



## Giant tire from Cobourg

UNITED TIRE - Liz Poulson and Margaret Brown stand in front of a giant super mining construction tire made in Cobourg - a typical 15-inch car tire between them to compare size.

This giant weighs 5458 pounds, has an outside diameter of 19 ft., 9 in. Rim diameter is 31 inches.

United is one of the industries in 127-1/2-acre Ontario Industrial Park after the army ordnance depot was closed.



# United Tire is a 'big' tire firm

United Tire is the only wholly Canadian-owned tire manufacturer producing tires in Canada. It is one of the mainstay industries of Cobourg's Northam Industrial Park. A large new addition has already been added to the original former army depot building to answer expansion needs.

The company is Canada's largest Canadian manufacturer, both in sizes and in numbers, of earth-mover tires. United manufactured tires can weigh 5,400 pounds and stand 10 feet, 6 inches high.

There are nearly 200 employees at the Cobourg plant.

The company began in Toronto in 1944, as did several other small retread companies. Demand for tires for the war effort had far outstripped supply. But as tires came back into production for civilian use, competition among retreaders became fierce, and only the most efficient and innovative survived -- United Tire was one of them.

There was a gap among the larger companies in providing specialized tires. United Tire saw this gap, and began to concentrate on filling it. One of the early areas was in Canada's forest industry. Equipment for harvesting trees was becoming larger and more powerful -- yet it was still using farm tractor tires, and the industry was plagued by flat tires. The solution was to design special tires to fit the job. But United was only a retreader at that time, so it made arrangements with major tire companies to manufacture new tires to United specifications and the tires carried the United name.

There was immediate suc-

cess, and soon the United tires became original equipment on the major logging vehicles. This became United Tire's Woodland tire line.

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## 200 jobs in Cobourg

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United Tire continued to grow, and to specialize, and became known as the premium retread tire for off-the-road industry in mining, road construction, crane and timber haulage.

As markets grew, United decided to manufacture its own tires, in competition with the giants in the United States, Japan and the U.K.

The plant was opened at Cobourg in the new Northam Industrial Park which had taken over the former Canadian Army ordnance depot buildings.

Soon, United was turning out

specialized tires for its specialized customers. A new labor force was trained; new manufacturing techniques were introduced.

There were new lines of log-skidder tires, underground mine tires with flat profiles, traction tires for large scrapers.

As the company says, "Although United Tire had extensive teething problems with product quality, our unskilled labor force learned quickly that while we have to have quantity to survive, we must also have the same quality level as our foreign and domestic competition. To this end, a quality control group was formed along with a research and development group to insure continued product innovations."

The company had a short walkout late in March of this year, but it lasted only from Thursday morning until Sunday midnight. The union was protesting the suspension of four employees. The matter was soon settled, and the tire production line was back in operation.

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