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GASTONIA • NORTH CAROLINA

Firestone

FEBRUARY • 1968

NEWS

Firestone Synthetic Fibers And Textiles Company

Operations of the Firestone Textiles Company, headquartered at the Gastonia plant since mid-1966, and Firestone Synthetic Fibers Company at Hopewell, Va., have been combined. The new operation has been renamed the Firestone Synthetic Fibers and Textiles Company. Headquarters are at the Hopewell plant.

President of the newly-designated division is Robert W. Rice, who previously was vice president and general manager of the Firestone Synthetic Fibers Company. He succeeds Harold Mercer of the Gastonia plant, who retired in January.

The new designation resulted when the company combined four divisions into two and placed them under direction of L. J. Campbell, vice president of non-tire operations.

The other combination involved the divisions formerly known as the Firestone Rubber & Latex Products Company of Fall River, Mass., and the Firestone Industrial Products Company of Noblesville, Ind. The two are now known as the Firestone Industrial Rubber Products Company, with headquarters in Noblesville.

General Manager On Hospital Board

J. V. Darwin, Firestone Textiles general manager, was named to the board of directors of Gaston Memorial Hospital at the annual meeting of the group in late January.

Mr. Darwin is one of two new members named to the board to replace members recently resigned. He was appointed to fill

Of the new division which includes textiles, Mr. Rice as president is responsible for the synthetic fibers plant at Hopewell, and the operation of the textile plants at Gastonia; Bennettsville, S. C., and the new plant soon to be in full operation at Bowling Green, Ky.

In the newly-named rubber products operation — besides the Noblesville and Fall River plants — the company has facilities at Milan and Newport, Tenn.; Cory, Pa.; and Los Angeles, Calif.

Charles W. Rippey, former president of the Fall River division, is the new company president. Rogers S. Firestone, formerly president of the Firestone Plastics Company at Pottstown, Pa. and the Firestone Synthetic Fibers Company, continues as president of the plastics company.

the unexpired term of F. B. Galligan, Firestone division operations manager at Gastonia until his recent transfer to Bowling Green, Ky. There, he is manager of the new Firestone textiles plant.

Mr. Darwin joins eleven others of the Memorial board of directors to oversee the hospital.



● Among those honoring Harold Mercer at a dinner marking his retirement were three plant managers and the president of the non-tire division which includes textiles. From left: J. V. Darwin, Firestone Textiles general manager at

Gastonia; Mr. Mercer; Robert W. Rice, Mr. Mercer's successor as president of Firestone Synthetic Fibers and Textiles Company; F. B. Galligan, Bowling Green, Ky., plant manager; Ralph King, Bennettsville, S.C., plant manager.

Harold Mercer Retired

37 Years Building And Inspiring

A distinguished business-leadership career which began with Firestone 37 years ago closed Jan. 31, and its achievements became a part of the company's proud history. Harold Mercer retired as president of Firestone Textiles Company, a position to which he was elevated in 1966.

The outgoing division president, a native of Indiana and a graduate of the University of Illinois, joined the company in 1931 at Akron.

Soon after Harvey S. Firestone, company founder, purchased the Gastonia plant in 1935, Mr. Mercer was transferred here as first comptroller. He was a key man in directing beginning operations in May that year.

IN 1938 he was advanced to plant general manager and held that position until promoted to president of the textile division a year and a half ago.

Throughout the years, Mr. Mercer has been a major con-

tributor to leadership in many areas of business, professional, church and civic life. His name is associated with major advances in the plant here and in other units of the division, the textile industry in general, and in his adopted community and state.

Among numerous honors accorded him are the Silver Beaver Award for his leadership in Piedmont Council, Boy Scouts of America; and the Brotherhood Award in Gaston County, presented by the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

A highlight of his years as Firestone executive and community leader came last April when Mr. Mercer and the plant here were honored by the Gastonia Chamber of Commerce at its annual Industry Appreciation Banquet.

On that occasion he was awarded an inscribed plaque "for outstanding industrial leadership and community service."

Upon his retirement at the end of January, Mr. and Mrs. Mercer and his son John Mercer were guests of honor at a dinner meeting at Gaston Country Club.

Officials and other representatives of the plant here and of the company headquarters joined other guests of the community to "wish well" the outgoing president in his "transition to a new role in life."

Mr. and Mrs. Mercer continue living at their home on York Road, Gastonia, where one of their hobbies is cultivating roses.

Besides some business interests, other pursuits to make his retirement life interesting are fishing (mostly deepsea), travel, photography and golf, membership in civic and fraternal organizations, and work in First Methodist Church where the Mercers are members.



Crescent City

● Rich and mellow Old New Orleans is one of America's most interesting cities. The Queen City by the River is especially inviting during the extended season of Mardi Gras Carnival, climaxed by the fabulous parade and entertainment gaiety, this year on February 27. For other travel notes, see page 4.

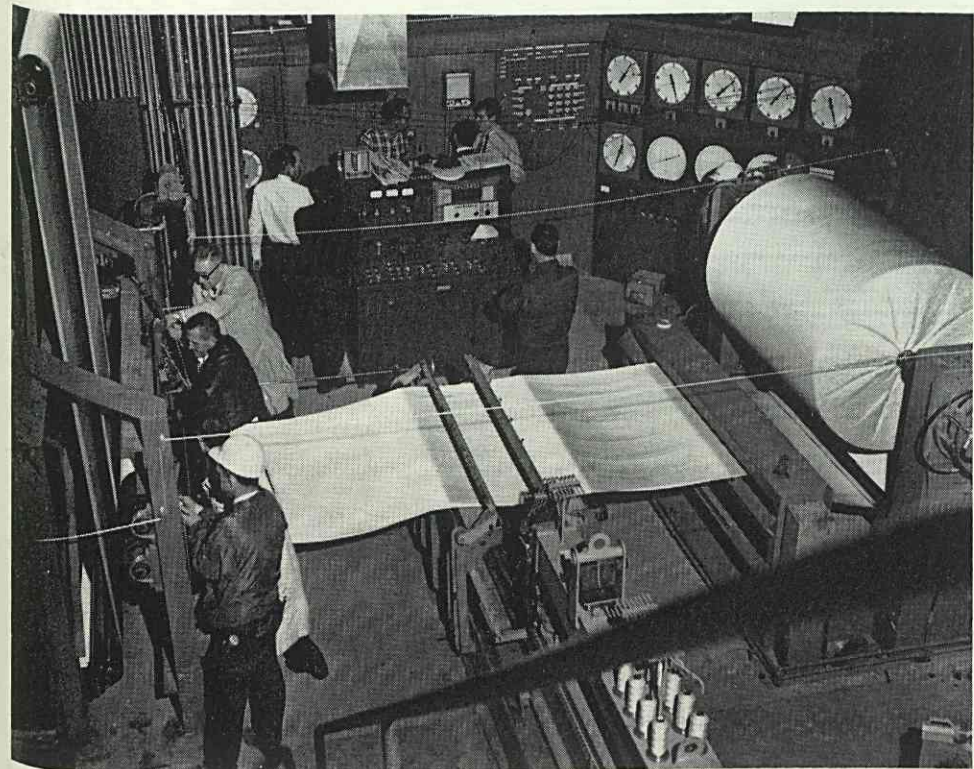
BSA Piedmont Council Report

Gains which the Boy Scouts of America Piedmont Council made last year show that Scouting is meeting needs of youth today, believes Raymond Varnadore of mechanical service.

The Firestone millwright is one of several Firestone men who are among the 4374 volunteer leaders in the Boy Scouts Piedmont Council. It is composed of NC counties Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford and the Carver, Foothills and Lakeland districts from portions of these counties.

Last year's record shows that the Scout program is an important part of the lives of

● More on page 4



Engineers, supplier representatives, plant technicians and other workmen in late January readied the first beam of synthetic fabric for its long, labyrinthine journey through the giant electronically-controlled dip/heat-tensioning unit at Gastonia. The fabric, woven here, travels through a dip bath and

onward through multi-stage stretch and gas-fired heat units, emerging onto beams for shipment and destined for quality-built tires.

The mammoth treating unit, automated to a degree never introduced here before, stands on the site of the old mill water reservoir.

Ready For The First Long Ride