

Buffalo Rock buys Mobile plant, will purchase more

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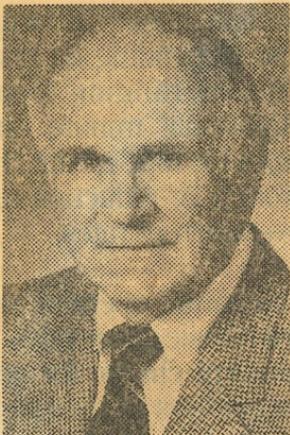
By Phil H. Shook
News business editor

In its fourth major acquisition in six months, Buffalo Rock Co. of Birmingham has purchased the Pepsi Cola Bottling Co. of Mobile.

With the acquisitions of the plants, the local bottler will rank among the top six privately owned bottling companies in the U.S., said Buffalo Rock President James Lee Jr.

"We are building a private conglomerate that will be controlled by one family," Lee said today. He said the company plans additional acquisitions "at the rate of at least one a year."

Besides holding the franchise for bottling and distribution of Pepsi Cola, Dr. Pepper, Seven Up and Mountain Dew, Lee's company still markets Buffalo Rock



Lee

ginger ale, the drink his grandfather, Sidney W. Lee, and his grandfather's chemist cousin produced in 1901 when the company was founded.

The Mobile bottling plant, which serves Mobile, Clarke, Washington, and Baldwin counties, was purchased from Crawford Lindsey and will be renamed Pepsi Cola Mobile, Lee said. The plant is located just off Interstate 10 in Mobile and employs about 80 workers.

Lee said Bob Cook, formerly general manager of Buffalo Rock's Gadsden bottling plant, will manage the Mobile operation.

A purchase price was not disclosed, but Lee said Buffalo Rock will invest approximately \$5 million in an expansion program at the Mobile plant over the next three years.

Buffalo Rock Co. employs more than 500 people and owns or has an interest in bottling operations in Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

Other acquisitions this year include the Pepsico Bottling Co. of Newnan, Ga., the trademark and distribution rights to Grapico, a soft drink produced by a Birmingham bottling firm, and a minority interest in a Pepsi Cola bottling plant in Pensacola, Fla.