Firestone
Fibers & Textiles Company

NEWS

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Gastonia, North Carolina
Bennettsville, South Carolina
Bowling Green, Kentucky • Hopewell, Virginia

From The Gen. Factory Mgr's. Desk
TO ALL EMPLOYEES:
Quality & Productivity

For several months we have been looking at a means to involve more people in helping to improve our plant productivity and quality. Jeff Claypool, Sam Crawford, Phil Williams and I have attended several meetings, listened to speakers and visited one of our tire plants to take a look at Quality Circles.

Quality Teams are committees of small groups of employees who together with a supervisor study problems and opportunities in their department on their shift. They meet weekly on company time for about one hour.

We want to start a similar pilot program at Gastonia with some of you becoming committee members. We will call our committees "Q & PT", Quality and Productivity Teams. We will start with two teams consisting of six employees (including one supervisor) from the first shift Twisting Department, and the other from the first shif Weaving Department.

We plan to have active teams functioning by October 1st. Watch your bulletin board for further details on team member volunteer instructions.

We want to make this work for you and our plant. Be thinking about those things affecting quality and productivity in your department.

R.L. KING

Giant tractors head for Turkey

A giant Terex tractor, capable of pulling hopper loads of coal weighing 150 tons, is loaded aboard the German ship "Project Americas" at the Port of Cleveland. Twelve of the tractors and hoppers are being shipped to the Turkish Coal Authority. Each of the Terex units—known as 34-11C coal haulers—is equipped with 10 Firestone Super Rock Grip tires, size 27.00-49. Tires on each unit are valued at approximately $50,000. Terex manufactured the coal haulers at its Brooklyn, Ohio, plant, while the Firestone tires were manufactured in Bloomington, Ill.

Have you read a tire lately?

It seems there's about as much information on the sidewall as there is in a table of contents of a college textbook.

Actually, there are 25 different items of information tire manufacturers convey, including who made the tire or the brand name, the tire size, its construction and load limits, the quality grades, mounting instructions, safety warnings, as well as place and date of its manufacture.

All this data stamped on the side of each U.S.-made tire benefits not only the customer but also aids in the inspection, inventory and warehouse functions prior to sale.

"The only problem is all this information is not placed on the sidewall in an organized manner, thus impairing the usefullness of the data to the manufacturer, seller and consumer," says Pete McDonald, manager of tire design at Firestone.

McDonald has come up with a solution, designed to make it easier to locate and read all the sidewall information. He calls his patent-pending invention "unified modular stamping (UMS)."

UMS allows the information to be contained within a series of modules, forming a segmented annular band around the tire sidewalls.

The band containing the modules of information on the outer or curb side of the tire is located in the portion of the sidewall near the tire shoulder area, promoting maximum legibility of the markings, McDonald explained.

The band of modules on the inner or hidden side of the tire is located near the bead area, permitting retreading of the tire without loss of information.

Other features and advantagesof the McDonald invention include provisions for additional room for future stampings, more aesthetically sound system for displaying sidewall stamping, improved venting of the tire during curing, better cost efficiency for mold design and reduced mold manufacturing costs.

McDonald said Firestone's mold design department produces approximately 350 to 375 computerized stamping drawings to stamp about 650 to 700 molds annually.

"Along with the savings in tire design time, new stamps, man-hour drawing and mold stamping time, an estimated $70,000 is saved per year," said McDonald.

Firestone has applied for patent protection on McDonald's UMS invention. First industrial application of UMS is on Firestone's new Steel Belted Radial 721 Metrix passenger tire which was just introduced in the replacement market.

Company To Open New Roofing Plant

The Firestone Tire & Rubber Company announced that it is making a multi-million dollar capital investment in its roofing business.

Terry J. Renninger, president of the Firestone Industrial Products Company, said the division will announce the plant site and begin construction soon.

"The plant will be fully dedicated to producing Firestone EPDM roofing," Renninger explained.

It will have more than 250,000 square feet of covered floor space and will have initial production capacity of 400 million square feet annually.

The new plant will be in full operation in late 1983. It will use advanced technology and will incorporate the most sophisticated production processes available.

"The new plant will be the largest and most efficient rubber roofing manufacturing facility in the industry. It has been designed for a quick and cost-effective doubling of production capacity to meet future requirements," Renninger said.

"EPDM rubber roofing has become the most economical product for covering new and existing flat roofs," the Firestone executive said, adding: "The automated facility will enable Firestone to effectively compete in this rapidly growing market."

Renninger said the design and engineering of the new plant have been completed and that orders are being placed for the needed machinery and equipment. Firestone will continue to produce EPDM roofing at its plant in Noblesville, Ind., to meet the rapidly growing demand for Firestone roofing.

Firestone Stock

The most recent report (July) showed 6,174 employees with accounts in the Firestone Stock Purchase & Savings Plan. Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, Trustee for the Plan, purchased Firestone Common Stock for accounts of participating employees at an average price of $11.11.