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Rapistan Closing Plant

FARMINGTON Rapistan Inc. has announced it is closing its plant in the City of Farmington and relocating the chain conveyor division to central headquarters in Grand Rapids.

The closing and transfer is necessary because business has grown to the point where Rapistan has outgrown its space in Farmington, explains Fred C. Morgan, general manager of the chain conveyor division.

RAPISTAN, which has been located at 3390 W. 9 Mile since 1963, will close on Nov. 30 and have its equipment moved to Grand Rapids by Jan. 1, 1972.

Morgan added that the company has excess manufacturing and office space in Farmington while his division would have to build a new plant in Farmington to meet its expansion needs, an alternative too costly in lieu of Grand Rapids having excess space.

A decision has not yet been made on what to do with the plant on 9 Mile, says Controller George Whitman, but Rapistan will continue its two sales outlets in Southfield.

The closing will result in about 55 persons being laid off

with some 30 employees being transferred to Grand Rapids.

The closing will result in about 55 persons being laid off with some 30 employees being transferred to Grand Rapids. Among employees being transferred are managerial, technical and sales personnel and a few production workers with key skills.

The building, 27,000 square feet, and the 2.5 acres Rapistan owns assessed at \$216,000 will remain on the city's tax rolls. Removed from the tax rolls, however, will be personal property such as equipment and inventory valued at \$342,000. This means a tax loss to city and schools of about \$16,000.

MORGAN STATED the company has been more than satisfied with the Farmington community and regrets very much the necessity of relocating.

"Because of the increasing inter-relationship of the products manufactured at both locations, it was felt that customers could be better serviced if the products and services are generated from one source."

Rapistan is a materials handling industry with the Farmington plant specializing in chain conveyor systems. The systems are sold to any

factory which must move its product from one spot to another while it is manufactured, to warehousing firms for moving goods to store, or to such businesses as hospitals to move carts between floors.

About four years ago, Morgan said, the eye-beam chain conveyor made up 100 per cent of his divisions' business. Today, this system is only 40 per cent of total volume with the other 60 per cent being in production of a tow-line and power and free conveyor systems.

"The materials handling industry is now meeting demands from customers who didn't exist five to six years ago."

This shift in demand and resulting new product lines has made it necessary for the chain conveyor division to expand its production space.

THE GRAND RAPIDS plant has 500,000 square feet, Morgan says, and about 12 per cent of this space will be

allocated for his division which will be about three times the space the Farmington plant has.

"The advent of these two new products have forced us to make this move. It is regrettable we must leave Farmington but, on the brighter side, our sales have doubled in the last three years."

The power and free conveyor consists of light-metal channels suspended from ceilings to transport supply carts through hallways and to elevators for movement between floors.

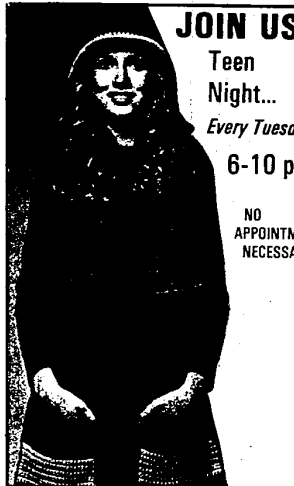
The in-floor towline system consists of a chain conveyor located in a concrete floor to serve as a "track" pulling a cart containing heavy material to be moved. The track can be laid out in an elaborate system of cross-switching to allow movement of carts to pre-determined locations for unloading.

These products are sold through the Rapistan sales forces located in sales offices throughout the U.S.

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School Wage Hearing Is Set

FARMINGTON A fact finder's hearing into the Farmington teachers' 1971-72 contract stalemate has been set for Nov. 23.

PROFESSOR Dallas L. Jones, University of Michigan professor designated to hear the arguments, notified the Farmington board of education and Farmington Education Assn. (FEA) that the date would be the first available on his hearing schedule.

Roger Allen, FEA executive secretary, criticized the board for failing to join the union in petitioning for a new fact finder who might have an earlier hearing date open. But

LeRoy Bariman, the board's chief negotiator, said the process of selecting a new fact finder would likely result in no time gain.

Teachers have been working under an extension of last year's contract pending agreement on terms of a new pact.

ONLY ITEM still in dispute is wage rates for the first of a two year agreement, both sides said.

A new element in this year's fact finding is the state's halt in the payment of fact finders without a determination as to how he will be paid.

In a related development, a hearing on the FEA's unfair labor practice charges against the board has been postponed a month to Nov. 29 at the union's request.

Meanwhile, Bariman said the board has petitioned for clarification of the charges which he termed vague and lacking in specifics.

In addition, the school board is asking the state to order that the FEA pay compensatory damages to members of the administration's negotiating team for public humiliation inflicted on members because of FEA statements.

The school board is also asking the FEA for a public retraction and apology for some of the disparaging statements made.

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