Hershey Auction Promises Old, Odd Items

Monica Von Dobeneck, The (Harrisburg) Patriot-News

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Think you might need a "bathtub truck," a tank on wheels that Hershey Co. employees once used to haul liquid chocolate from one part of the plant to another?

Or maybe a telephone booth? The Hershey Co. has two of those for sale in an auction this weekend to get rid of the thousands of items in the old plant on East Chocolate Avenue.

Hershey spokesman Jeff Beckman described the auction, which might attract 1,000 bidders, as offering "a lot of stuff."

Little of it will appeal to anyone looking for memorabilia to feed his nostalgia for the old plant. The auction includes hundreds of mop buckets, bales of toilet paper, cranes, forklifts and other items useful to someone who runs a manufacturing plant or a construction firm.

Mike Fortna, owner of Fortna Auctioneers, said he has had interest from bidders from several states and countries. The auction is open to the general public. Bidders can register from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Friday) and look over the offerings.

But if you want to buy toilet paper, be prepared to buy in bulk.

"Maybe 1,000 rolls of toilet paper," he said. "We have hundreds of ladders, but you might have to buy at least five."

Manufacturing moved from the old plant at 19 E. Chocolate Ave. to the new West Hershey plant this year. The remaining machinery and other items no were longer needed, Beckman said.

Most of the old plant will be demolished, which has upset some residents who see it as a legacy of company founder Milton S. Hershey.

A part of the building will be preserved for offices, and the iconic bushes that spell out "Hershey Cocoa," the smokestacks and the silos will remain.

"This reflects a bygone era in candymaking, "Beckman said. "The new plant is the most technologically advanced candy plant in the world."

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