

December 14, 1964



Ed. Ott, vice-president in charge of manufacturing of Weinbrenner, a division of Textron, breaks ground for a new building at the Merrill Weinbrenner plant. Construction of a 125 by 250 foot manufacturing building and a 50 by 60 foot office building will be part of an overall \$825,000 modernization program for Weinbrenner. Shown during the ground breaking are (left to right) John Carriker, C. R. Livingston, Stan Frisch, president of the union at Weinbrenner; Mayor Ralph Voigt, Ott, Leslie King, an officer of the Weinbrenner union; P. Amos Gruett, City Clerk Robert Klug, City Attorney George Russell and Les Schoenke. Gruett and Livingston worked with the group which originally helped to locate the Weinbrenner plant in Merrill. Carriker is development and program manager for Weinbrenner and Schoenke is assistant general manager. (Jim Freiberg)

Weinbrenner Plant Announces \$825,000 Expansion Program

F. A. Wilmanns, president, Weinbrenner, Division of Textron, Inc., today announced plans to build a new dress shoe plant, data processing and communications center at their plant site in Merrill.

The new facilities will increase Weinbrenner dress shoe capacity 25 per cent. The construction is the first step in a three year program to modernize all Weinbrenner factories. The company has plants in Merrill, Marshfield and Antigo.

"Because of the excellent relationships we have had with Merrill employees, the coopera-

tion of the city, as well as with the citizens of Merrill, we have chosen Merrill for our expansion program," Mr. Wilmanns said.

The new plant, which will be approximately 40,000 square feet, will be the most modern shoe factory in the United States, fully conveyorized and air-conditioned.

The new computer center will control production for all plants, as well as the accounting and forecasting functions. The IBM 1440 computer will be the nucleus of the data processing center.

Included in the approximately \$825,000 expansion plan, which will upgrade the facilities and capabilities of the plant, will be the building of a 125 by 250 foot manufacturing building to be adjacent to the present facilities at the southeast end. The 50 by 60 foot computer center will be located east of the present office facilities.

Ed. Ott, vice-president in charge of manufacturing, noted that all new concepts of shoe-making have been incorporated in the planning of the facility and that two years went into the planning of the modernization program. The 1440 computer will allow for complete forecasting, work loading, billing and inventory, further streamlining the complete operation and will have a direct effect on the management capabilities. Personnel have been under a training program for the past year and this program will be continued.

The additions which will be 43,500 square feet will increase the total area of the plant here to 220,000 square feet. Work on the program will get underway immediately with an anticipated completion date for the buildings of June 1. The complete program will be fulfilled by March 1966. Implementation of the plan is under the direction of John Carriker, development and program manager.

Approximately 425 persons are employed by Weinbrenner here. The additions and modernization program will mean added employment at the local plant.