the Adopt-a-Highway litter removal program along a stretch of U.S. 74-76 outside Leland.

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