

Duplin Times

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Factory To Turn Feathers Into Beds In Rose Hill

A "feather bedding" business will open in Rose Hill soon, but it will mean working, not loafing for 16 people.

Feather Processors Inc., owned by Ebern Watson Jr. and his brother, Larry, is being constructed beside U.S. 117 just north of Rose Hill, not far from the state animal diagnostic laboratory.

It is expected to open in December with a monthly payroll estimated at more than \$12,000.

The plant will process chicken and duck feathers and down (the prized fine, fluffy feathers next to the skin of adult birds) for pillows and other bedding items, as well as down-padded outdoor wear.

Ebern Watson said he will initially invest \$600,000 in the plant.

The facility will replace a plant that burned April 30 in Raleigh. Watson said it will not be as large as the original plant at first, because the insurance payment did not cover the full value of the loss.

Some machinery was saved from the fire, but much new equipment will have to be installed, he added.

The Watsons have a broiler operation out of Rose Hill so they decided to relocate the plant near their other firm, Watson's Seafood and Poultry Co. The feather processing firm was organized in 1963.

Because the company buys feathers from all over the East, Watson said, it makes no difference where the plant is located.

Ironically, none of the feathers will come from the Rose Hill Poultry Corp. Watson said the broiler plant uses its feathers to make livestock feed and fertilizer. Protein makes up about 90 percent of a feather's material.

"This will be a glorified washing plant," Watson explained.

Large washing machines will take in 600 pounds of feathers at a time, wash, waterproof and dry them and pack them in burlap wrapped bales weighing about 550

pounds for shipment to bedding and clothing industries, he said.

The feathers will be stripped from the quills by machine.

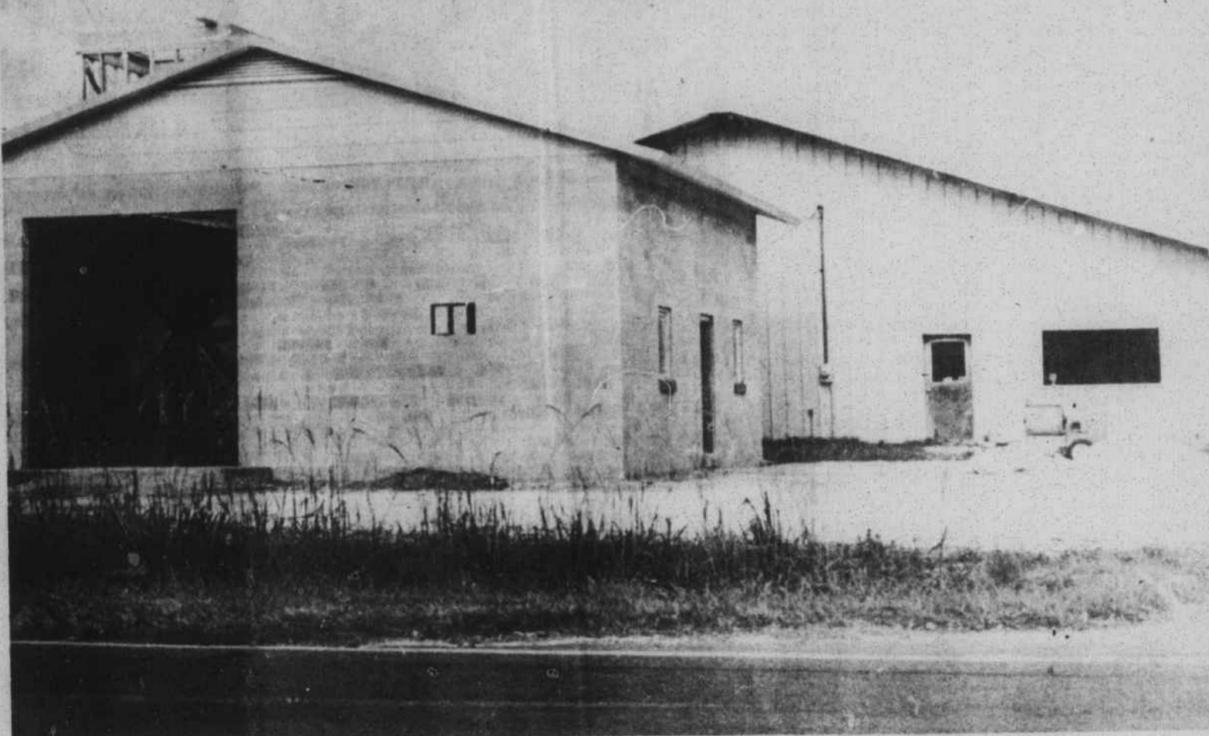
About 60 percent of the feathers will be from land birds such as chickens. The remainder will be from ducks and geese. Turkey feathers cannot be used.

Watson said his customers supply the armed services, which use 300,000 to 500,000 pillows a year.

Two pounds of chicken feathers will stuff one \$8 pillow, he said. Only one pound of duck feathers is needed for the same size of pillow. Seven ounces of down will fill a pillow of the same size, he added, but that pillow will be worth \$75.

Eight broiler chicks produce an average of one pound of feathers which sell for about \$1. Waterfowl feathers now sell for \$6-\$8 per pound and down, \$28 per pound.

A laboratory will be necessary to insure the required sanitation level of the feathers and down.



Feather Factory In Rose Hill

Additional Costs Could Halt Plans For Rose Hill Sewage Plant

A new sewage treatment plant won't be built if the local share of the cost nearly doubles, Mayor Ben Harrell told the Town Board last week.

The state has proposed a sharp increase in the local share of such projects by reducing the federal contribution in each so more projects can be funded.

Rose Hill is one of many towns with sewage treatment plants that no longer meet upgraded pollution standards. Scores of North Carolina communities would be unable to make required improvements in their sewage treatment plants to reduce pollution, municipal officials said at a Raleigh meeting earlier this month when the state presented its proposal.

The federal government now contributes 75 percent of

the cost of sewage treatment projects under an Environmental Protection Agency construction grant to the states. The state contributes 12.5 percent and the town, 12.5 percent of the cost.

The federal share in such projects will be reduced to 55 percent in fiscal 1985 (October 1984 through September 1985). State officials want to spread the federal grant money across more projects by reducing the federal share in each project to 55 percent in 1983. Under the plan, 13 additional projects could be funded.

But local shares of the cost would increase from 12.5 to 22.5 percent and the state's share to 22.5 percent. State money for the projects will run out when the 1977 clean water bond fund of \$230 million is exhausted. Only \$27 million of this fund

remains, according to a state brochure.

When state money runs out, towns will have to put up 45 percent of the cost of the projects.

More than 60 officials attended the Raleigh hearing and strongly protested the state's proposal.

"There's no way we could come up with another \$300,000 to \$375,000," Rose Hill town administrator C.T. Fussell said on Wednesday. "People wouldn't vote for another bond authorization."

"They'd be changing the rules in the middle of the game if they go through with this increase," Fussell added.

Rose Hill residents approved a scaled-down \$375,000 bond issue in November 1980 to provide the town's share of the estimated \$2.5 million cost of a plant

that would meet EPA standards. They rejected a larger bond proposal in March 1980.

In the meantime, the federal government reduced the allocation to the state from an average of \$80 million a year from 1975 through 1979 to \$46.8 million for fiscal 1982.

Harrell told the board the town's tax rate would rise from 70 cents to \$1.35 and the water rate would double if it attempted to meet the increased share of the project cost.

Rose Hill received approval for \$186,000 to pay for engineering and specification fees for its project. "I see no need for Rose Hill to go into the engineering phase if the cost goes up," Harrell told the board.

Fussell said the town now charges a minimum of \$10

per month for water and sewer service. It has 600 water meters in service. He said many residents would be unable to pay \$20 or more a month for the service.

He said the town includes 575 houses and 56 businesses. It has a population of about 1,600 and an assessed property valuation of \$16 million. Income from water and sewer service for the current fiscal year is estimated at \$145,000.

Duplin County Fair Oct. 4-9



Warsaw Annexes National Spinning Plant Site

The city of Warsaw's recent annexation of National Spinning Co. property is designed to qualify the plant for urban development action funds.

The plant site's 61.24 acres are about three miles east of the city limits. The company waived water and sewer services in its petition to the city for the satellite annexation that was approved last week.

The town's application for the federal development grant was approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, according to Rep. Charles O. Whitely, D-NC. Warsaw is scheduled to receive \$1,040,000.

National Spinning also has received approval from the Duplin County Board of Commissioners for \$10 million in tax-free industrial development bonds, which will be sold by the state.

The company plans to re-equip its plant with open end spinning equipment, which will manufacture yarn for such garments as sweaters

and men's hosiery.

The present equipment manufactures a type of yarn for which demand has declined. To continue operating, company officers said they had to change the plant's product.

The conversion is expected to result in 118 new jobs, plus re-employment of a number of laid-off workers.

National Spinning will repay the town over a 10-year period.

The firm will pay interest at 60 percent of the prime rate and will pay only interest for the first five years.

Warsaw will receive property taxes from the company starting next year.

In other action at their Monday night meeting, the following took place:

— Frank Paul protested the location of a Wilson's store sign at the corner of his building on U.S. 117. Paul claimed the sign interferes with traffic visibility.

The board agreed to write a "friendly" letter to Wilson's asking the firm to move

the sign.

— The request of Asa Lee to locate a mobile home on South Bay Street, a residential area, was denied because one adjacent property owner refused to sign his petition.

The other four adjacent property owners have signed his petition. But the town ordinance requires agreement of all adjacent property owners in a residential area before a mobile home can be located in the area.

— The board appointed Everett Westbrook to the board of adjustment for a one-year term.

Thirty-one houses have been condemned in the town, but lacking a building inspector, it cannot order the structures to be either repaired or demolished.

The board agreed to ask county Building Inspector Brice Sanderson to appear at its next meeting to discuss the question and the possibility of Warsaw coming under the county building inspection department.

Duplin Agribusiness Fair Highlights

By Ruth Wells
Publicity Chairman

More interesting entertainment has been booked for your enjoyment at the Duplin County Agribusiness Fair October 4-9.

A very unique feature will be a religious service on Wednesday, Oct. 7th. Rev. David Dickey, pastor of Grove Presbyterian Church, Kenansville, will conduct the service. Choirs from throughout the county will participate.

High school bands will perform throughout the week. East Duplin band under the direction of Rocky Long, will perform Wednesday night. North Duplin band, directed by Brian Hoxie as well as the James Kenan band, directed by Tom Newman, are scheduled for Saturday. Wallace-Rose Hill band, directed by Joe Hodges, is also scheduled for Wednesday performance.

And speaking of bands — the military band from Fort Bragg will be on hand for opening ceremonies.

A featured attraction four nights will be a play, "The Fisherman." This production will be brought to you by the Duplin County Community Theater. All their past presentations have been outstanding.

Tobacco Day will be very interesting to anyone connected with the industry, which is, of course, the entire population of the county. The county commissioners will be featured in Thursday's activities.

Clint Reese of the North Carolina Cattlemen's Association, will have timely information for the area cattlemen. He is scheduled to appear on Friday. The extension department will also bring information on preparation of seafoods, soybeans (eating - not for planting), pork and poultry.

A very special feature this year will portray a dying skill in Duplin County, drawing shingles, riving boards and tobacco sticks. Stacy Andrews, Route 2, Beulaville will take time off from his employment to demonstrate one of the basic survival skills for mankind once he migrated out of the cave. The "draw horse" and "drawing knife" used in the operation were as essential to our colonial ancestors as the wheel is to modern man.

Another almost forgotten art will be demonstrated by Lonnie Andrews as he operates a "tarkil." If this has no meaning to you, it was a very important and lucrative operation in bygone days when tar was "extracted from "fat light"ard."

Sheriff Revelle assures us that as always, the right arm of the law will be on duty at the fairgrounds. Duplin's rescue units will each take turns at the fair.



MAGNOLIA TOWN BOARD SAYS TEAR IT DOWN...

The on again, off again Magnolia Depot project is off again. Magnolia's Town Board advised Mayor Melvin Pope to demolish the depot at the August town board meeting. The depot, a historic landmark, was purchased by the town of Magnolia in 1980 after a three-year running battle with the railroad. Efforts to purchase the depot began in 1977 and in 1980 the town paid the railroad company \$600 for the depot and agreed to

a land rental of \$136 per year for the property on which the railway station sets. Also, the town of Magnolia purchased a lot adjacent to the train station for \$2,500. The lot is 76 feet by 175 feet. After all these years of negotiation, phone calls, letters and tax money spent, the decision now is to tear it down. Commissioner Ruth Quinn stated the bricks "are soft and we (the town) don't have the money to remodel it."