



John

FOCUS: YEAR PAST, AND YEAR TO COME

As we enter the new year, I want to thank each of you for your help in making 1981 a successful year for the Brevard plant. Sales volume remained stable; overall safety performance was much improved over 1980; and the majority of our employees elected not to participate in the major USWA - DuPont organizing campaign.

As you know, many plants around the nation did not fare as well as we did at Brevard. The full force of the recession hit many areas in the United States. Segments of our economy remain in serious trouble affecting major industries like autos, housing, airlines, appliances, steel, and even computer sales. Recession means unemployment which brings hardships to millions of families. In many cases employees are losing wages and benefits gained during more prosperous times. The choice is often simple—make concessions or join the ranks of the unemployed. In the final analysis, job security is the fundamental issue that concerns every employee. I am grateful our plant did not face these kinds of problems. But what about 1982?

The future is difficult to predict, but there are some things I feel can be said about 1982. As a general statement, our x-ray business should remain stable. Changes in polyester base demand and increased departmental manufacturing capacity will require adjustments to the casting schedules. The extent of these adjustments has not yet been determined.

Medical x-ray products will continue to feel the impact of an increased level of competitive activity. Domestic x-ray sales will

continue the trend toward slower growth rates. Factors that impinge on our business include nationwide pressure to reduce rising medical costs and emerging electronic imaging systems.

There are things that must be done if we are to maintain our competitive position in the domestic marketplace and gain new business in foreign markets. Competitors are actively investing money and resources to achieve productivity and quality improvements. It is essential that our plant take advantage of every opportunity to increase market share. This can best be done through successful:

- Cost containment programs.
- Improved productivity.
- Improved product quality.

To achieve these goals, it will be necessary to continue our efforts to upgrade existing equipment through rate increase programs, quality improvements, and finishing area mechanization. In addition, a study is underway to determine the feasibility of modernizing 1B coater.

A number of people frequently ask about employment opportunities for relatives and friends. The number of people who leave our employment during the course of a year is very small, and I anticipate new hiring will be very limited during 1982.

Many challenges lie ahead, but I remain optimistic about the future of the Brevard plant. If we continue to exhibit the qualities that have made this plant successful in the past and recognize the need for cooperation and dedication to the task before us, 1982 will be another good year.

John Golden

EASY RIDING: Do-It-Yourself Vanpool is One Year Old, Going Strong.

Have you ever stopped to figure out how much money it takes to get to work? Jackie Hall and Jim Cabe did, and their findings persuaded them to start the Brevard Plant's only official vanpool.

It sounded simple, but a vanpool is more than "just folks riding to work together." The pool operates under special laws administered by the N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles, according to Federal guidelines established by the Department of Energy. Licensing requirements are strict for both the vehicle and the drivers. Careful accounting for all money is required. In exchange for the extra trouble, the operator is able to purchase the necessary licenses and insurance at special rates, and if gasoline is ever rationed, the special "VANPOOL" license tag guarantees top consideration on a full tank of fuel. The state also agreed to cover capital losses incurred during the first year, but this help was never used.

The first year ended January 26, and this is a success story.

The 15 members have enjoyed dependable transportation for a year, and there have been 8 fewer cars on the road and in the parking lot. The van goes 63 miles each day at an average fuel rate of 10.4 MPG: that's 156 passenger miles per gallon. As fuel is conserved, riders also save on costs of maintenance and insurance of personal vehicles. Each member pays \$2 per day, and "spare riders" are waiting to fill seats whenever a regular is out.

"We call that \$2 the 'stopping charge,'" says Jack Hall, "and the rest of the trip is free. We don't charge by the distance each person rides, because a single share of the difference in gasoline cost is such a small part of the overall operating expense. I think we figured out that it would be about \$2.05 for the longest rider, and \$1.95 from Island Ford Road, the closest stop to the plant.

"Two dollars for everyone makes the

bookkeeping easier."

"About a third of that goes for gas," says Jack. "The rest covers maintenance, insurance, and payments on the van."

Van payments are a large item in the budget because the van is a first-class vehicle. All the running gear is heavy duty for best reliability, and passenger comfort is considered in the carpeting, tinted glass and extra padding in the seats. Heating and air conditioning systems have outlets both front and rear.

"It's not perfect," says Jackie, "but the only things I would change are the radio—I should have bought one with FM stereo—and the cruise control. That sounded like a good idea, but we never use it."

Jack Hall is the operator of the vanpool and the principal driver. Gertha Shipman and Lester Chapman, the alternate drivers, also hold the required "Class B" operator's license.

When Hall and Cabe first saw the need for a vanpool, they spent several years trying to get help on the project. Finally, after two years of discussing DuPont sponsorship, they concluded that the best way was to do it on their own.

They looked at leasing and found it impractical, so Jack traded in his car, and Jim paid the first \$500.00 insurance premium. Cabe's schedule changed before he got his money's worth, but the pool has been able to pay back the unused portion. In another 3 years, Jack could recover some of his investment by being the owner of a 4 year old Dodge van with 80,000 miles on it.

What then?

"Trade for a new van," Jack answers. "We're saving money, saving gasoline, riding in style and enjoying each other's company. This is a game where everyone wins."

And it also seems to validate Poor Richard's classic advice: "If you would have a thing done well, do it yourself."

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