

# Richland firm finds new uses for old tires

With help from Fluor Hanford, the Port of Benton and others in the community, a new Richland business aims to take a sizeable bite out of a mounting problem — what to do with tons of discarded tires that pose health threats to the public and cause concern among the state’s landfill planners and permitting agencies. Millions of old tires, discarded at an alarming rate, are in the state’s landfills. Millions more are dumped illegally, littering the landscape.

Northwest Tire Recycling Products, Inc. opened its doors to the public in an Oct. 11 dedication ceremony attended by representatives of state agencies, port districts and the cities and counties of the region. Tire retailers were also on hand to witness the demonstration of a process that will turn old tires into useful products. The company demonstrated an innovative, patented and environmentally friendly method of processing used tires into a variety of usable forms.

Environmental specialist Jim Penor of Northwest Tire Recycling said the process, called the “Enviro-Block System,” yields an engineered uniform bale containing 100 tires compressed into a space the size of a couple of office desks, but weighing about a ton.

The bales can be used for erosion control, drainage for dairy farms and feedlots, fish habitat, road construction and sound barriers. Penor said the company hopes to produce as many as 32 bales per eight-hour daily shift, and may add additional shifts in the future.

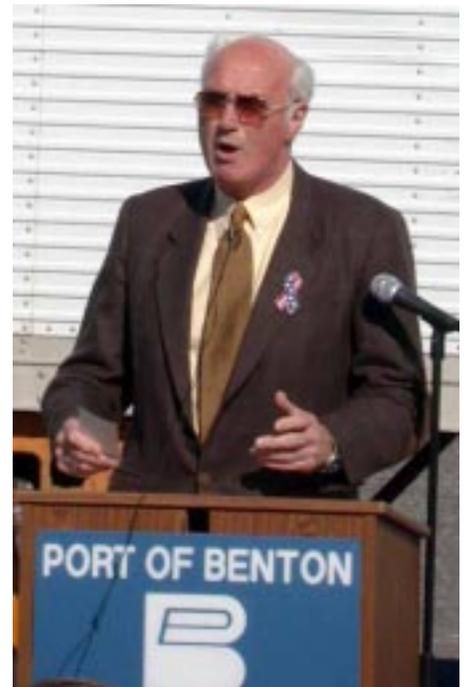
The Northwest Tire Recycling plant is on land near the Hanford Site that was transferred to the Port of Benton by the Department of Energy. Fluor Hanford played a key role in supporting the company, both financially and as a mentor, in its efforts to begin operations. Other contributors were Community First Bank and the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments.

“Fluor Hanford, while entrusted with the significant responsibilities associated with Hanford cleanup, is also actively engaged in and committed to economic development,” explained Fluor Hanford President Keith Thomson. “The establishment of Northwest Tire Recycling, in addition to its ecological benefit, is an example of Fluor Hanford’s commitment to helping spur new businesses in this area.”

The Fluor Hanford Economic Transition team, Thomson said, provided assistance with the new company’s business plan, the purchase of capital equipment and its marketing plans. ♦



Northwest Tire Recycling employees Myron Hankins, left, and Eric Garcia demonstrate the company’s process for turning old tires into dense rubber bales to be used in a variety of ways.



Fluor Hanford President Keith Thomson speaks to state and local dignitaries at the grand opening ceremony for a unique new business in Richland. “We are pleased to have the opportunity to help local entrepreneurs like Northwest Tire Recycling get started,” said Thomson.