

Seaford nylon plant is named a landmark

By **NANCY E. LYNCH**
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SEAFORD — State officials, industry leaders and company executives came together Thursday to honor the world's first nylon facility and pay tribute to the fiber and its inventors.

The DuPont Co.'s Seaford plant, home of the world's first wholly synthetic fiber, which spun a textile revolution 56 years ago, was designated a National Historic Chemical Landmark by the American Chemical Society. More than 250 people attended the hour-long dedication.

"This plant," said David A. Hounshell, is the mother of all nylon plants around the world. It is truly a historical landmark." Hounshell is Henry R. Luce Professor of Technology and Social Change at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Ronald C. Breslow, president-elect of the American Chemical Society, presented a bronze plaque to DuPont Chairman Edgar S. Woolard Jr. and

Seaford nylon plant manager Paul Couvillion. The Seaford nylon plant is only the fifth historic landmark honored by the society for milestones in chemistry.

The plaque will be displayed in the plant's newly created exhibit on nylon, at its 340-acre site west of Seaford.

"Nylon is one of the most important polymer materials ever developed," Woolard said. "Nylon gave the textile revolution unstoppable momentum."

Nylon, discovered in the late 1930s in the lab of Wallace H. Carothers, today generates more than \$4 billion in sales. The Seaford plant can produce 400 million pounds of nylon a year with its work force of nearly 1,600 people.

Among the most notable attendees on the ceremony Thursday were Joseph X. Labovsky, 83, of Shellburne in north Wilmington, and Harwood K. Strange of Chesapeake City, Md., who worked there when the plant opened in 1939.

"I had the honor of starting up the



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Joseph X. Labovsky (left) and Harwood K. Strange were guests Thursday as the Seaford Nylon Plant was recognized.

first spinning machine here," said Strange, 77, who retired in 1978 after 41 years with DuPont. "Nylon is one of the great discoveries in my lifetime."

Also attending were Gov. Carper and Rep. Tina Fallon, R-Seaford, who presented a tribute from the state House of Representatives.

"Nylon has made DuPont a leading company in the world," Carper said. "That success also has made Sussex County a better place to live."