



I-40 Construction And Industry Recruitment Linked

While a segment of I-40 has been opened between Wallace and Rocky Point, construction is still underway on other parts of the interstate. Pictured above is construction on I-40 outside of teachey, the segment extends from south of US 41 at Wallace to north of US 117. The contract for the segment was awarded last December. According to Duplin Development Officer Woody Brinson, the time to plan and recruit industry

along I-40 is now. The advantages of a major interstate have consistently meant growth through new industry, he said. And, even though I-40 is not scheduled for completion until September of 1987, plans for new industry recruitment should begin immediately in Duplin County. The completion date of the segment pictured above is December of this year.

Duplin County Sees Development Near Brought In By I-40

The time to plan for development along I-40 is now, says Duplin County's director of economic development.

A swath of business and industrial activity will be created near the Interstate 40 route as construction of the port-to-Piedmont link progresses Duplin business leaders predict.

This has occurred along most interstate highways in the past, the nearest examples being in the Smithfield and Benson areas of Johnston County, Dunn in Harnett County and Lumberton in Robeson County.

The time to plan for that development is now, before everything is locked up, said Woody Brinson, Duplin County economic development director.

However, agriculture will remain the county's "bread and butter" for the foreseeable future.

Duplin ranks among the top 100 counties in the nation in agricultural income. The 1984 gross agricultural income was estimated at about \$260 million by the county Agricultural Extension Service. Duplin has topped the state in farm income for two decades.

It is called the leading poultry-producing county of the nation, with an unusual mix of turkeys, broilers, market egg flocks and hatching egg flocks. The gross return from poultry in 1984 was estimated at \$137.5 million, with turkeys providing \$80.5 million, broilers \$37.1 million and chicken and turkey flock replacement hatching eggs \$15.8 million. It is the

only eastern North Carolina county in which the gross return from livestock and poultry nearly triples the return from crops.

A broiler processing plant operates at Rose Hill and a turkey processing plant at Wallace. Another Duplin-based firm, Nash Johnson and Sons Farms, owns the House of Raeford poultry processing plant in Hoke County and supplies that plant with most of its birds.

An \$18 million turkey processing plant in northern Duplin County is being proposed jointly by Goldsboro Milling Co. of Wayne County and Carroll's Foods Co. of Duplin County.

Not every company has found the way to succeed in the county's impressive and growing poultry industry. Last year the Watson Seafood and Poultry Co. of Rose Hill failed, leaving its 200 contract broiler growers without birds and about 250 workers of one shift in the Rose Hill broiler processing plant without work. Come of the workers have been hired on other shifts. While some of the growers with the best poultry houses were "taken on" by other program operators, many have been left with no contracts and no birds.

A major producer of swine, another growing industry in the county, bought the Watson feed mill south of Rose Hill from the Federal bankruptcy court. Murphy Farms of Rose Hill as expanded in a manner similar to the poultry industry, through a combination of growing its own and contracting with farmers to

grow out hogs. Although Duplin usually ranks about 10th among tobacco-producing counties in the state, it is one of the few eastern counties in which tobacco is not the leading income producer. Still, tobacco is an important crop, providing a gross return last year of \$33.7 million.

Despite its past profitability, the problems of tobacco are forcing farmers to seek other income sources. New poultry houses reveal this trend in an expensive way — at \$75,000 to more than \$120,000 apiece. The poultry industry has a history of moving from one or two good marketing years to two or three bad ones, and there is fear it is moving into a poor year due to rapid expansion.

N.C. Hydraulics at Beulaville, which makes and repairs hydraulic cylinder, is expanding. It plans to add 20-25 employees to the 70 now employed, said Brinson, the

Wallace Rezones Lot Re Zones

Approval of a rezoning request has removed one obstacle to the expansion of the N&W Food Service Co. in Wallace.

The Wallace town board in a special meeting last week rezoned property recently purchased by the company beside its present plant from a residential designation to a central business classification. J.L. Nichols Jr., owner of the company, said the lot will be used for parking.

Nichols outlined expansion plans for his company at the board's Feb. 14 meeting and asked for the rezoning, some nearby residents opposed the rezoning proposal.

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Nichols wants to add 15,000 square feet of cooler and freezer space to his 45,000 square-foot warehouse. He is now leasing freezer and cooler space in Wilmington. The firm wholesales foods to restaurants and fast food chains. Nichols told the board the firm now has 40 employees. It expects to more than double its employment with the addition.

Nichols said the expansion will cover his present parking area. He needs to establish his parking area

on the recently purchased property on East Cliff Street. The residential zoning would not have permitted a

parking lot. Under the central business category he will be permitted to use the property for parking.

Homebound/Hospitalized Services

The Homebound/Hospitalized program is available for all school-age students in Duplin County between the ages of 5-18. A student may be eligible for the program after it has been established that the student is to be confined for four weeks or longer to a hospital or home for treatment or for a period of convalescence.

The student needing the service should be examined by a competent medical authority and a determination made that the student should be expected to be away from school for a minimum of four weeks.

The medical statement needed to qualify a child may be obtained by

contacting the principal of the school or by calling Lynda D. Day, administrator of programs for exceptional children, at the Board of Education, 296-1521.

Students who are eligible are given instruction based on their needs from 3-5 hours per week. Mrs. Linda Johnson has worked as instructor for the past five years. She serves as a link between the school and home as she works with the student's regular classroom teacher to insure continuity in the student's educational program while away from the classroom.

For additional information, call 296-1521 or contact the principal of any school in the county.

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Troubled Farmer Is Still Area's Mainstay

Despite its financial problems, agriculture remains the major income producer of eastern North Carolina.

Virtually all of the businesses in towns such as Wallace, Tabor City and Whiteville are farm-related and farm-supported.

In the last decade, poultry and swine have become major income sources for Duplin, Sampson, Wayne, Union, Wilkes, Chatham, Pender, Wayne and Lenoir counties. Support services and poultry and swine processing plants provide thousands of off-farm jobs for North Carolinians.

Tobacco continues to be the major farm income source in most Southeastern North Carolina counties, Sampson and Duplin being the principal exceptions.

The gross return from both poultry and swine topped tobacco in Duplin County again last year, as it has for several years. The poultry gross was estimated at \$137.5 million by the county extension service. That amounted to more than half of the

\$260 million agricultural gross for Duplin County in 1984. The return from swine was estimated at \$49.9 million, according to the report. The county ranks 10th or 11th among North Carolina counties in tobacco production.

Gospel Concert At Magnolia

There will be a gospel concert on March 2 at the Magnolia Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Featured groups will include the Brill Brothers of Warsaw, Ronnie Ezzell and the Good News Singers of Maple Hill, New Covenant Life Singers of Faison, and Nucleo, a visiting gospel soloist of New York.

The public is invited to attend.

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