



WHO NEEDS SNOW to create a pretty winter scene? Fog and the resulting heavy frost created scenes like this Monday and Tuesday.

David Lee Wilson

Cass City man first traffic fatality of 1980

David Lee Wilson of Cass City became Tuscola county's first traffic fatality of 1980 when his sports car was cut off and crashed early Tuesday, slamming into two parked cars and burst into flames.

Wilson, 37, lived at 3678 E. Akron Road. The accident took place at 3:45 a.m.

The owner-operator of the Sugar Town Market in Sebewaing, he was the husband of Ellington Township Clerk Mona Wilson and the brother of Cass City Police Chief Gene Wilson.

The Tuscola County Sher-

iff's Department reported his car was southbound on Unionville Road, south of Gifford Road, when it went out of control, went through a fence and hit two cars parked at a house.

His Corvette burst into flames, with Wilson trapped inside. He died at the scene, deputies said. The Caro Fire Department was called to the scene to extinguish the fire.

Deputies had no idea what caused his car to go out of control on the unpaved road. The body was taken to St. Mary's Hospital, Saginaw,

where an autopsy was performed. Results weren't immediately available.

Wilson was born March 2, 1942, in Cass City.

He and Mona Helms were married June 20, 1969, in Ellington township.

He is survived by his wife; one daughter, Terri, and two sons, Michael and Douglas, all at home; his mother, Mrs. Herbert (Hazel) Tumlison, Caro; brother Gene Wilson, Cass City, and nieces and nephews.

He was a lifelong resident of Tuscola. In addition to owning the market, he was a

farmer and truck driver.

He was a member of the Sutton-Sunshine United Methodist church and Sebewaing Chamber of Commerce. He served six months active duty in the U.S. Army in 1960 and 5 1/2 years in the Army Reserves.

The funeral will be held at 2 p.m. this Thursday at the Collon Funeral Home, Caro. Rev. Wayne Thomas of the Sutton-Sunshine church is officiating.

Burial will be in Ellington cemetery. Memorials may be made to the charity of one's choice.

Cass City healthier

Unemployment grows in gloomy economy

By Mike Eliasohn

Cass City appears to be a bright spot in a gloomy picture of unemployment.

The reason is that the two biggest employers here, General Cable and Walbro, are not tied to the auto industry, which is in a severe slump as new cars go unsold.

In Tuscola county as a whole, rising unemployment rates have been echoing the national and state trends.

In October, according to Charles L. Cramer, Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC) branch manager in Caro, the unemployment rate was 8.7 percent. The preliminary figure for November is 11.7 percent and he predicts it may hit 15 percent for December. (The actual figure won't be known until about mid-February.)

During the 1974-75 recession, the peak came in February, 1975, when 19.2 percent of the work force was without jobs.

Based on October figures, more than half of the Tuscola county work force is employed outside of the county, primarily in auto plants.

Many factories inside Tuscola county are suppliers tied to the auto industry, thus are also feeling the crunch.

Evans Products in Gagetown, whose workers make parts supply racks for the auto plant, provides a chilling example.

The hourly work force there presently numbers only 18, according to plant superintendent Bob Heard of Cass City.

In December, 1978, the work force was a little under 100, at the time the union negotiated a new three-year contract with the company. By February or March, Heard said, the number had climbed to 130 working two shifts. The late afternoon shift was laid off in

August and the numbers working there have declined even more since.

IN CASS CITY

Cass City's biggest employer, General Cable, makes various cables for communications, including coiled telephone cords.

Local manager Henry Ardler said total employment there now (including office staff) is about 350. That's down 30-40 from the last three-month period, but he predicts the current work force will probably stay at its present level through 1980.

Walbro Corp. President Lambert Althaver is predicting a better 1980 than 1979, though the increase won't be as great as was this past year over 1978.

His optimistic forecast, he added, is tempered by uncertainty over the energy situation and inflation.

Walbro does benefit from one aspect of the increasing energy crunch, the increasing use of wood for heating fuel. That means lots of chainsaws being sold and the greatest portion of the carburetors.

Walbro makes for chainsaw engines.

The second biggest market, however, is for outboard motors and Althaver said that area does show some signs of weakening.

Auto fuel pumps and other fuel line components are made in Caro, primarily for the after market. When new car sales decline and motorists drive their old cars longer, that means sales of those components will increase.

Walbro's plastics and die cast divisions, in Bad Axe and Auburn respectively, make components for enough different industries that a downturn in one won't mean complete disaster.

His plants in Cass City, Caro and Bad Axe employ

a total of about 450 persons (hourly and salaried).

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is thought of as the mainstay of Tuscola county's economy. Although it obviously plays a very important role, a comparatively small percentage earn their livelihood from farming.

The October employment statistics show 12,225 persons employed inside the county, of whom 2,825 work in manufacturing. There are 3,750 with government jobs, which leaves 5,650 in the category of service jobs, agriculture and miscellaneous. Added to those figures are the 13,600 Tuscola residents who work outside the county, the vast majority in manufacturing.

The situation for farmers isn't totally bleak, but it isn't the best either, according to county Agricultural Agent Don Kebler. "Farmers, I feel, are just about eeking it out and keeping their nose above water. Anything that causes a ripple could draw some down."

Crop prices are not the best, though it varies with the crop. Recent sales of corn to Russia, for instance, didn't improve the price, according to Kebler, because it was old surplus that was being sold. The bumper crop this past fall just added to the amount to be disposed of, thus the still fairly low price for the crop.

Among those raising livestock, about the only ones doing well are dairymen.

Kebler added an ominous note. Back in 1973-75, when crop prices were good, farmers bought a lot of new equipment. Now that equipment is starting to wear out, but crop prices haven't kept pace with the hefty increases in the price of farm machinery.

SUMMARY

When the local economy improves depends in a large part on when the auto business improves, Cramer said.

Even if auto sales do improve, it may take a while for in-county industry to start increasing employment. Many of the supplier industries, he said, have finished their production runs for the year, thus won't have to make any new product until Detroit gets ready to build its 1981 models.

Auto company employees (excluding Chrysler workers) are the cream of the unemployed, as their SUB pay (while it lasts) and unemployment benefits combine to make up 95 percent of the pay they received while working.

But for those who don't get SUB pay, it can be pretty grim. Maximum unemployment compensation paid is \$136 to a worker with four or more dependents. That amount may be increased in the future, but nothing is definite yet.

Unemployment presently runs a maximum of 36 weeks (26 regular plus a 13-week extension). It's likely if the recession continues, a further extension will be added. During the 1974-75 recession, unemployment compensation ran a maximum of 65 weeks.

In the first week of November, there were 1,628 persons drawing unemployment checks at the Caro MESC office. Last week, the number was a little over 4,000.

For the time being, the office is open weekdays from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. to deal with the rush (Normal is 8-5), plus employees there are working Saturdays in order to keep caught up with the paperwork.

The MESC office is one place where employment has been increasing. The usual number of persons working in the payments section is 14. Now there are 21 there.

Drilling likely in Novesta

Search on for gas and oil in Cass City area

Oil. Black gold. Maybe.

The possibility of discovering oil or natural gas is enticing enough that two companies have secured leases for drilling rights on some properties in the Cass City area.

One will likely drill a well in Novesta township within six months.

The owner of the land where the well is to be, William Kolacz, told the

Chronicle there was a working oil well across the road from his property 30 years ago. His property is at the southwest corner of Warner and DeLong Roads.

Kolacz has signed a lease with Southeastern Exploration Co., of Marysville. He was originally informed a drilling rig would be on his property on or about Dec. 1, but that timetable has been moved back six months, according to the firm's exploration and production

superintendent, Michael P. Jaskoski.

It isn't definite that his company will drill there, he indicated, but it's very likely it will do so.

It is the only well it has plans to drill in this area. Southeastern has been involved with drilling some wells north and west of Caro.

Drilling on the Kolacz property will go below 4,000 feet, which is considered a deep well. It will take about two weeks to go that far.

Drilling derricks are now truck mounted, so don't have to be erected at the site, which speeds up the process considerably.

EVEN SO, IT'S AN EXPENSIVE proposition. Jaskoski said a dry hole represents an investment of about \$250,000. If oil is found, an additional \$80-90,000 must be spent for pumps, storage tanks, etc. (The oil would be trucked out.)

If gas is found, the total investment is almost double that for a dry hole, because of the need to construct a pipeline, possible processing needed to get it into usable form, etc.

When a well is drilled, the result, assuming it isn't a dry hole, can be either oil or gas. Because of the close proximity to the oil well of 30 years ago, Jaskoski said, if anything is found on the Kolacz farm, it is expected it will be oil.

Southeastern Exploration is a sister company of Southeastern Michigan Gas Co.

The property owner receives a bonus payment when he signs a lease with an oil company plus a yearly rental fee. If drilling is done and results are successful, he receives 12 1/2 percent of the gross income from the well.

Various seismological and other tests, on which the decision was made to drill on the Kolacz farm, were done in this area several years ago, according to Jaskoski.

He didn't wish to give any odds on the possibility of finding gas or oil there. "We go in with the highest expectations. There's nothing to say either way."

THE HIGH PRICE THAT a barrel of oil now brings is what is renewing interest by oil companies in this area and others, according to John T. Stoliker of Richmond, who works as an agent for Amoco Production Co.

His firm, John T. Stoliker Enterprises, has been securing drilling rights leases all over southern Michigan, as far away as Muskegon, he said in a telephone interview. He recalled that some were in the Cass City area.

He has been in the oil business 20 years and for the first 10 of those, the price oil companies received was under \$2.40 per barrel. Now it's more than \$20, he said, which makes it worthwhile to explore new areas and re-examine where wells had been abandoned, when the

Please turn to page 12.



BUSIER PLACE -- The Michigan Employment Security Commission office in Caro has been a busier place of late as the number of persons applying for and receiving unemployment compensation has skyrocketed.

Accidental shooting injures 2 in Cass City

Two young men are in the hospital, recovering from gun shot wounds they received Friday in an accidental shooting in a S. Seger Street home.

Darrell K. Grady, 15, of 4109 S. Seger Street, was discharged Monday from Hills and Dales General Hospital.

Daniel Scott, 22, of 4860 Koepfgen Road, was transferred from Hills and Dales to St. Mary's Hospital in

Saginaw, where he was reported in fair condition Wednesday morning.

The incident took place at 4:42 p.m. in the basement of the Grady home.

According to Sheriff's Department Detective Ronald Phillips, the two victims were both sitting in chairs, playing with a slotcar racing set.

Two other boys, 14 and 15, were playing with a 30-30 rifle, the type used for deer

hunting.

The 14-year-old handled the weapon first. The 15-year-old then loaded a shell into the lever action rifle. He told Phillips he had the weapon pointed down and was trying to remove the shell when the gun discharged.

The bullet went through the leg of one of the victims, and then into the leg of the other.

The gun was about 8-10

feet away from Grady and Scott when it went off.

The detective has concluded the shooting was accidental. He has turned his investigation report over to county Prosecutor Artis Noel, who said Monday afternoon he will probably reach a conclusion by this Wednesday afternoon on whether to bring any charges against the youth who had been handling the gun when it went off.

Robbery attempt ends in death

A would-be robber died early Wednesday after having been shot with his own gun by one of the persons he was trying to rob.

Ronald Vader, 31, of Flint, died at 2 a.m. at Saginaw General Hospital, where he was taken after the robbery attempt.

According to Tuscola County Prosecutor Artis Noel and Caro state police, the incident occurred about 7 p.m. Friday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Kuzma on Saginaw Road, Vassar township.

The would-be robber, armed with a sawed-off shotgun, came to the door, announced his intentions,

then hit Kuzma in the face and knocked him down. Mrs. Kuzma then came to the door, and like her husband, was also struck in the face.

Kuzma managed to get the shotgun away from the man and fired, hitting the culprit from 10-20 feet away.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Kuzma were taken to a hospital for treatment of their injuries.

Noel had issued a warrant Monday charging Vader with assault with intent to commit armed robbery and possession of a firearm during commission of a felony.

He would have been arraigned from his hospital bed had his condition improved.