Firestone, PCI will take over two plants

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Formal transfer of ownership of two Lake Charles synthetic rubber plants from the federal government to private industry for over 30 million dollars will take place here tomorrow morning.

The two plants are the copolymer plant, being purchased by the Firestone Tire and Rubber company for $15,136,512, and the butadiene plant, being purchased by Petroleum Chemicals, Inc., for $17 million.

Both plants are located in the industrial area southwest of Lake Charles.

On hand for the formal transfer will be high officials of Firestone, Cities Service, Continental Oil company and members of the Rubber Facilities Disposal Commission.

Members of the disposal commission and Firestone officials will gather at the law offices of Plauche and Stockwell shortly after 9 a.m. tomorrow for the formal transfer of the copolymer plant. Commission members will then proceed to the law office of Jones and Kimball where the transfer of the butadiene plant to Petroleum Chemicals will take place.

Representing Firestone at the transfer ceremony will be J. E. Trainer, executive vice president, Joseph Thomas, secretary and general counsel, Dr. J. M. Street, director of laboratories, A. D. Miller, staff executive, C. A. Hill, general manager of Firestone's synthetic rubber plants and former manager of the Lake Charles plant, all of Akron, Ohio, and W. Howard Cain, present manager of the local plant.

F. M. Simpson, vice president of Petroleum Chemicals, will accept the butadiene plant. High officials of Cities Service and Continental Oil, joint owners of Petroleum Chemicals to be present are A. P. Frame, vice-president and Park Holland, attorney for Cities Service, both of New York and H. G. Osborn and Charles Perlitiz, both of Houston, vice presidents of Continental.

Members of the Rubber Facilities Disposal Commission who will formally transfer the two plants to private ownership are Holman O. Pettibone, chairman, and Lewis R. Rounds, Everett R. Cook, Eugene Holland, J. M. Wainger and Robert Diller.

Petroleum Chemicals and Firestone will co-hosts at a dinner and reception tonight at the Pioneer club for commission members and invited guests which will include industrial leaders in the Lake Charles area.

Also invited to the dinner and transfer ceremonies are Gov. Robert Kenning, Elmer Conner, executive director of commerce and industry for Louisiana, and Congressman Overton Brooks and T. A. Thompson.

Sale of the two plants, built during World War II, was approved by wide margins in both houses of Congress last month. Firestone has operated the copolymer plant for the federal government since it was built. Cities Service has been operating the butadiene plant.

Firestone has already launched an expansion and improved program at the Lake Charles plant which will increase its annual capacity for producing synthetic rubber by approximately 13 per cent. The company is spending a total of $13,500,000 to expand the local plant and one bought from the government at Akron, Ohio.

F. M. Simpson, vice president of Petroleum Chemicals, told a recent meeting of the Southwest Louisiana chapter of the American Petroleum Institute that his company also plans to expand the butadiene plant.

The butadiene plant produces the basic raw material for synthetic rubber from petroleum products. The Firestone plant uses butadiene to produce copolymer, general all purpose synthetic rubber, used primarily in treads of passenger car tires.

Members of the Rubber Facilities Disposal Commission were due in Lake Charles late this afternoon from Baton Rouge where two synthetic rubber plants were transferred to private ownership today. Plants transferred in Baton Rouge are the butyl plant to Esso Standard Oil company and the copolymer plant to the Copolymer Corp.