

Watsonville's newest plant is prospering

Watsonville's big new frozen food plant, Richard A. Shaw Inc., is doing nicely, thank you, its founder told the Rotary Club yesterday.

Nicely enough that although its costs for food doubled in five years, the cost to consumers rose only 15 percent, Shaw said.

Location of the firm in Watsonville was a natural, Shaw explained. It's in the middle of California's principal vegetable-growing area. And Watsonville offers the four essentials — available property, rail service, water and experienced workers.

The firm so far is using only one-third of the 27-acre site, so there's plenty of room for expansion. In peak season, it employs 1,100 people, and it pays \$255,000 a year in taxes.

Its water usage comes to 300,000 gallons a day; Shaw said our vegetables are washed more thoroughly than those washed in any home kitchen." On the topic of sewer plant usage, Shaw said "Water from food processing plants actually purifies the city water; without us you'd have real trouble."

Another note: Broccoli is the frozen food industry's biggest seller, having passed peas in popularity.

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