

Woman's Club
To Host Two
Card Parties



See
Page
2-B

Young Golfers
Take Part In
Tournament



See
Page
10-A

Crisis Pregnancy
Center Will
Open Here



See
Page
3-B



THE CHOWAN HERALD



Volume LVII - No. 37

Published In The Most Beautiful Little City On The North Carolina Coast

Single Copies 50 Cents

EDENTON, NORTH CAROLINA, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1995

After 95 Years, Cotton Mill Will Close

By CLIFF CLARK

After 95 years of continuous operation the Edenton Cotton Mill, now owned and operated by Greensboro-based Unifi, Inc. will cease operations on November 17, leaving 75 people out of work.

"We've got a lot of people here who have never worked anywhere else," said Unifi's Plant Engineer Don Latham, "There are people here whose parents and even grandparents worked at the mill."

It is a blow to the economic vitality of Chowan County that is nearly as great as the closing of Pelikan Inc in November 1994. And like Pelikan's closing, it came as a complete surprise to nearly everyone in Chowan County.

"It caught us totally off guard," said Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Richard Bunch.

His view was shared by Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Kelly, who was in Denver, CO at a professional conference, but quickly made plans to travel back to Edenton to address the situation.

"We had no idea this was hap-

pening," said Kelly.

While a firm decision has been made to close the mill, which has an average annual payroll of approximately \$1.6 million, there are still many loose ends that will need to be tied up, said Robert Ward, Unifi executive vice president.

When Ward was asked about what would be done with the mill village, he said no firm decisions have been made, but that it would be sold as either one parcel or in parts. "There are still some areas we will need to address."

Ward was also asked whether the plant had been "shopped around" for potential buyers. "No. We have no active buyers for the entire operation," he answered. Ward also couldn't give a firm answer on whether the machinery in the plant would be sold or remain.

The Town of Edenton recently appropriated approximately \$55,000 of a \$120,000 water line project to help increase the water pressure at the mill. When the negotiations were underway to have the water line installed, Unifi officials insisted the line was necessary for the operation

to continue. The project has just been completed.

Town Manager Kelly said in a telephone interview from Denver Tuesday morning that Unifi officials have promised to pay back the \$55,000 to the town for the improvement. "Unifi has as-

sured us that they would reimburse us for the water line," said Kelly.

In a press release about the closing, Unifi said the primary reason for its decision was to "reduce the Company's cost structure and improve produc-

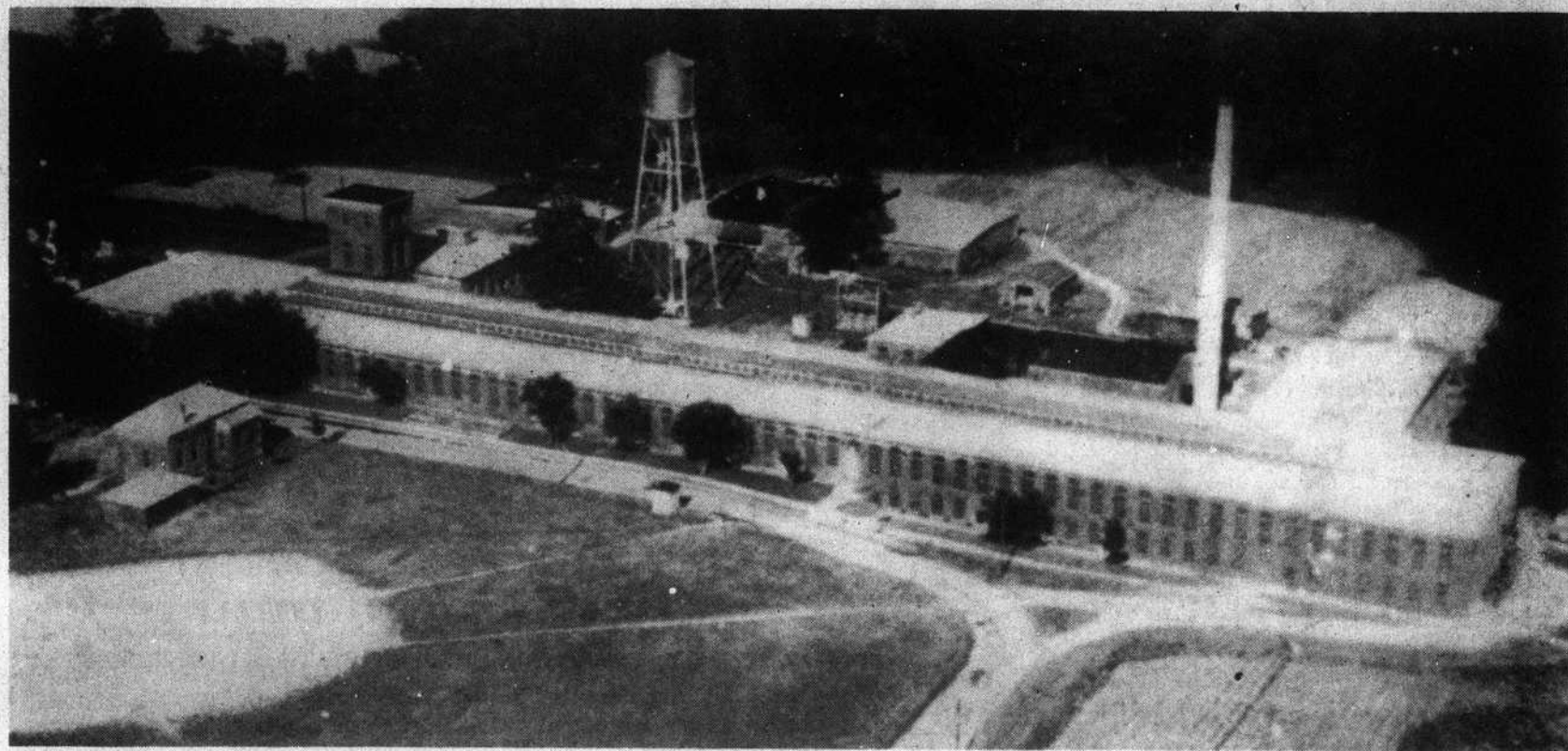
tivity through the consolidation of certain manufacturing operations and disposition of underutilized assets."

A Unifi plant in Mount Pleasant is also being closed.

Despite the bad news, Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland

said the people of the county should look at this as an "opportunity. We are committed to making the best of this bad situation."

He also offered those who will lose their jobs some help. "We See MILL On Page 3-A



For many years the Edenton Cotton Mill employed well over 1,000 local people. In recent years, however, that number had dropped to below 100. The fate of the mill and the surrounding mill village is still in question.



Dr. Rev. Clifton Davis was the keynote speaker during the Edenton-Chowan Civic League's annual banquet Saturday night. He talked about social problems facing America, and urged those present to begin taking steps toward effective change. Davis is serving as Interim Vice-Chancellor of Development and Planning at Elizabeth City State University. (Staff photo by Rebecca Bunch)

Dr. Rev. Davis Entertains, Educates E-C Civic League

By REBECCA BUNCH

Empowerment through teamwork was the theme hammered home by Dr. Rev. Clifton Davis before a capacity crowd at Holmes High School during the annual Edenton-Chowan Civic League Banquet Saturday evening.

Davis, who is serving as Elizabeth City State University's Interim Vice-Chancellor of Development and Planning, said there are many opportunities, and many challenges, facing African-Americans as the millennium approaches.

"The Contract With America is not a mandate by all the people," he said. "And I don't think a lot of folks in this room voted to kill Affirmative

Action."

Davis noted that the Republicans, in addition to "cutting everything" have "put our universities on the auction block...you can tell those folks that mandate is not my mandate."

He also noted that poverty and hopelessness are leading increasing numbers of Americans to commit violent acts, that homelessness is a national tragedy and that after years of decline drug use is rising once again.

"There's crack out there, there's crime out there. Cocaine can only destroy your life; only God can put it back together," he said.

Davis said that rural areas, once thought to be havens from the violence of the larger

American cities, are no longer safe. He said only strong, quick action by concerned citizens will stem the tide.

"We've got to fight to take the drugs and the guns out of our children's hands," he said.

Davis said African-Americans must strive to become empowered economically, politically, and spiritually.

"We've got to learn to share, we've got to make it a little more equal. I know Jesus said the poor we will have with us always, but why are they always us?"

Davis said there are tools for achieving parity in the modern world. "We do it by caring, by being involved, by volunteering. We've got to be

See DAVIS On Page 5-A

January Closing Confirmed For Belk

By REBECCA BUNCH

Belk of Edenton, a fixture in the downtown business district since 1948, will close its doors here Jan. 31.

"The decision to close was a difficult one, but the store's location just has not been competitive in recent years," said Troy Howard, executive vice president of the Belk Group, headquartered in Fayetteville, N.C.

According to Howard, the 17,000-square-foot store employs 20 associates. He said that management from the Elizabeth City store "will be

See BELK On Page 8-A

Calendar of Activities

Auditions For ELT

Auditions for the upcoming production of "My Fair Lady" will be held at Swain Auditorium, E. Church Street, Edenton, at 7:30 pm on September 26, 27 and 28. The last of the three dates will be for callbacks. For more information, contact Joe Conger at 482-8411 or Ross Inglis at 482-3315 or 482-4193.

Bar-B-Que Chicken Dinner

There will be a Bar-B-Que Chicken Dinner on Saturday, September 23 from 11 am to 7 pm at the VFW Post 9280 on Old Hertford Road. Eat in or take out. \$5 per plate.

Walk-A-Thon Set For Sat.

The Albemarle Crisis Pregnancy Center of Elizabeth City will hold a Walk-A-Thon to help raise funds for a satellite center in Edenton. Beginning at 9 am on Saturday, September 23 at the Waterfront Park in Edenton, the two-mile walk is open to everyone. There will be clowns, balloons and refreshments. For more information, call 338-1655 or 793-9385.

Marker To Be Placed

On Thursday, September 28 at 3 pm a Daughters of the American Revolution Historic Marker will be dedicated on the grounds of the James Iredell House. This marker will be dedicated to the 13 Edenton Tea Party DAR members that saved and restored the Iredell House. The public is invited to attend.



Country Music Star Waylon Jennings

Jennings Concert Set For Oct. 22

Country music legend Waylon Jennings, his band and his wife, singer Jessi Colter, will come to Edenton on Sunday, Oct. 22, for two performances in the E.A. Swain Auditorium. Shows will be at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Tickets for the Jennings concerts will go on sale at the Chowan Arts Council on Monday, Sept. 25, and by phone at 482-8005. All seats are reserved, with prices ranging from \$20 to \$30 in the 840-seat auditorium.

The shows are being co-sponsored by the Arts Council

See WAYLON On Page 3-A

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