

A Clingan Tires employee fixes a tire Thursday at the company's warehouse on Third Street in Liberal. The company recently received a new buffering machine which makes retreading tires easier.



By ROBERT PIERCE

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A retread is a manufacturing process designed to extend the useful lifespan of a worn tire.

Retreading starts with a safety inspection of the tire. The old tread is then buffed away, and a new rubber tread is applied to the bare casing using specialized machinery.

Clingan Tires recently acquired a machine which now makes retreading easier.

"It's a new buffer," said general manager Jim Wills. "It's the latest in technology. It's all totally computerized. It's supposed to increase our productivity and efficiency. It's much, much more easier to use."

Wills said the machine will enable Clingan to cross train employees in the retread shop and make them more versatile in their jobs.

"It's been a great addition to our plant," he said. "It will certainly help increase our capacity in the number of units we can do a day."

The buffer which this model replaced was basically manual, according to Wills.

"The operator had to manually buff the tires," he said. "When you do that, it gives way to the possibility of errors. This is totally computerized."

Wills said the new machine already has all of the desired measurements programmed into it.

"You just put the size and the type of tire that you want buffed into the keyboard, and it does all the work for you," he said.

The buffer gives Clingan the opportunity to increase its productivity by about 12 to 15 units a day without having to add more manpower.

"We're currently running about 55 to 60 tires a day," Wills said.

Clingan Tires, itself, has been in business for about 50 years, with locations in Liberal, Guymon, Okla., and Ulysses.

"We have a warehouse where we run a wholesale commercial division,"

Wills said. "We have \$1.5 to \$2 million worth of inventory at all times. We have the largest inventory of tires in Southwest Kansas."

Clingan sells many types of tires, including those for lawnmowers, ATVs, cars, pickups, trucks, forklifts and road graders.