

"Textiles Saving Lives" Program Provides Body Armor

RALEIGH — Attacks on law enforcement officers occur with alarming frequency, but a textile product can prevent many of these incidents from involving fatalities.

Concealable body armor, or bullet-proof vests, can save an officer's life. The vests, a textile product made of DuPont's Kevlar, are not inexpensive, however, and the budgets of many local law enforcement agencies lack funds to provide the body armor for officers.

Members of the North Carolina Textile Manufacturers Association (NCTMA) decided last year to purchase bullet-proof vests as part of a "Textiles Saving Lives" program designed to educate the public about the lifesaving properties of textiles.

The program was so successful, with 57 vests purchased for law enforcement officers in 12 North Carolina communities, that the Association elected to continue the project in 1988. Since the program began last year, 102 vests have been purchased for the police departments in 23 communities throughout the state.

The "Textiles Saving Lives" project originated from a stark radio report about a North Carolina Highway Patrol officer whose bullet-proof vest enabled him to survive a firearm attack in Western North Carolina.

Paul Baker, Jr., of Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company in Siler City, an active NCTMA member, heard the report and remembered that the vests are a textile product.

The Association investigated the vests and learned the follow-

ing:

- The body armor protects against assaults by firearms and knives or other cutting instruments, but cannot be used again once it has deflected a bullet.
- The vests are expensive — as much as \$300 each. While the State of North Carolina provides the vests free to its law enforcement personnel, local law enforcement agencies generally lack sufficient funds in the budget to supply their officers. Officers can purchase the vests themselves, but the high cost is often prohibitive.
- According to State records, police officers were assaulted with firearms 143 times and with knives or other cutting instruments 62 times in 1986. In addition, from 1976-1986, 27 law enforcement officers were killed in the line of duty in North Carolina.

"If just one officer is able to walk away from a vicious criminal attack because of this body armor, our efforts will have been fully rewarded," said Keith Norwood of National Spinning Company in Washington, who heads at the project through the Association's Textile Week Committee.

Norwood and NCTMA outlined the program for textile companies in the State, encouraging them to purchase the vests for their local law enforcement personnel.

"We are particularly gratified that some non-textile companies and the Town of Tarboro were impressed enough to join in the

program," said Norwood.

Textile and non-textile companies in Tarboro purchased nine of the bullet-proof vests for the Tarboro Police Department. The town government was so impressed by the importance of the program that it then authorized a town expenditure to equip the police force's remaining 12 members with the concealable body armor.

"Textiles are important to everyone," said NCTMA President Marshall Y. Cooper, Jr., of Harriet & Henderson Yarns in Henderson. "We felt that the bullet-proof vest was an excellent way to make this point to the public. This is a contemporary example of a textile product which can save lives and which has saved lives."

Companies participating in the "Textiles Saving Lives" project to date are: WestPoint Pepperell in Lumberton, Elizabethtown and Martin County; Spray Cotton Mills in Eden; American & Efrid, Inc., in Mount Holly; Tuscarora Yarns in Mt. Pleasant and China Grove; Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company, Hart Furniture and Gledale Hosiery, all in Siler City; the Gaston County Textile Week Committee in Gaston County; the Alamance County Crafted With Pride Committee, in Alamance County; the City of Burlington, Elon College, Gibsonville and Mebane.

Also participating are: Burlington Industries in Mount Holly; Dixie Yarns in Gastonia, Tarboro, China Grove, Mount Holly

and Hope Mills; Chatham Manufacturing in Elkin; Artee Industries and Doran Textiles in Cleveland County; National Spinning in Washington and

Beaufort County; Wiscasset Mills in Albemarle; Spindale Mills in Spindale; and, in Tarboro, the Town of Tarboro, May Knitting Mills, Edmont, Glenoit

Mills, Carolina Telephone Company, Runnymede Mills, Phoenix Trimming, Polylok, Edgcombe Manufacturing and Black & Decker.



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Imports Threaten Industry

Foreign trade and imports are issues most Americans don't think of very much, but in this election year there are some trade issues, particularly in the area of textile and apparel imports, which will have profound effects on the way millions of Americans earn a living.

Textile and apparel imports, according to the government's latest trade figures, continue to flow into the U.S. at near last year's record levels.

Today, 55 percent of the textile and apparel market is controlled by imports. The U.S. textile industry is operating at only 83 percent of capacity. Unemployment in the textile and apparel industry is growing. In the last decade 400,000 jobs were lost to imports, and the very foundations of a once healthy, basic industry have been shaken.

While the problem with textile imports has been around for a long time it has accelerated in the last eight years.

From 1971 to 1981 the U.S. textile and apparel deficit grew from \$2.077 billion to \$6.407 billion. From 1981 to 1983 it grew as much as it had in the preceding 10 years to \$10.585 billion. At the end of 1987 it towered at a shocking \$25.795 billion!

The response of the textile and apparel industry has been to seek import controls. Not import bans, but control of the growth of imports to match the expansion of the U.S. market.

Critics of the industry position have labeled it "protectionist" and claimed that such action

would, in the long run, result in a hopelessly inefficient industry.

Industry proponents say all they want is a chance to compete for a fair share of our own market.

A vibrant textile and apparel industry is important to America for a number of reasons.

Jobs. The U.S. textile, fiber and apparel industries employ 2.2 million workers, more than the combined auto and steel industries.

A healthy U.S. economy. Eighteen of the 20 U.S. manufacturing industries are in trade deficit. The Administration's strategy of letting the dollar fall in value against foreign currencies has not worked for textiles, largely because foreign suppliers tie their currencies to the dollar or manipulate their exchange rates to boost exports.

Better markets for U.S. agriculture. The U.S. textile industry is the largest and most reliable customer for U.S. cotton and the only customer for U.S. wool.

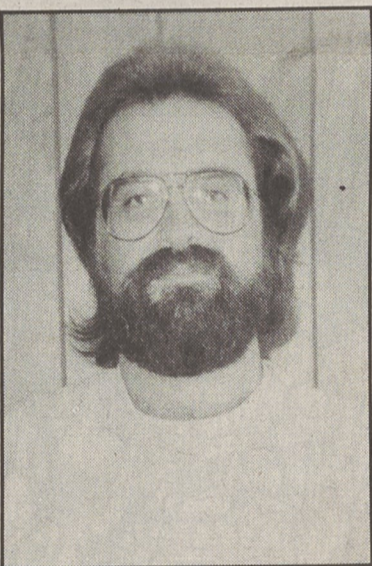
Stemming foreign influence. Vast amounts of money are being spent by foreign governments and industrialists to lobby Congress. Countries from the Asian rim, the major source of low-wage textile and apparel imports to the U.S., spent \$100 million dollars to lobby Congress in 1986. Japan alone spent \$60 million.

A strong national defense. Next to steel, the Pentagon ranks textiles as the item most vital to national defense. Tents, uniforms, helmets, shoes, tire cords, etc. The Defense Depart-

ment has over 10,000 items in its textile and apparel inventory.

Jobs, defense, a healthy U.S. economy, secure markets for agricultural products, and the integrity of the Congressional decision making process are all influenced by a healthy textile industry.

Recognizing that there is no free trade in the world, the textile industry is seeking fair trade. This can only be accomplished if the U.S. government makes major adjustments in its textile trade policies.



CLAUDE SUBER

Textile Veto Hurt

Although textiles has long been the bread and butter industry for most Kings Mountain area people and most plants are running on normal schedules the recent veto by President Reagan of the textile bill hurt the Kings Mountain section of the Piedmont.

This is the statement of Claude Suber, president of Kings Mountain Knit Fabrics, who said his company, which has employed as many as 110 people of three shifts, has cut back to 55 on a four day work week.

"I blame the presidential veto for this," said Suber, who admitted he had at first had mixed reactions to the textile bill. "I'm not much of a protectionist but textiles are my livelihood," said the past president of the Kings Mountain Chamber of Commerce. "I can see that my business has been affected and most of the other industry in town that manufactures outerwear has been hit hard." Suber said his business has been slow since last Christmas but that neighbors, Anvil and Dependable Knit and Clevemont on York Road are apparently doing well, as most underwear manufacturers are.

The outerwear and fashion market were hardest hit by the textile bill veto, said Suber.

"I can't understand statements by the media that the quality of American goods is not comparable to foreign imports," he quoted a recent broadcast interview.

Kings Mountain Knit manufactures velour, terry cloth, fleece and fashion goods.

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