

State Bentonite Industry Marked for New Expansion

By **WARD MARCHANT**
(Staff Writer)

Wyoming's bentonite industry, rapidly becoming an economic factor in the state, will gain added impetus this summer when a new plant is scheduled to be built near Casper.

The new plant, to be located at Bucknam on the 33-mile road will raise the state's total to nine including the existing plants located from Casper north to the Black Hills and west to Greybull.

Arrangements were tentatively made last July when the Natrona County Board of Commissioners met with representatives from the Black Hills Bentonite Co. at Moorcroft and railroad representatives to discuss the feasibility of such a plant near Casper.

According to figures released by Al Harding, manager of Black Hills Bentonite, the new plant will cost \$600,000 to build and will employ about 25 men.

At the July meeting, the county commissioners agreed to work on the 33-mile road, and expenditure of over \$100,000 according to John Purcell, county commissioner. Besides extensive road work, the replacing of two bridges — now inadequate for heavy truck travel — will be necessary. One of the bridges, at Cloud Creek, would have to be replaced anyway, even if the plant weren't to be built Purcell said, because of the damage by a flood last spring.

The mill will be the second such constructed in the Casper area: In 1946, the Benton Clay Co. built

a mill with a maximum capacity of producing 150 tons of sacked bentonite. Late in 1961, the mill was expanded to increase the capacity to over 400 tons per day. Bentonite reserves for the Benton Clay Co. are located near the town of Natrona and in Johnson County and amount to over 10 million tons.

Wyoming is the only area in the world to contain marketable deposits of true bentonite, used extensively as oilwell drilling mud and nearly 1,000 other uses.

The largest reserves of bentonite in the world are found in the northeast section of the state, where five plants are in operation. Other huge deposits are found in the northern Big Horn Basin, with two operating near Greybull, and in the Lander region where the industry holds promise.

Plants are located at Colony, the Federal Foundry Supply Division of the Archer Daniels Midland Co.; at Clay Spur, the Baroid Division of the National Lead Co.; at Moorcroft, Black Hills Bentonite; and two at Upton, the American Colloid Co. and the Archer Daniels Midland Co.

The two plants at Greybull are the Magnet Cove Barium Corp. and Wyo-Ben Products.

Platte Pipe Line Installs 5 New Pumping Stations

During 1962, Platte Pipe Line Co. completed an expansion program that included the construction of five additional pumping stations and modification of

Gower and Bosworth in Missouri.

In addition to the new stations, a total of 5,250 horsepower was added to existing pumping stations. The stations modified were

Importance Of Bentonite To Wyoming Grows

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