

Lockwood Motors' Building On Blast Site



THIS YAWNING CHASM, 20 feet deep and 50 feet across, marks the parking place of the Pacific Powder Co. truck which exploded here Aug. 7, 1959. This is the site of Lockwood Motors new building, the crater being about midway of the property. A marker is to be placed there.

In the early hours of Aug. 7, 1959, a dynamite laden truck, parked for the night on SE Pine St. between SE Washington and SE Oak Avenues, blew up, devastating much of the business area of Roseburg.

Almost four years later, there now stands on the site where the blast occurred a new business structure, housing the Lockwood Motors Co., whose former building was a blast casualty.

Fred Lockwood and Gordon Smith, partners in the business, recount their own experiences of the blast.

Lockwood, who lives at 1353 SE Overlook Ave., said he was at home and looking out over the town at the fire visible in the old Gerretsen Building Supply building, when suddenly the blast occurred.

He thought the whole town was a goner, but his first concern was the Umpqua Tractor Co. business, nearer the blast, which the company owned at that time. He went there to do what he could, then hastened to the Lockwood Motor Co. in the building now occupied by Trowbridge Electric.

Lockwood laughingly recalls how he used his key to open the door to get into the building, where all he needed to do was step through the showroom window which had been destroyed by the explosion.

Salvage Papers
He found the building a shambles and little could be done at the time except to salvage important papers and contents of the safe until cleanup could start.

Smith had more difficulty getting to the scene, having to travel around by Garden Valley Blvd., and experiencing some difficulty making it. He, too, had witnessed the blast from his home in Laurelwood. He recalls coming into the building and salvaging \$23,000 worth of checks, titles and contracts for auto sales which were scattered all over the room.

After first surveying the damage, the two men thought they would be back in business within a couple of weeks. The damage didn't appear too great. But a check later by structural engineers revealed much greater damage to the building.

Search was made for a temporary quarters. This was decided on when the old bowling alley building at 745 SE Rose St. was found to be available. This building, too,

was badly damaged but required much less work to put into shape.

Meanwhile, after the business district was opened up a week later, Lockwood Motors conducted business from its used car sales

lot on SE Oak Ave. and SE Stephens St. Six weeks later the bowling alley building was made available for business.

The owners knew this building was too small to use indefinitely,

so they started looking around for a business site. The Gerretsen Building Supply location, where all the damage to the town originated, was obtained.

Four years later a new building has been erected to take care of the business. Such a long delay was never anticipated, but problems arose from the start. Efforts of citizens to construct a couplet there and a high level Washington

Avenue bridge held back plans. Then finally the Pine Street-Stephens couplet was decided on, in connection with the low-level bridge.

Other obstacles had to be faced in planning for a building within a cost range that would serve their needs. Finally plans were ready for calling for bids. Contract was let to James & Stritzke Construction Co. in December, and early in January the work was started.

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