

# Mount Shasta Herald

## News

### **Nestle answers citizen's questions**

By Deborra Clayton

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The McCloud Citizen's Group met Friday with Nestle Waters North America northern California water resource manager Dave Palais at Scout Hall to discuss the bottling plant to be built on the site of the old Cal Cedar mill.

Palais answered numerous questions from McCloud residents about factory construction plans, projected employment opportunities and possible preservation and long term use for the mill's crane shed.

Palais told the group the preliminary project description calls for an initial facility of about 400,000 square feet with an intended build-out to 1 million square feet.

The current proposal situates the factory between center and slightly northeast of center on the property, he said.

He said Nestle intends to begin construction as soon as the Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Assessment are complete and Siskiyou County issues the necessary building permits.

"Construction itself should take about a year," Palais said.

Responding to questions about employment during the construction phase, Palais reported Nestle will use the same engineering firm they have worked with in the past to design and oversee the building project.

"We will seek and accept bids on all aspects of the construction from qualified local and out-of-area businesses and contractors," said Palais, adding that professional qualifications, cost and scheduling availability were determining factors in the hiring process.

He said a truck route is planned to the west/northwest in order to link the factory with Highway 89 west of town.

"Negotiations are currently underway with property owners for access to that

route," said Palais.

"We will improve the existing road to accommodate the trucks," he said, adding that he did not know whether any necessary railroad crossings would be built below, above or at grade.

Palais told the group truck traffic through town would be a "rare occurrence" necessary only when and if the factory haul road was temporarily impassable.

In peak season, approximately 300 trucks will arrive or leave the facility during every 24 hour period of the factory's continuous operations, he said, reminding the group the CEQA process include truck traffic analysis.

Palais said the majority of the trucks used in Nestle facilities are outside haulers, with the rest belonging to Nestle. He was uncertain about the eventual ratio of outside/company trucks and truckers at the McCloud factory.

"When we start looking for haulers, qualified local truckers with competitive prices will be considered," he promised.

There were many questions about employment opportunities once the proposed factory is operational.

One or two production lines are planned initially, Palais said, each of which will require a team of workers responsible for everything from pulling an incorrectly positioned bottle out of the production line to maintaining and trouble-shooting equipment.

He estimated initial employment at 60 positions, approximately 5 of which will be managerial jobs filled by current Nestle employees from other factories.

Palais said Nestle will begin advertising for specific jobs approximately 6 months before the factory opens, which is tentatively projected to be sometime late in 2005 or early 2006.

Addressing concerns about applicant qualifications, he acknowledged that a high school or college degree is helpful but added, "Education is not the overriding criteria.

"Nestle looks for adaptable people who work well on a team, can think on their feet, garner the respect of others and are able to speak up if they think something's not right," said Palais.

Among the jobs available will be production managers, electricians, mechanics, forklift operators and office staff.

Regarding plans for any portions of the old mill property Nestle does not intend to use, Palais told the group he has spoken with several interested parties who "foresee an economic upturn here in McCloud and would like to participate in that."

He said he was not at liberty to discuss such details as with whom he had spoken or whether the sale or lease of available Nestle-owned acreage around the proposed factory was being considered.

McCloud resident Darlene Mathis spoke on behalf of the McCloud Land and Building Preservation Association, a local organization which recently filed for 501(c)(3) non-profit status.

Mathis said the Preservation Association, with support from McCloud's Heritage Junction Museum, is working on a proposal to save the crane shed and other historic buildings on the old mill site for "adoptive re-use".

She said the Association envisions cottage industries occupying the buildings, producing such wood products as log cabin kits, furniture and wainscoting - all products produced in McCloud early in the 20th century, according to Mathis.

The Association is also currently negotiating support from two area colleges for the establishment of a fine woodworking school in the crane shed, she said.

Palais told Mathis professionally presented, well thought out proposals for all projects deemed "compatible with Nestlé's project and what the company stands for" would be considered, providing the proposed project had realistic chances to come to fruition, was prepared to undergo independent CEQA review for any necessary discretionary permits and would neither interrupt factory operations nor expose Nestle to liability claims.

Palais reminded her he had been asking to see a proposal from the Preservation Association since November 2003, and that time was running out.

"In order that the most comprehensive EIR/EA review and analysis is done at the outset, the preliminary project description contemplates tearing everything down," Palais informed the group.

He was unable to confirm a deadline for project proposals, but urged the Association to present "a professional, conceptual proposal" as soon as possible.

"Once the buildings come down, they're gone," Palais said.