

The impact of Kinzua

By Tom Franks

Kinzua Corporation employs about 588 people in its total operation. The mill product is marketed throughout the United States and in several foreign countries.

As an individual customer, Kinzua represents one of the largest customers of Union Pacific in the Northwest. In 1976, there were 3,346 cars in and out. The majority of the cars carried outbound lumber, plywood and wood chips from Kinzua. Coupled with 1,000 outbound trucks from Kinzua, the freight bill totaled in excess of \$2.6 million and is expected to go well over \$3 million this year.

Kinzua is by far the biggest customer for power from Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative.

Based on the census figures from the Oregon Blue Book, Kinzua employees represent between 10 and 11 per cent of the entire population of Morrow County!

While the seed of the present operation started 21 years ago, the vast changes have taken place at Kinzua since 1974.

From 1974 to 1976, outbound shipments have almost doubled and the projection is for a one-third increase during the coming year.

Considering the return which family farmers have obtained since the late 1950s in Morrow County, it could be argued that Heppner would not be here except for Kinzua.

There is little else that can explain a town with under 2,000 people having three doctors and two dentists, a medical population unheard of in a rural American community of this size and location.

This section of the Gazette-Times came into being because one Heppner businessman said he wanted to express his appreciation for the presence of Kinzua Corporation and Kinzua people in the community.

After some weeks of observation, I had formed the opinion that Heppner and Morrow County had yet to fully respond to the presence of Kinzua.

If you are stuck in the confines of the lust for power, you will turn this comment into a song about \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$, but when I say response I mean response.

What, for example, had the newspaper done? Collected its job printing money and printed a few press handouts? This is not the whole truth, because planning to respond to the community and the county as a whole was on the drawing board. It almost went without saying that I wouldn't be here, in this job, if Kinzua were not here.

When we started to respond to Kinzua, Kinzua responded to us. The business community responded to the project.

Despite this, I wonder if there are not a few dark corners where local business has not responded in terms of service? I wonder if the \$\$\$\$ seeker has even tapped the surface. Is there a businessman who in the honesty of his own mind is forced to say that he has only collected the money and given token response to the work force which Kinzua represents? If so, the loss is his.

It is my observation that the time has come to step out a little further to serve the potential, the people, or if you please, the potential market, of Kinzua.

The presence of Kinzua has created change and that is sometimes hard for all of us to take. The management of Kinzua has done an excellent job of working in and with the community. The appreciation of the business interests represented in this newspaper, and others, support feelings which really exist.

If Kinzua didn't exist and we announced tomorrow that a firm would move into Heppner with a potential of employing 588 persons, joy would run unbound in the streets. Let's not overlook Kinzua just because it has developed over the years.

Kinzua has more to come. The management aims to make it a show place for the industry, an industry tourist attraction which will bring visitors to the airport and visitors to town. Other articles in this section will give the reader a further feel for the potential of Kinzua.

Kinzua is big business. Big business in its own right and big business for Heppner and Morrow County. In addition, Kinzua is progressive. Are we matching that progress? As a famous speech maker in post-Depression America pointed out—Diamonds are in our own back yard.



*We are more than just
happy to be part of
this area . . . it is true
satisfaction in the area
that keeps our company
growing.*

*We're proud to be part
of Morrow County.*

