



SPECTRUM CONSTRUCTION - A fully automated dyeing and chemical dispensing system is going up at the Spectrum plant on Patterson Road.

SPECTRUM

From 1A

along big conveyers, deposited on carts, and automatically labeled after being packed with yarn. The Sangrado automated packing system takes information fed into a computer and packages yarn in polyethylene bags and bagged in cartons.

Spectrum, a major player in local textiles, has become heavily automated in the last four years and expanded from the original location in Kings Mountain to locations in Hickory in 1987 and Belmont in 1993. A new state of the art texturizing facility is opening in Marion. Spectrum operates automated winders at its other locations but the packing system is new to this location.

The Kings Mountain plant employs 275 people, Hickory 230, Belmont 225 and Marion, 100.

Spectrum produces both spun yarn and filament yarn and the company's products are used in clothing by such recognizable fashion brands as Land's End, Ralph Lauren and Polo.

Spectrum also produces yarn to make automotive fabrics.

Jones said that while Spectrum is proud of its ranking of large companies in the state, it is most proud of the impact on the community and its employees.

Spectrum operates a mentor program for elementary students at North School, an apprenticeship program through the high school and offers on-site employee training in its education department for those who want to acquire a high school diploma through Cleveland Community College or take advantage of tuition-free post high school training.

Jones said that free tuition is provided for employees and their families who want to get a



VETERAN EMPLOYEE - Ovella Camp, a Spectrum employee for 21 years, likes the new automation at the Kings Mountain plant.

high school education on the job. The company also pays up to \$2500 per year for employees who want to attend college in job or company related fields. If the employee has a 2.0 grade point average he or she doesn't have to repay a penny of the cost.

Jones said that some 100 employees at three plants have participated in the program. Some 25 local employees are enrolled in a basic computer skills class at the plant conducted by Cleveland Community College.

Jones said that sales, revenues and business has increased since 1990 because of the firms' good relationship with the community, customers and vendors.

Longtime employees like Ovella Camp say they like the new changes that have come with automation. Camp has been a textile employee for 21 years.

"Automation is time saving not only for the company but for the employee," says Camp.

LETTER

From 4A

prayer and we need to allow the Bible to be taught as a history course. By doing this, our students will be introduced to the Ten Commandments. This will instill our Judeo-Christian values into students who are being neglected by their parents and caretakers. This will also help reduce crime and make our schools safer for students who want to learn.

I know what some are thinking. What if the American Civil Liberties Union and liberals sue us claiming that teaching the Bible is unconstitutional? Well, I'm not a government lawyer, but I don't believe the Constitution prevents us from teaching the Bible, but if the liberals, fortune tellers and palm readers have a tantrum, just offer the Bible as an elective. That certainly isn't forcing one to take the course.

And, on the subject of religion, since some of our liberal leaders decided to remove religion from our schools, we have witness more societal ills than at any other time in our history. It is time for people to realize when they turned their back on God, society started to crumble. It is time that our school system allows us to put our faith in God instead of late-night TV psychics and fortune tellers.

Also, our curriculum must force students to concentrate on the basics such as math, reading, science, geography, history, English and computer skills. These are the subjects that will make our students more successful in life.

In addition, students who are not going to attend four-year colleges must be given the opportunities, in high school and in our community colleges, to study for trades that will enable them to obtain and keep good jobs.

And, we need to further school discipline and get illegal drugs and violence out of our schools,

by having our cellular phone companies donate phones to teachers so they can call for help if they see a drug pusher trying to poison our children or if they see a violent student wrecking havoc. Also, if a student commits a crime, they should be tried as an adult, especially if the crime involves a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs.

If we don't take our schools back, by using these and other methods, parents will demand that we create new and innovative charter schools. Charter schools are already up and running and many public school teachers do not view them as a threat. If we do not act quickly, the education consumer will demand that vouchers be issued to poorer students so that they can attend the school of their choice. Their argument will follow these lines: "The extremely wealthy should not be the only ones allowed to send their children to private schools."

Also, if we do not take our schools back, some teachers will opt for charters because they are allowed to continue to participate in the state retirement plan and receive the same benefits as if they were in a regular public school. Some are also realizing, in the charter schools they have more freedom to teach and they don't have to put up with a bloated, education bureaucracy in Raleigh and Washington.

The chargers might even have enough freedom to make students wear uniforms and that might not be such a bad idea. After all, our sons and daughters in the military wear uniforms.

Improving education can have numerous benefits for our society and the suggested avenues for improvement that I have mentioned will not make a perfect society, but they will certainly be improvements to our current system. It is definitely time that we take back control of our public schools, and if we do not, we will witness a mass exodus from the system.

Norris G. Hastings
Shelby

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