

DES MOINES PLANT—This aerial view shows the Company plant at Des Moines. Phases of latest expansion included addition of more than 100,000 square feet of factory space and 10,800 square feet of additional office space.



THE HAWKEYE STATE—Iowa, with its rolling prairie, is the heartland of American agriculture. Its fine soil produces more corn than any other state and Iowa also ranks high in the production of oats, soy beans, pork and beef.

Company Tire Plant Helps Build Des Moines' Industrial Progress

By Ralph Darrow
Editor, Firestone Hawkeye

One of the most modern and fastest-growing tire manufacturing plants in the world is doing its part in bringing desirable diversification in manufacturing to Iowa's capital city of Des Moines. On a rolling prairie just north of the city is the plant of the Firestone Company.

Built late in World War II to fit specific military needs, the plant was expanded tremendously after the war crisis ended to fill a strong and growing civilian demand for tires.

Expansion is still going on in the 10-year-old plant because of Des Moines' location in the center of a large and growing market.

The story of Firestone's Des Moines plant goes back to World War II when the United States and its allies were fighting for life against the Japanese and Nazis. The U. S., as the arsenal for the fighting fronts, was locating many types of vital plants deep in the interior where they would be safe from possible air attacks.

It was decided to locate a tire plant in Des Moines with the specific purpose of producing high flotation tires which could "float" vehicles over the sticky mud and soft sand which was slowing the advance of the allied mechanized fighting divisions.

BUILT BY GOVERNMENT funds, the plant's planning and construction was under the supervision of Firestone.

Ground was first broken in October, 1944; and the first tire rolled off the assembly lines in April of 1945. Shortly after production began, World War II came to an end and there no longer was need for quantity production of military tires. Since the Government had no desire to continue in the tire busi-

ness, the Firestone Company purchased the plant in February, 1948.

An almost continuous program of expansion has been carried forward since Firestone purchased the plant. The latest plant expansion, now nearly completed, cost approximately \$6,000,000. Phases of the latest expansion which started in 1953, were the addition of more than 100,000 square feet of factory space, 10,800 square feet of additional office space, and 4,700 square feet of miscellaneous construction. A 133-car parking lot was also added.

Work has now started on another parking lot and on a warehouse of 382,000 square feet.

CHARGED WITH supervising this large operation is J. C. Blue, General Manager. Mr. Blue came to Des Moines from the Pottstown, Pa., plant in 1948 and most of the expansion has taken place since he arrived.

In addition to producing tires, the Des Moines plant houses headquarters for the Western Sales Division which directs the marketing of all Firestone products in the central part of the United States.

The division, headed by A. P. Mathieson, includes the states of

Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas, and parts of Missouri, Oklahoma and Montana.

The sales operations in Des Moines include a retread shop, the Des Moines District offices and two retail stores.

THE DES MOINES plant is one of the most mechanized in the tire industry, utilizing the latest in machines and techniques. Raw materials roll into one end and tires roll out the other in almost one continuous process.

At the north end is a receiving dock where employees unload raw natural rubber from Firestone plantations in Liberia and from Far Eastern plantations, synthetic rubber manufactured in U. S. plants, fabric from Firestone textile mills and other materials needed in tire manufacturing.

As the raw materials move south, they are processed and assembled into tires which are cured, closely inspected so as to meet the high quality demanded, then shipped out at the south end.

THE PLANT ALSO is an asset to the community in which it is

located. It provides employment for 2,000 men and women of Des Moines and surrounding communities.

The city of Des Moines was settled by a handful of pioneers in 1843. Primarily a town of insurance offices and publishing firms, the city has begun to achieve prominence as a manufacturing center. The Firestone plant is one of the top three industries in the city in size of payroll.

There are 72 schools ranging from kindergarten through the University level. Best known is Drake University.

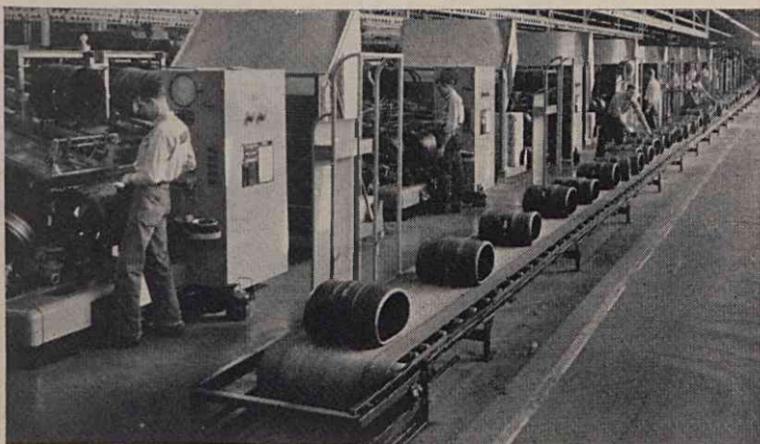
Iowa is the heartland of American agriculture, possessing some of the finest soil in the world and one quarter of the Grade A land in the United States. Ninety-seven per cent of the rolling prairie is under production of crops.



CITY SKYLINE—Primarily a town of insurance offices and publishing firms, the city now is growing as an industrial center.



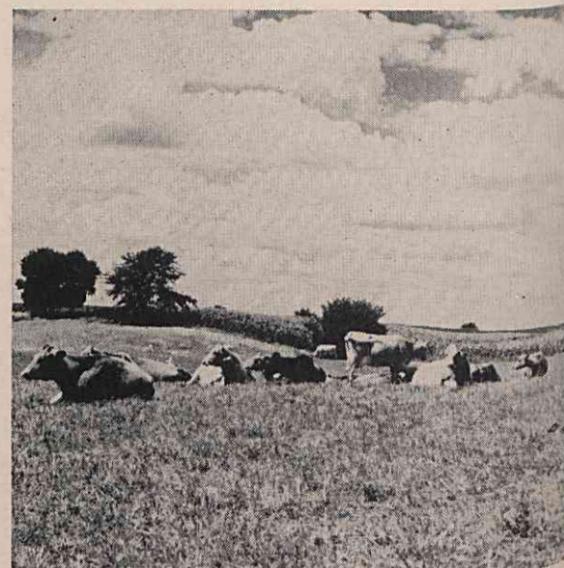
STATE CAPITOL—Des Moines is the capital of the state of Iowa. Pictured above is the Capitol Building with its gold dome.



TIRE ASSEMBLY—One of the most modern tire manufacturing plants in the world is the Company's Des Moines plant. Here various parts of a tire are inseparably joined together on modern tire assembly machines.



KNEE DEEP IN CORN—The state leads the country in corn with 10,965,000 acres in production. In 1952 the state produced the first billion dollar crop.



PASTURE SCENE—Excellent pastures and grazing land make Iowa rank second in cattle. Holsteins dominate dairy cattle and much creamery butter is produced.