

NEWSLETTER

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Joe Penne, Editor

PLANS REVEALED FOR NEW PLANT

Construction of the new \$13 million Mueller Co. plant to supplement production of Chattanooga-type products will get underway within 90 days at Athens, Ala.

According to the announcement made in Athens on Aug. 14, the need for a new plant had become evident from the strong sales demand that has existed for Chattanooga plant products during the past two years.

President Harlan A. White said, "Based on market surveys which we have had prepared, we believe the demand for these products will continue. In addition to the demand for products now manufactured, we have several new product projects underway which will further increase our need for added facilities."

According to an announcement, the company plans to continue full operation of the Chattanooga plant--the new plant at Athens being added capacity. "Improved customer deliveries should result in added business, added capacities will allow competitive bidding on existing product lines, and new products to be introduced will further strengthen our market position, assuring our present employees continued employment at the Chattanooga plant and our new employees at Athens a share in our future," it said.

When the plant is fully operational the total employment is expected to reach about 350. Except for a few management personnel, all employees are expected to be hired from the northern Alabama area.

Frank C. Hackman, Mueller Co. manager of manufacturing engineering, has been deeply involved in the planning of the new plant and will move to Athens in about October to represent Mueller Co. during the two-year construction period.

The new plant, with approximately 245,000 square feet of manufacturing space, will be built on a 55-acre tract south of the City of Athens. It will consist of a grey iron foundry using electric furnaces, a machine shop, an assembly area, shipping facilities, plus office and building service areas. When the plant becomes operational, two regular shifts will be operating in the foundry, machine shop and assembly departments.

Once the Board of Directors of Mueller Co. decided to expand facilities, an exhaustive study was undertaken by a consulting firm to determine the best location. Such factors as available labor, proximity to markets, utilities, building sites, raw materials, transportation, and community attitudes, were all weighed during the study.

At the official announcement of the plans at a luncheon in Athens, White told the group of community representatives that "the size of the community is such that we think we can make a contribution to it, and conversely, the community presents an image to us that it will be conducive to our company's growth and prosperity."

Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce President Henry Blizzard welcomed the news of the company's plans and noted that "the facility will be at least five times the size of any other industry ever to locate here."

Athens, a city of about 14,000, is in Limestone

County about 110 miles north of Birmingham and about 22 miles west of Huntsville. Decatur (Alabama) is only 15 miles south.

According to the **Huntsville Times**, Athens Mayor Bobby Higgins said, "When I went down to Montgomery the people in the Air Pollution Control Commission said this was the first foundry they had seen which proposed to install anti-pollution equipment that more than meets state standards." White said about \$1.3 of the \$13 million cost will go for pollution control equipment.

During the announcement luncheon, Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace made a telephone call to the Mueller president to express the state's gratitude to the company for selecting Athens as the new plant site.

RECORD ON GROWTH SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

The construction of a \$13 million plant in Athens, Ala., is a major undertaking, obviously, but an examination of the company's record indicates a number of major improvements, expansions and acquisitions have taken place since about 1960.

During this time period, the owners of Mueller Co. and Mueller, Limited have re-invested several million dollars in plants and property in an effort to keep up with customer demand, rising costs and competition. In spite of the frustrations of long lead times and shortages that exist currently, Mueller Co. management has been working systematically to build the facilities necessary to meet the long-range needs of the industries we supply.

Since 1960, major building or expansion programs have taken place in Decatur, Chattanooga and California. In addition, three firms have been acquired and their product lines integrated into those of Mueller Co. or Mueller, Limited, to help strengthen our marketing activity.

The lengthy improvement program began about 1960 when the company announced plans for construction of a new office building and the addition of about 200,000 square feet of manufacturing, warehouse and shipping area in Decatur. Another 43,000 square feet of manufacturing space were rehabilitated in the three-year, \$6 million project. Two years ago major improvements were made in the Decatur Iron Foundry with the addition of a new and larger electric system for melting metal. Currently, a \$2 million expansion is underway at the Decatur Foundry Division. The 70 feet by 480 feet addition to the main foundry building will provide space for a number of improvements for manufacturing and for employees.

While work was still underway on the first Decatur program, construction of a new, expanded plant in California was announced in mid-1962. The 170,000-square-foot facility on a 20-acre tract near Brea was built to replace the out-dated Los Angeles plant that had no room for expansion. This work was finished in early 1964 and in 1965 **Factory Magazine** listed the Brea plant as one of the top 10 in the country in industrial design.

About the time construction was finishing in California, Mueller Co.'s plans were outlined for the

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modernization and rehabilitation of the former Cramet Co. property in Chattanooga. Work on this project was finished late in 1966. The 320,000-square-foot plant and office replaced the congested Chestnut Street property that had been the home of Mueller Co. in Chattanooga since Mueller acquired the Columbian Iron Works in 1933.

As for more recent acquisitions, Mueller Co. purchased the Adams Pipe Repair Products Company, Inc., South El Monte, Calif., in 1963. The California plant has been closed, but its line of repair and leak clamps for water and gas systems continues to be produced in Decatur.

Also in mid-1963, Mueller, Limited of Sarnia, Ontario, announced the acquisition of St. Jérôme Industries, St. Jérôme, Quebec. At take-over, the St. Jérôme plant produced manhole frames and covers, plus some custom castings. In addition to maintaining the original product line, production has been expanded in the past decade to include a range of municipal castings, water fittings, some tapping sleeves and a variety of valve and service boxes. A number of expansions have taken place in the plant and manufacturing space has been increased by about 40 per cent in the last 10 years.

The most recent acquisition, the H. Y. Carson Company, Birmingham, Ala., took place late in 1971. This subsidiary, now known as the Carson Clamp and Fitting Company, produces a line of repair clamps to stop leaks in bell joints of cast iron pipe lines. The work force is small and the facilities are limited, but work is underway to add to the production there.

The 1960s were active ones for Mueller Co., both from the standpoint of expansions and sales. The company's current addition in Decatur and the new construction in Athens indicate its willingness to continue its efforts to progress during the current decade.

Retirements

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

Chattanooga

Reginald McGee, automatic core machine attendant, 20 years, 1 month and 28 days, Aug. 15 (80 Plan)

Decatur

Anthony N. Grossman, tool room foreman, 49 years, September 4.

Harry C. Craft, Foundry Division janitor, 27 years, 2 months and 13 days, Aug. 28.

Brea

Helen M. Staley, lab technician, 17 years, 3 months and 26 days, July 27. (Disability)

Mueller, Limited

Bessi Olson, labor pool, 27 years, 5 months, 19 days, Aug. 3.

FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES

H. Dale Reidelberger, toolmaker, has been promoted to Decatur Tool Room foreman, succeeding A.N. (Buddy) Grossman, who is retiring Sept. 4.

Leon M. Nelson, formerly operations manager of the Data Processing Department in Decatur, has been promoted to general manager of the Carson Clamp and Fitting Company, Birmingham, Ala., a subsidiary company of Mueller. Nelson succeeds William Penn, who has left the company.



Buddy Grossman

FROM DROPOUT TO RETIREE IN 49 YEARS

"To take a piece of raw steel, machine it and see it come alive and be useful is still a thrill for me." Anthony N. (Buddy) Grossman said just before he retired with 49 years at Mueller Co.

His lifetime of work took him from a 16-year-old dropout to the top of the seniority list at Mueller Co. in Decatur. At his retirement he was foreman of the Tool Room, the department in which he worked since 1941.

Buddy has been foreman for only two years, but the transition from "the machine to the man in the middle" was not too difficult because he has been substitute supervisor in the department for many years.

Agreeing that being a foreman requires a man to be an arbitrator, inspector, counselor, leader, trouble-shooter and scheduler, he added that these roles are all handled, generally, by being able to work with people.

"If you use good common sense and handle people as individuals, most of the problems can be worked out," Buddy said. "No two of the 23 men in this department are alike and after working with them for 30 years we have gotten to understand each other pretty well," he confided.

Both Buddy and his successor H. Dale Reidelberger agreed the foremanship in the Tool Room is different from one in a production department. They cited low turnover and the types of jobs as the major difference.

The job of foreman is often one of interpreter, too. He has the responsibility to see that people do their jobs the way the company expects—in terms of quality, safety and good production, plus the added responsibility to his people to help them understand the company better while looking at the worker's point of view. This stance in the middle of the road demands patience and fairness.

Buddy's father let him quit school and go to work provided he would learn a trade. Since Buddy's father and grandfather had worked at Mueller Co., it was logical he would seek a job at the same place.

He applied for a spot in 1924 as a toolmaker and on his 16th birthday he went to work in the Cost Department. After a few weeks he made it to the tool room—temporarily. From there he went into Dept. 70 and later worked as a draftsman at different times in Plant Engineering, Product Engineering and Tool Engineering. After 17 years he finally got the chance to become a toolmaker and entered that department in 1941.

The Grossmans have no special plans after retirement, except a trip to Florida in December. They will maintain their home in Decatur and Mrs. Grossman expects to continue working for a while.



Introducing the new giant 4 cu. ft. frost-free freezer.

When the frost-free refrigerator came around it was really hot stuff.

But how did a company come up with that idea?

Well, if it hadn't been for profits we'd still be out in the cold. Contrary to popular belief, most profit does not find its way into the businessman's pocket. Any company that wants to grow or even arrive... must reinvest part of its profits in research and product development.

By creating a better product the company creates an advantage for you the consumer. Then along come the competitors.

They, too, create a superior product or perhaps lower

their price to generate sales. Score another point for your side.

Then the originator of the idea has a choice. Lower the price to meet the competition. Or improve the product even further. Or both.

Score another point for your side.

Pretty soon business is booming on all sides. The manufacturer is selling. The retailer is selling. You are buying a better product for less. And, to keep up with the demand, jobs increase in the refrigerator business.

Remember, profits aren't kept in cold storage. They're constantly used to give all of us a better way of life.

We all profit from profits.

Chamber of Commerce of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20006

A federation of chambers of commerce, trade and professional associations, business firms and individuals
dedicated to strengthening the competitive enterprise system—for the greater good of all.

News Briefs

Joseph J. Fyke, John E. Hackl, and Roger L. Drake represented Local 838 at the 19th international convention of the Allied Industrial Workers in Bal Harbour, Fla., during the last week in August. About 800 delegates from AIW local unions all over the world were expected to attend this bi-annual session.

The Mueller Co., Chattanooga, softball team recently won the Industrial Division championship of the Rainbow #5 Slowpitch Softball League, and took runner-up positions in Knoxville and Whitwell tournaments. Members of the team are: Manager George Hixson, Assistant Manager Stan Kuhne, Tom Johnson, Jimmy Kean, Bill Chadwick, Walt Smigiel, Walt King, Steve Hobbs, Eddie Woods, Butch Holland, Dwight Morrison, Ray Reavely, Buddy Jolley, Robert Holder, Roger Hollingsworth, Michael Tate and A.D. Williams.

The August meeting of men retirees in Decatur was attended by about 50 at the Swartz Restaurant. The next meeting is set for 11:30 a.m. on Sept. 13.

According to "ball park" estimates, there were about 2,800 attending the Mueller Night of baseball at Decatur's Fans Field. Decatur's Commodores scored an impressive win over the Quincy Cubs for the fans from Mueller Co., their families, retirees, friends and a range of other baseball boosters.

Delmar E. Bagenski, sales service manager-water, has been elected president of the Decatur Mueller Co. Employees Credit Union. He fills the unexpired term of Leon M. Nelson, who has been transferred to Birmingham, Ala., to become general manager of the Carson Clamp and Fitting Company, a Mueller subsidiary. Dan Morris, data processing programmer, has been named to take Nelson's place on the Board of Directors.

Bill Brooks, Shipping Department, has been elected president of Mueller Co. Men's Bowling League in Decatur. He succeeds Harold Whitacre, products inspector, who is the new league secretary. Joe Chladny, construction engineer, is vice president and Tom McGeorge, Dept. 70, was elected league delegate.

About 100 Mueller Co. employees are participating in league bowling this year. In addition to the 12-team Mueller league, a group of women is entered in a league and three teams of night shift workers are competing.

HOUSING STARTS REBOUND IN JULY

Renewed strength in the housing industry was reflected in new starts in July. The Commerce Department reported that privately-owned housing starts rose in July to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 2,176,000 units from the revised June level of 2,093,000 units.

These figures are in contrast to the May-to-June levels when a decline of about 13.2% was registered.

The 4% increase in July didn't necessarily signal a general turnaround from the gradual downtrend that has been under way in the housing industry since the first of the year, according to the reports in the **Wall Street Journal**.

The Commerce Department said July home building activity was down from June in the Northeast and West, but up from June in the Southern and North Central regions.

UTILITY WARNS OF GAS SHORTAGE

Following a warning from Illinois Power Co. that natural gas will be in short supply during the coming heating season, Mueller Co. in Decatur is adding five large fuel oil storage tanks just east of the shipping dock truck turn-around area.

Mueller Co., like most industrial users, is on an interruptible service contract with the utility and when supplies are short, gas is cut off from the large users and diverted to more critical areas.

Last year Mueller Co. gas service was interrupted during 32 heating days, but this year Illinois Power Co. officials predict this loss of gas availability could increase to as many as 179 days.

This means Mueller Co. could be heating its plant and office most of the winter with its standby system of fuel oil--a commodity that is also expected to be in short supply around the country. The five new tanks, each 27 feet tall, will add about 95,000 gallons to the fuel oil storage at Plant 1.

An Illinois Power vice president was quoted in a Decatur newspaper as saying interruptible customers have been urged to lay by alternate fuels such as oil and propane. "We realize that such fuels are also in short supply and that only most diligent efforts in this regard on the part of some industries can keep them operating at certain winter periods."

Utilities around the country have been urging large users to conserve fuel in any manner possible--including the reduction of temperatures in work areas.

During a severe cold period last winter, thermostats at Mueller in Decatur were cut back to conserve fuel and this winter promises a similar situation as energy supplies become more critical.

Service Awards

The following Mueller employees received service awards during August.

Decatur

- 10 Years: Ronald L. Luster, Stephen A. Albro, Dean H. Thompson
20 Years: Harold F. Stengel, Harold Whitacre, Morris D. Hadden, James E. Myers, Derle B. Smith
40 Years: J. Warren Sexson, Walter F. Salefski

Outside Sales

- 10 Years: Jack L. Chilton
20 Years: Herbert T. Huffine, Robert R. Lugo

Brea

- 10 Years: George Cornell
20 Years: James Forte

Chattanooga

- 10 Years: J.R. Woodrow Sells, Raymond E. Chastain, Lewis M. Massey, Robert C. Goodson, Lynn D. Price, Clarence E. Saxton, Charles T. Blakenship, David A. Bullard
20 Years: Leroy Jeffries, Jethro Hammond, Melvin Barkley, Jr., John L. Taylor, Wilson Cox, Haywood Edwards, Jr., Forrest M. Clark, Jr., John W. Ford, Wheeler T. Cage, Jimmy R. Keys, William G. Beene, Alvin Suttles, Robert J. Taylor