

Business Outlook Bright

American industry will continue to establish production records in 1969. The new year will be one in which the nation's disposable personal income will be at an all-time high. Raymond C. Firestone, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Firestone company, made the observation in his business forecast for 1969.

Mr. Firestone noted that the economy of the United States will show continued improvements with the Gross National Product (GNP) rising to about \$920 billion—an increase of some seven per cent above the expected 1968 record-breaking performance.

While the overall business picture for 1969 appears bright, Mr. Firestone is most optimistic over forecasts for the rubber industry. Detailing the picture, the company chairman made these points:

- Total tire shipments for all markets should be well over 200 million units, the all-time record which will be posted for 1968.

For example, passenger-tire shipments are expected to set records in 1969, for the 18th year in a row.

Shipments of all replacement tires (not including those shipped to original-equipment manufacturers) in 1969 are expected to be at record levels totaling about 145 million units, some 6 million tires more than anticipated 1968 shipments.

Of these 145 million replacement tires, some 126 million are expected to be passenger tires, 15.5 million truck tires, and the

remaining 3 million will be used on tractors and farm implements.

Then, some 52 million retread tires of all kinds will be shipped, also setting records.

- U.S. consumption of synthetic rubber is expected to increase to 1,950,000 long tons in 1969. Natural rubber usage in the U.S. should be about 560,000 long tons.

- Outside the U.S. tire shipments are expected to continue large gains. The number of motor vehicles outside the U.S. now outnumbers those in the U.S. Our production facilities in all sections of the world are being expanded to meet increased demands for tires.

EARLY IN 1969, Firestone will begin production in new tire plants in Boras, Sweden, and in Bonsaso, Ghana. Expansion projects are underway in other plants throughout the world.

- Our company next year expects to spend close to \$250 million for capital improvements. This is a substantial increase above our estimated \$200 million capital spending for 1968.

—More on page 2

Boss Of Year 1968



Thomas A. Grant, manager of methods-time study at Firestone, Gastonia, received the 1968 "Boss of the Year" award in late November.

The Growing Beauty Chapter of the American Business Women's Association made the presentation as one of its annual honors. Grant was selected by a panel of judges on the basis of a letter submitted by the methods-time study secretary, Janet (Mrs. Melvin) Ware.

- Thomas A. Grant, with 1968 "Boss" trophy; and Janet Ware who nominated him.

Also sharing the spotlight of recognition was Mrs. Hazel Johnson, immediate past president of the Growing Beauty chapter. She received the 1968 "Woman of the Year" trophy.

State Sen. Marshall Rauch was guest speaker for the awards dinner at Gaston Country Club.

Scholarship Program Materials Ready

Information booklets and application forms are now in distribution for the 1969 Firestone College Scholarship awards competition. The materials are available at the Gastonia industrial relations office and at the Bennettsville plant main office.

seniors, "Start early" is the suggestion from Alvin Riley, Gastonia IR manager. He points out that the new Scholarship booklets which explain the program fully, incorporate some changes in eligibility requirements and provisions.

Application for scholar-

ships are open to sons and daughters of Firestone employees who meet other requirements as outlined in the 1969 booklet.

Completed applications must be received in the company's Akron headquarters no later than the end of February.

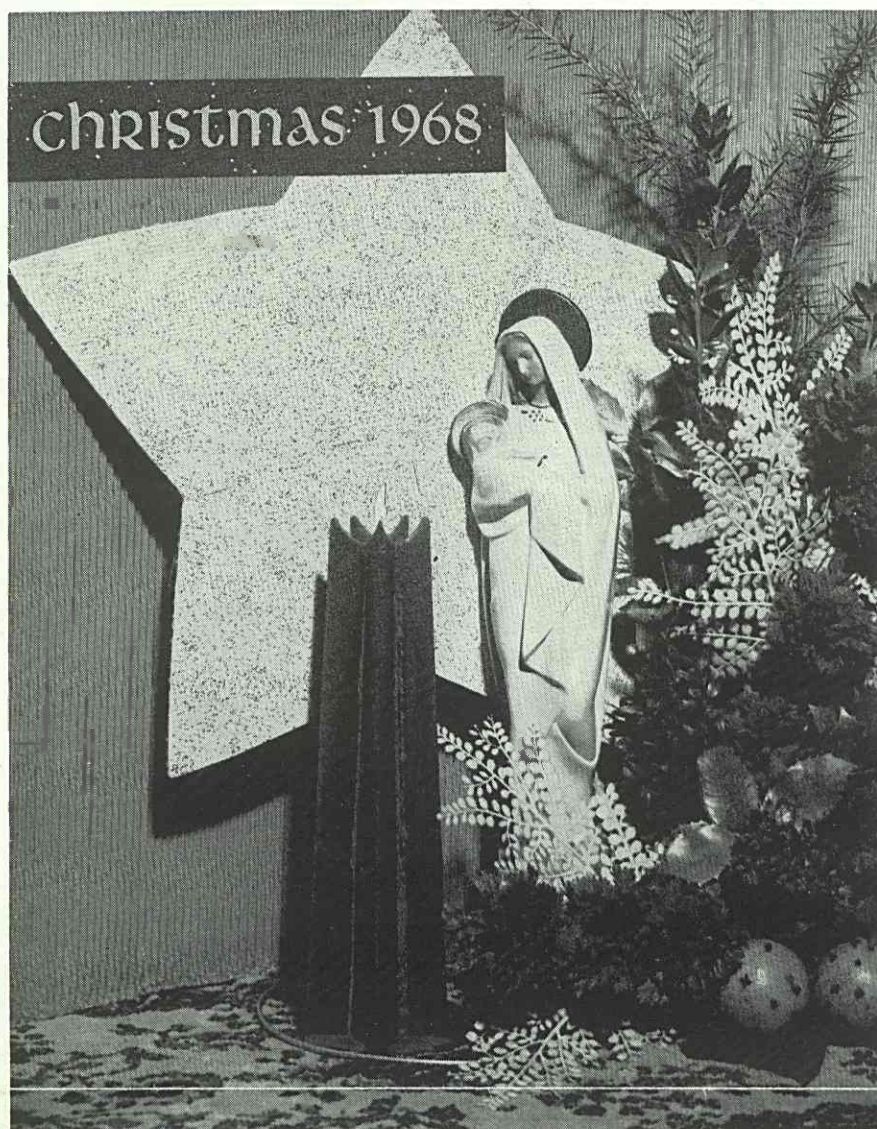
Firestone

GASTONIA
NORTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER • 1968

NEWS

- These symbols of the ageless and universal meaning of Christmas were arranged by Annie (Mrs.) Henry) Chastain of weaving (chafer).



Season's Greetings

From

JOHN V. DARWIN

Manager

Gastonia Plant

Again the Spirit of Christmas radiates its eternal promise of hope, love, peace and good will. As you ponder the miracle and glory of the First Christmas, may your faith be renewed, your hearts gladdened by inspiration of the Eternal Message.

My sincere wish is that this Christmas have rich meaning, and the New Year bring happiness to you and yours.

26th Year For Firestone In Bennettsville

From all-cotton yarn production to tire-cord fabric of synthetics exclusively. That transition is a big part of the story of Firestone's first quarter-century at its Bennettsville, S. C., plant.

Along with the change have come great strides in plant-lay-out improvements, modernized production methods and updated equipment; outstanding performance in industrial safety, product quality, and in community service.

The company textile operation in Marlboro County—in its 26th year now—continues as one of the leading employers in the SC Upper Coastal Plain.

Bennettsville's plant is one of the family of textile producers of the parent-company division, Firestone Synthetic Fibers and Textiles Company. Other U.S. fiber-fabric production facilities of the division are the plants at Gastonia, Hopewell, Va. (headquarters), and Bowling Green, Ky.

FIRESTONE purchased the Bennettsville facility in late 1943. The factory had been operated many years as a unit of Marlboro Cotton Mills.

Firestone continued production wholly in cotton, but turn-

ing out tire fabrics instead of yarn. During the war (WWII) years, the schedule was geared to defense needs.

After the war, synthetic production was added, but the big changeover came in late 1966 when total production went to manmade materials. In the shift, Bennettsville cotton-processing equipment—mostly looms—was moved to Gastonia where some of it is still in production.

Under Firestone ownership, the first Bennettsville manager was W. R. Crabtree. He and some others of the original management staff were transferred from the Gastonia plant. Among these was Garl Anderson who retired this year.

F. B. Galligan, succeeding Mr. Crabtree, remained manager until his transfer to the Gastonia plant. Here, he was on the pro-

More on page 3