

NEWSLETTER

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Joe Penne, Editor

HOUSING STARTS SLIP FOR 2ND MONTH IN ROW

Following an 11% drop in March, housing starts in April dropped another 10%, according to the Commerce Department report.

April's starts ran at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 2,115,000, down from 2,357,000 in March, but up from 1,951,000 a year earlier.

Government officials noted that despite the drop during the last two months, the starts are still running high and said they had expected a decline from February's record pace of 2,682,000.

The chief economist for the National Association of Home Builders said one of the reasons for the decline was due to a reduction in the government's activities in housing. He said the economy is now moving ahead on its own and there is no need for the government to provide heavy stimulus through its housing programs.

Housing starts for two-unit dwellings rose last month, but fell for buildings of all other sizes. Geographically, starts were off in all areas of the country but the South, where they increased.

MORE THAN AN ORDER FOR MODERN HYDRANT

Mueller Co. fire hydrants find their way into unusual places and odd situations.

George W. Piper, sales office manager in Chattanooga, receives requests for hundreds of hydrants each week, but recently there came a call from El Paso, Texas, for a new MUELLER MODERN, IMPROVED design that was a little out of the ordinary.

The potential user is building a fire department "test center" and needs the hydrant to go with other equipment he is accumulating.

He knew what he wanted: He asked for a 27" high model without the "stem section" and chains for the caps. He said, "I have heard that your new fire hydrant is one of the newest and best hydrants on the market."

His request that the hydrant be donated was a little unusual, but it is not the first one received for a "free" hydrant to be used in situations such as training and testing. He said, "I know that this is a lot to ask for, but I know you are a very understanding company. You have no idea how much this hydrant means to me and I will always appreciate it."

Now a hydrant isn't exactly the kind of object that you clutch to your heart and cherish, but when you

consider that this request came from a youth of 15 years who has developed an interest in fire fighting equipment during the last two years, it is a little easier to understand the personal importance he places on his request.

What does a "very understanding company" do in such a situation? Piper sent a number of pieces of literature on hydrants and suggested the youth consider something a little less "hefty" than the modern hydrant. The next trip through El Paso may find Mueller Co.'s Sales Representative Bob Martin making a call at the test center in the youth's backyard to check out the extent of the operation. Maybe he'll write an order!

FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES

Gerald A. Stanley, Sr., formerly a milling machine set-up operator in the Specialty Division, has been promoted to assistant Specialty foreman (2nd shift).

William R. Lawyer, formerly computer operator, has been promoted to the new position of assistant Specialty production control manager.

In Chattanooga, two changes have occurred in the Data Processing Section. **John M. Ragsdale** has been employed as systems analyst/programmer. **Jimmy M. Kean** has been promoted to Data Processing operations manager.

Allen Easterly, formerly a machine operator, has been promoted to assistant Machine Shop foreman in Chattanooga.

BREA PLANT CONCLUDES SUCCESSFUL A.I.D. DRIVE

The Brea plant recently completed its annual campaign to increase employee giving to charitable organizations through the A.I.D. (Associated In-Group Donors) program.

Contributions were increased 54% and reached a total of \$4,308, while employee participation rose 22% to include 71% of the total work force.

Mrs. Mary Lou Bellante of the Personnel Department headed the campaign and received a citation from the A.I.D. division representative in recognition of efforts on behalf of the causes supported by A.I.D., an organization similar in goals to the United Fund or Community Chest.

THREE ENTER SALES TRAINING

Three men will begin the extensive Mueller Co. sales training program July 1, in preparation to becoming field sales representatives.

They are:

Glenn E. McPeters, who has been a Mueller Co. employee since 1965 and currently is a time study engineer in Chattanooga. He has attended the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Middle Tennessee State University.

Joe R. Haines, who has been working with the Iowa Power and Light Co., Des Moines, attended Grand View College and has a background in business and accounting.

William R. Koester, a native of Decatur, recently received a bachelor's degree in industrial technology from Southern Illinois University.

In succeeding months these men will become familiar with Mueller Co., its products and their uses, and manufacturing methods by studying catalogs, literature, spending time in the factory production centers, going on field trips and actually operating the equipment.

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT NOISE CONTROL PROGRAM?

Have you heard? Mueller Co. has a noise control program underway aimed at reducing certain levels of sound to protect our hearing faculties.

Memphis, Tennessee, took great pride a few years ago in the fact that it had a city ordinance against horn honking. Perhaps this was the initial effort to legislate in areas of noise and the beginning of the fight against sound pollution.

In addition to being irritating, certain noise levels can be harmful to our hearing and the Federal government recently included in its Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) some specific provisions spelling out what must be done to protect workers.

If sound levels in a work area exceed 90 decibels (dB) through an eight-hour day, every effort must be made to reduce them through engineering. Employees may work in areas where the noise level exceeds these prescribed limits, but the duration of exposure to them must be reduced so that the affects of noise are no greater than those of eight hours at 90 dB.

When engineering and administrative controls fail to bring noise levels or duration of exposure to below permissible levels, the use of protective equipment, such as ear plugs or ear muffs, is required, according to the regulations.

The elimination of noise that can be damaging to hearing has been a company practice for many years, but special emphasis on improving conditions was started about a year ago when consulting firms were called in to survey noise problems at all U.S. plants.

In Decatur, compressed air being exhausted from

air operated tools and other devices was the largest problem found at Plant 1. These have been corrected with the addition of mufflers.

Due to the nature of the operation, corrective measures are more difficult and costlier to implement at the Foundry. Material to deaden sound and alterations in some equipment are being tested and checked to improve those areas. In the meantime, employees in these areas continue wearing ear plugs.

Audiometric hearing test equipment has been purchased and about half of the Decatur employees have completed this check. All new employees have a hearing check before they report for work and annually all employees exposed regularly to areas with a high noise level will receive a hearing test.

These regular tests must be done to assure that ear protection devices provided are being used properly and are effective in preventing loss of hearing when high noise levels are encountered.

Service Awards

The following Mueller employees received service awards during May.

Decatur

10 Years: Larry L. Lourash, John W. Morrison, Jr., Pauline E. Hickman, Lila Fornwalt.

20 Years: Fred E. Dean.

30 Years: Eugene E. Gibbs.

Chattanooga

30 Years: Wm. Russell Miller, Robert E. Harris, Jack N. Malone.

Mueller, Limited

30 Years: Erie Duggan.

EMPLOYEE'S DAUGHTER IS EXCHANGE STUDENT

Debra Rhodes, daughter of Lawrence Rhodes of the Maintenance Dept. in Decatur, recently was notified that she has qualified as an exchange student and will spend the summer in Colombia, South America.

Debra, 16 years old, will be a senior at Moweaqua High School.

While in Colombia, she will live with a family and attend school there. She expects to leave in mid-June and return in early September. The Rhodes family hopes to provide a home for a student from another country during the coming school year.

NEW FACES IN FAMILIAR PLACES

Two recent graduates from Millikin University with degrees in industrial engineering have been added in the Industrial Engineering Department in Decatur.

Jack C. O'Riley, who worked here during the past two summers on a student program, has returned on a full-time basis along with Michael T. Leatherman.

News Briefs

William A. Mueller, cost supervisor in Decatur, recently participated in a "march" but it was part of a peaceful demonstration. Bill walked in the "March of Miles" program and gained \$47.50 for the March of Dimes program. He obtained pledges from his co-workers who promised to pay a certain amount for every mile he walked over an 11-mile route through Decatur. Bill was among about 100 who completed the course and was the first adult to finish, covering the 11 miles in three hours. He walks from two to three miles every day, so it was no problem to finish.

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Bonanza Days, an annual affair early in May sponsored by the Brea Chamber of Commerce in observance of the establishment of the city, got special recognition at the Mueller Co. plant when a number of the office girls appeared in long dresses and accessories in keeping with the early days of California. These "pioneers" in office attire were an interesting contrast to the shorter styles of today. Bonanza Days this year included a parade with 76 entries and about 2,400 people.

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Two more offsprings of Mueller Co. employees received recognition recently for outstanding achievements in high school. Vanessa Ermovick, daughter of Brea's Manager of Production Control Vince Ermovick, was cited by the Fullerton, California, Rotary Club as one of the top 120 students from area high schools to be honored for their scholastic achievements. She is a 14-year-old freshman and active in Latin Club, enjoys swimming and is a junior 4-H leader. Bill Parks, son of A. D. Parks, general sales manager, recently was initiated into the National Honor Society. Bill is a junior at Stephen Decatur High School in Decatur.

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In recognition of National Quality Control Week, Mueller Co. and a number of other Decatur industries erected displays at downtown locations, telling the story of quality control. The eight-foot display by Mueller, showing various types of testing and quality control checks, was in the lobby of the 1st National Bank.

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"A bird in hand..." etc. business is taken seriously by the Richard Armstrongs in Decatur. They have taken a tiny quail into their home to nurse it back to health and to keep it as a pet. Richard (Dept. 80) and his wife speculate that the tiny bird's family was frightened by an animal and it was left to fend for itself. Last year "Robbie" developed a paralysis and she had only a 50-50 chance to survive, but a series of shots by a veterinarian led to her recovery. Robbie sleeps in a dresser drawer, drinks soda pop and eats canary food. She is supposed to be a wild bird, but apparently Robbie has no desire to return to the wilderness--but then, why should she?

IT IS STILL A SMALL WORLD

"It's a small world" is an over-worked phrase but it is hard to improve upon it because it seems to fit situations so often.

This is a story about a slip of paper and two Mueller salesmen who live on opposite coasts.

Mueller Co.'s Kenny Potts covers the Los Angeles area and a number of counties as far east as the Arizona-Nevada borders, including the City of San Bernardino. Recently while Kenny was in that city he had written a note on a Mueller scratch pad bearing his name and address. Somehow the note found its way into the yard of a man who recognized the name "Mueller" and was familiar with the letterhead because he had received notes on it in the past.

The note was found by J. Henry Sponsler, brother of Richard C. Sponsler, the Mueller sales representative in Delaware, Washington, D.C., and part of Virginia.

The California Sponslers contacted Kenny and his wife and the four of them got together for a visit at the Sponsler home, which, by the way, is on Lugo Avenue. Bob Lugo is the Mueller sales representative in southern California and Arizona.

SALESMAN RESIGNS TO JOIN DISTRIBUTOR

Frank L. Kuenstler, a Mueller Co. sales representative for about 18 years, resigned June 1 to accept the position of vice president for Trans-Tex Supply Company, Arlington, Texas.

Frank, a native of Texas, worked with a water construction firm before he joined Mueller Co. in 1954. His first territory was in west Texas and New Mexico. He is now living in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, covering northeast Texas.

Trans-Tex is one of Mueller Co.'s most active distributors so Frank will remain close to Mueller Co., its products, and many of his former customers. General Sales Manager Del Parks said that Frank has been a very loyal, devoted and successful salesman and "our best wishes go to him for the utmost of success in his new endeavor."

TRAINING PROGRAM ENDS IN CHATTANOOGA

A 20-week training program for manufacturing supervisors and foremen in the Chattanooga plant, designed to improve shop management skills, was completed late in May with the awarding of certificates by E.B. Watmough, founder and director of the Tampa Manufacturing Institute, Tampa, Fla.

About 85 men have been participating in the program since Jan. 12, concentrating on business economics, sound management practices, and industrial engineering fundamentals, including time and motion study, work simplification, methods and costs.

Each three-hour session was conducted twice on Wednesday to allow men from all three shifts to participate.

Some Time Ago

At MUELLER

The invention of the drilling and tapping machine was important in the early success of Mueller Co., but there were ventures outside the water and gas industries in the formative years that were something less than profitable, according to the June 16, 1901 issue of the DECATUR REVIEW. In 1884, about 12 years after the drilling and tapping machine was patented, Fred and Henry Mueller made some major modifications on roller skates and the company set out to take advantage of the skating craze that was rolling over the country. The company put in a lot of new equipment and material and just about the time production began rolling well the skating fad faded and it was an uphill battle from then on. Mueller was caught with its skate keys in hand and a warehouse full of skates that no one wanted. They weren't worth 25¢ on the dollar and finally in 1892 they sold the last 3,000 pairs in Australia.

A burglar alarm pistol was company founder Hieronymus Mueller's first invention, but this also was unsuccessful. The alarm was simply a pistol that was fired by opening a window, but for establishments or homes with many windows this was not a workable idea. Although this invention was not successful as an alarm, it was later sold as a toy pistol and was used heavily on the 4th of July.

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The December, 1954 issue of the MUELLER RECORD announces the appointment of Earl E. Bright as plant manager of the Mueller Co. Pacific Coast plant in Los Angeles. Earl moved from Kansas to the L.A. area in 1924 and went to work for Mueller in 1935 as a machine operator in the plant's Brass Machine Shop. He was manager of the west coast plant until 1967 when he was transferred to the Mueller operations in Chattanooga where he is now plant manager.

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On June 27, 1917 a writer noted that Mueller plumbing goods were getting a big reputation in Dayton, Ohio. They're so popular that people who can't buy them are stealing them! A burglar entered the store of Cickereel-Schneble and stole about \$500 worth of brass goods. He was very discriminating, taking nothing but those marked with the name "Mueller".

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Oscar Mueller gave the reason why salesmen are poor card players in the October, 1919 issue of the MUELLER RECORD. Mr. Oscar came down from Sarnia to meet with some salesmen and got into a card game. According to the story, he paid his fare back to Sarnia with his winnings. He explained that salesmen make poor poker players because they are so occupied with thinking of ways to cover their losses in their expense accounts, they don't keep their minds on the game.

DECATUR JUNIOR COLLEGE TO BEGIN THIS FALL

Community College of Decatur is now receiving applications for admission for the fall term which opens in September.

The college administration is urging those interested to apply as soon as possible so that they may use this information to help plan courses and schedules. This institution plans to establish programs in as many fields as enrollment justifies.

The school is open to all residents of the community who are post-high school age or high school graduates. The school will generally present basic junior college programs offering two-year associate degrees or preparing students to continue on at a four-year school.

In addition, a program of community services such as continuing education or special short-term training will be available. These community services are frequently designed to serve the immediate needs of the business, industrial, professional and public employment segments of the community. Such specialized courses as accounting, air conditioning and refrigeration, data processing, marketing, welding, general machining and others are expected to be available at some future time.

The night program, which could have as many enrolled as the day school, will offer the general education courses as well as many of the specialized ones.

The tuition base rate has been established at \$6 per quarter hour for all students qualifying as residents of the Junior College District 537.

That rate also applies to any qualified resident of Illinois living outside a junior college district who files with his or her local school board a Notification of Intent to attend a public junior college in another area.

For example, a student living in Maroa, Blue Mound, Mount Zion, etc., wishing to attend the Community College of Decatur must have the Notification of Intent completed by the college's enrollment date. In these cases certain costs of the education are paid by the student's home school district.

Employees or their children who wish to attend the local college may obtain informational catalogs and enrollment blanks at the school office in the former Millikin Bank building at Main and Water streets.

Retirements

The following list gives the retiree's job at time of retirement, years of service and date of retirement.

Chattanooga

Johnie Johnson, SPO machine molder, 15 years, 11 months and 1 day, April 28.

Decatur

Joseph DeWilde, Jr., production tool grinder in Dept. 70, 19 years, 8 months and 27 days, June 5.