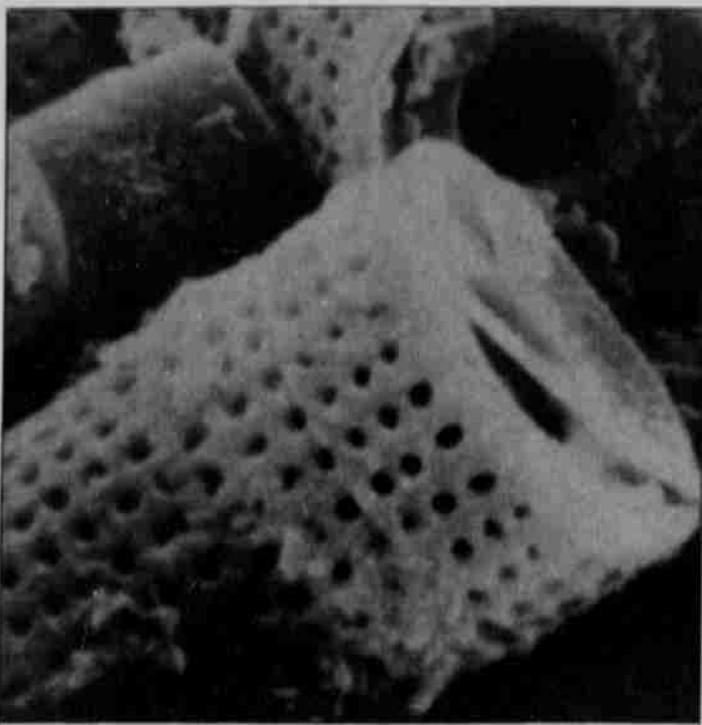


Something BIG brewing at Tectonite plant

Tectonite plant at WSFPI is on the threshold of 21st century technology and is hoping to break into industry market.



Multiplied 10,000 times, diatoms resemble pastries.

One could call the folks working at Warm Springs Composite Products (WSCP) "movers and shakers". The 10 or so employees working on the floor are constantly in motion, pouring the prepared mixtures into molds, edging, sanding, moving and stacking finished products and, for some, working on fine-tuning the formulas used to create "Tectonite", the "building material of the 21st century."

Excitement creeps into the voices of employees as they talk of their work at the plant, located in the former plywood section of Warm Springs Forest Products Industries. Possibilities are seemingly endless with the new product, which is comprised primarily of diatomaceous earth, or D.E.

Two distinct products are created with the mixture. Cast products, such as refractory blocks, lids, vaults and niches can be made when the mixture is poured into forms and allowed to dry. Pressed products, such as flooring, sheetrock, roofing material and rail material, can be made when a very similar formula is poured into molds and then pressed, making a very dense, but relatively light weight product. WSCP is, for now, focusing primarily on cement substitutes, refractory products and fire-proof door materials. User advantages have been listed as "competitively priced, durable, versatile, no shrinkage or expansion, non-hazardous, water resistant, decay and rot proof, asbestos free, vermin proof, dimensionally stable, consistent tolerances and variable set times...it can be sawn, machined and drilled. It has exceptional screw and nail holding capability. It can be glued, painted or stained and readily accepts water proofing compounds. These product characteristics make Tectonite a truly versatile product with applications limited only by the imagination."

The composite products plant was created through a joint venture when the Tribe entered into an agreement with Structural Technologies, Inc. Owners of STI, Terry Turner and Phil Rodda, came into the agreement with the technology while the Tribe provided the facilities and financial support. The joint venture's function is to license the technology to manufacture D.E.-based products. The first licensee is WSCP, which is 100 percent owned by the Tribe.

WSCP is negotiating to issue a license agreement with Christy Concrete Products, a nationally recognized California-based company that specializes in cement and concrete products. Three WSCP employees traveled recently to Fremont, California to observe and take part in daily plant operations. While there, Frank Smith, Melvin Tewee and Kahseuss Jackson learned, among other things, product technology and process, quality control and packaging.

Tewee and Jackson each stated that WSCP materials are "better and easier to work with." Jackson said too, that "what we're doing is completely new to the Tribe and the world." Other advantages include the WSCP product reaches its full strength in four days, while the Christy product takes 30 days. WSCP can remove their product from the molds in just one hour, cement takes a full 24 hours. The WSCP product has many advantages over similar concrete-based products—it's lighter weight, less expensive to produce and completely earth-friendly.

Smith added that the product is "good because it's environmentally safe" and a perfect substitute for wood and concrete counterparts. By using D.E.-based material instead of wood for building construction, "we're working for the future" and reducing the pressure on the local forest resource.

Tony Gilbert stated that with the reduction in logging on the reservation, "this is a good change and something new for the Tribe." Campy Smith, who has been with the project since inception early last year, says WSCP is "providing the opportunity for the younger guys to learn different skills, like fork lift operation and mixing batches. Potentially, this product can be used in place of just about anything. I don't think we've even scratched the surface." The plant is offering "more opportunities for people to work...our small crew will grow as production increases." He foresees "two to three different plants on the reservation with an undetermined number of employees...This looks good for the future and potentially, this project offers great employment and income to the Tribe."

Jackson summed it up best when he said, "We want the community to know, that even though we're quiet, the potential for jobs is great. We're just in the development stages now, but this could become something really big."



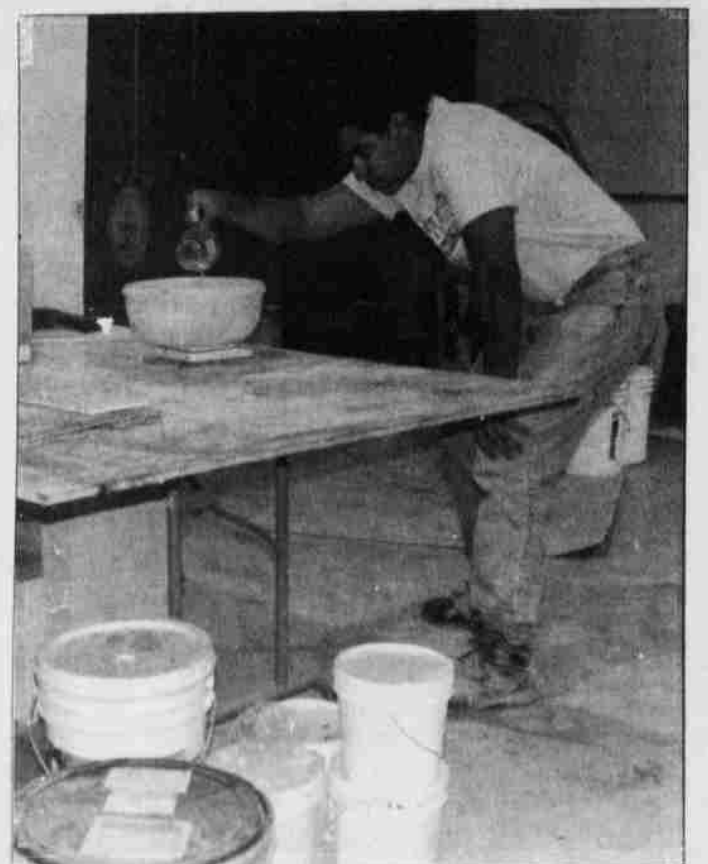
Marty Spino, Tony Gilbert and Chico Colazo work on utility box covers.



Louie Tewee hoists damp door core on to table.



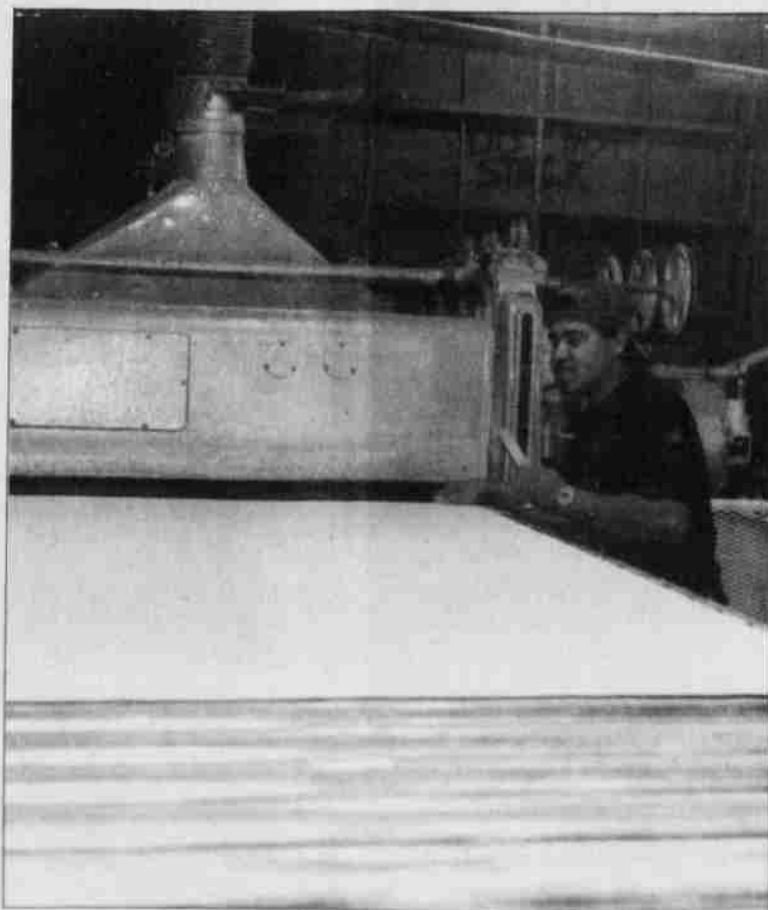
Frank Smith pours slurry into form.



Kahseuss Jackson works primarily in research and development.



Melvin Tewee shaves excess off edge of door core.



Chico Colazo operates sander.