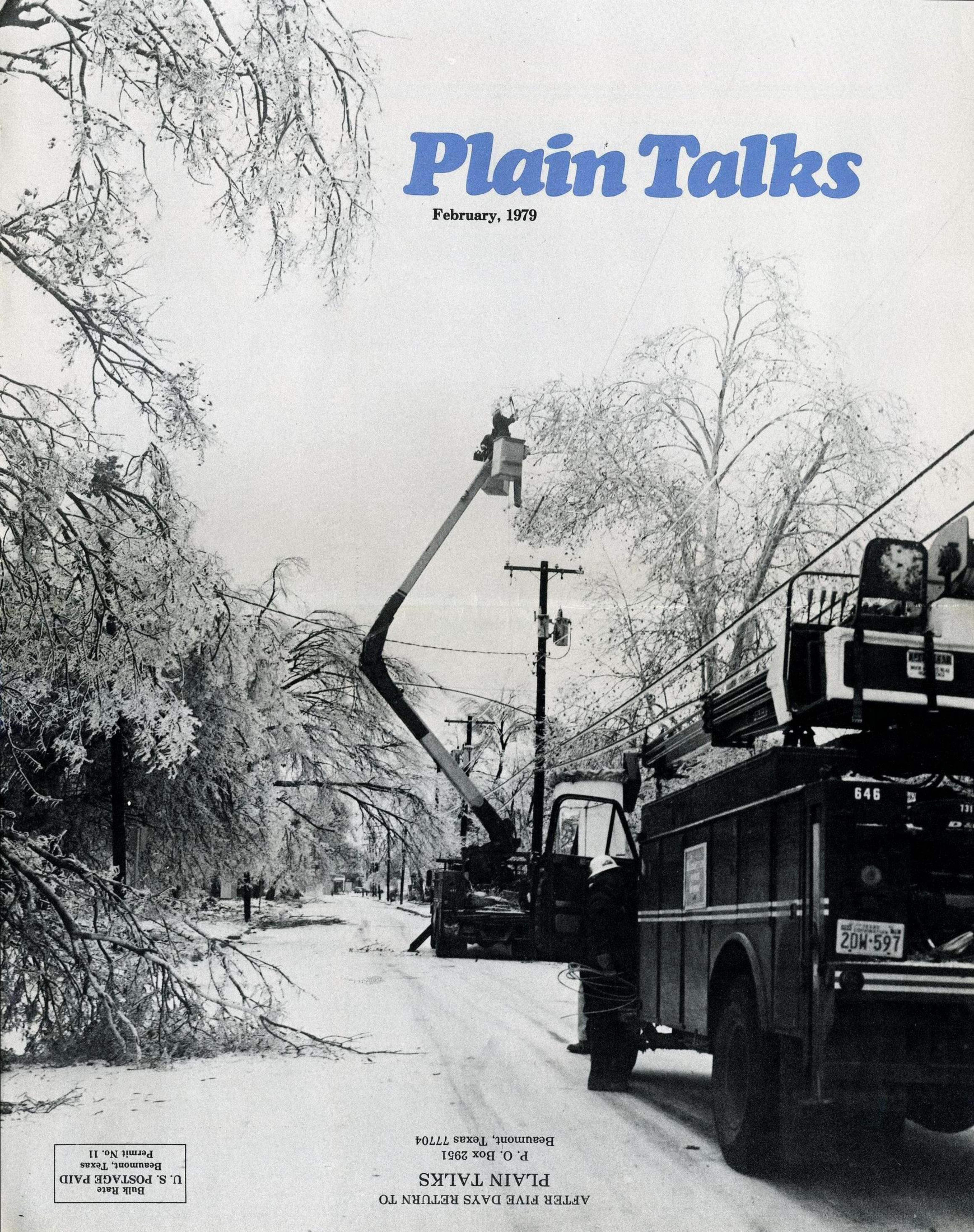


# Plain Talks

February, 1979



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# Must the lights go out?

While the United States continues to dither and dally about the use of nuclear power, the Soviet Union is moving decisively to increase its nuclear energy capacity. A recent news story says the Russians intend to make nuclear power the primary source of electricity for the huge area west of the Ural Mountains that encompasses their major population centers. Action to accomplish the plan has begun, and the Russians hope to complete it over the next two decades.

The Soviet Union is already in the business of exporting nuclear power plants, with a new one now operating in Finland and a purchase agreement from Libya for another. By 1981, according to the news story, the Russians plan to have a factory in production that will eventually turn out at least 10 nuclear power plants every year. They are also moving ahead with development of the fast-breeder reactor.

This news from the Soviet Union is in dismaying contrast to the state of nuclear power development in America. Till now, the U.S. has been averaging five to six new nuclear plants every year—with 70 now operational. But that rate is already in decline, since it now takes over 10 years to secure the permits and construct even one nuclear plant. The flow of new orders for nuclear plants has essentially disappeared—and those that do succeed in opening are likely to be greeted by protest demonstrations at the gate.

America's leadership in nuclear technology is fading. Brazil, for instance, seems to have given up waiting for a coherent American nuclear policy and has turned to West Germany for nuclear facilities and technology. And while the U.S. has indefinitely delayed the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, countries such as England, France, Belgium, West Germany, and Japan are continuing the development of nuclear reprocessing technologies.

The regulatory tangles and legal hurdles to building a new nuclear plant in the U.S. have become so formidable that they are virtually strangling nuclear power development. Last year, the chief of the then-Federal Energy Administration, John F. O'Leary, told a reporter that plans for 40 to 50 nuclear power plants had been canceled in the two years prior, and commented: "The unfortunate

thing is that the intervenor [public participation] process has gone to the point where we may well have seen the end of nuclear energy as a live option in this country." There has been little improvement in the situation since he made that remark.

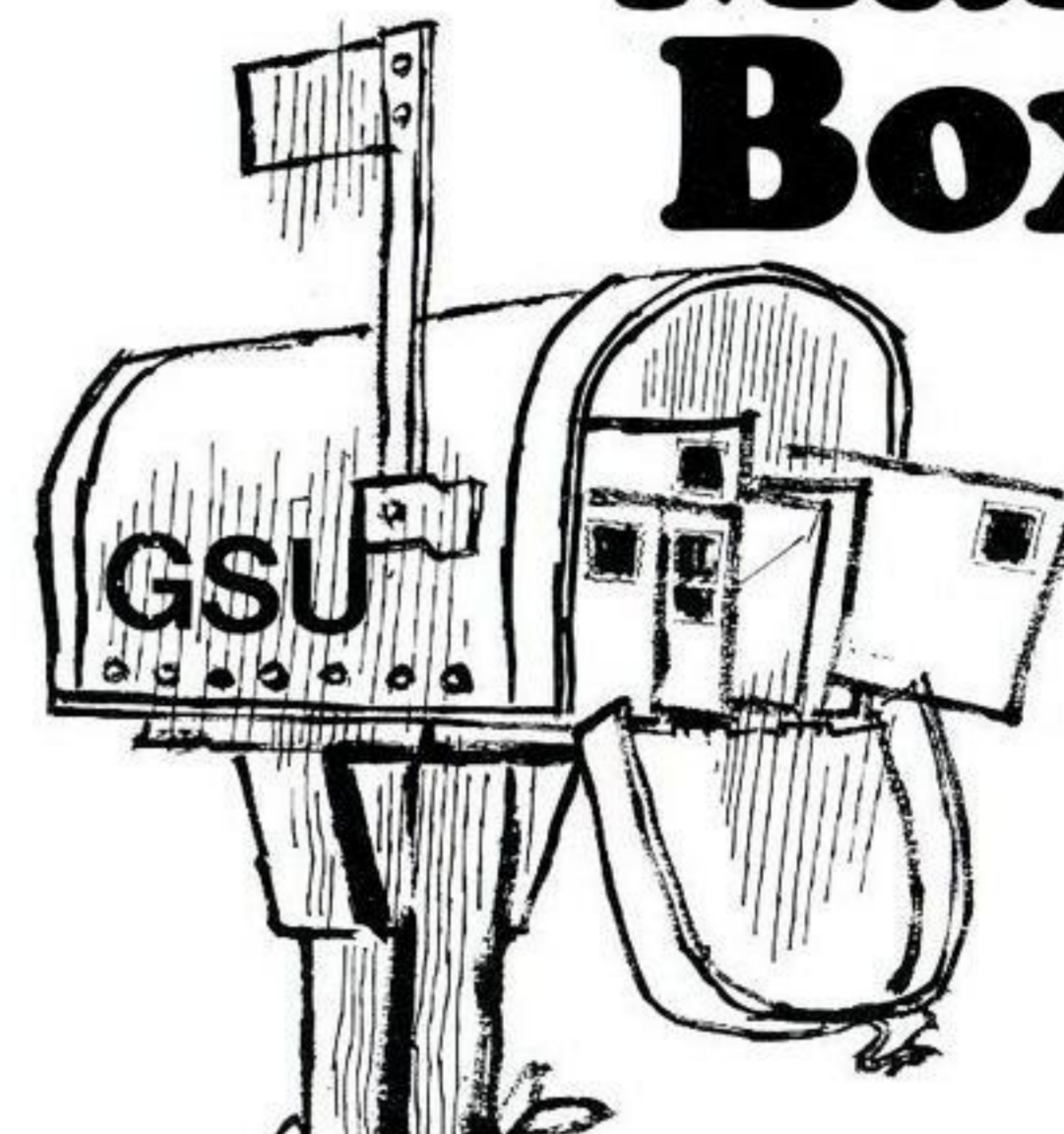
And this is puzzling since the technology now in use—light water converter reactors—has proven safe and efficient, cleaner than fossil-fuel plants, and more economical than coal-fired plants. Furthermore, technologies for the safe disposal of radioactive wastes are now available. In the short term, this country has to move decisively toward both coal and nuclear power for generating electricity—and yet it has seemed curiously incapable of making a choice about either.

The indecision and delay is a luxury America can hardly afford. In the opinion of most reputable experts, the nation's demand for electrical energy is going to increase regardless of how successful Americans are in conservation measures. The Secretary of Energy has stated that the Administration's 1985 goal for coal production cannot be met. Nuclear development is limping badly. If both coal and nuclear power fall short in the 1980s—as now seems likely—what will happen to the economy?

The recent National Governors' Conference got the answer to that question from Dr. Thomas A. Vanderslice of General Electric. The expected shortfalls, he said, will push up the average price of electrical energy all over the country, in some areas by a substantial amount. By 1985, there probably would be electrical energy shortages over much of the nation; many areas would suffer severe brownouts or service curtailments. By 1990, the national average "reserve margin" for electrical energy would probably drop from the present margin of over 25 percent to two percent. With such a tiny margin, power plants simply shut themselves off when demand exceeds their capacity.

Now there's news that a power scarcity may come even sooner. The National Electric Reliability Council has just forecast the grim prospect of electricity shortages in the early 1980s. If the lights start going out, we think it will be small consolation to Americans to realize that they will still be brightly burning—thanks to nuclear power—along the banks of the Volga.

# Mail Box



Gulf States Utilities Company  
446 North Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Gentlemen:

This is to inform you that you have two very nice young men working in your "Trouble Department". I do not know their names but I know how they handled a situation at 3628 Cannon Street last night.

I called at about 9:40 and again at about 10:35 as we experienced a couple of firework displays along your power line in front of my house and from your line down the line to the corner of the house. One young man answered the first call and he and another young man answered the second call. They were very prompt, efficient, helpful, assuring and extremely nice. They located the problem and said they would have a crew come out today and take care of the matter. I do not know if the crew came out or not.

The two young men mentioned above deserve a word of praise and they are an asset to your company.

Very truly yours,

(Mrs.) Priscilla B. Lambert

*Editor's note: The two dispatchers involved were Rudy Stewart and Dennis Howze. Stan Pollins was the serviceman dispatched to correct the situation.*

Gulf States Utilities Company  
Post Office Box 2951  
Beaumont, TX 77704

We would like to express our appreciation to the employees of Gulf States for the many acts of kindness during the bereavement of our son, Lee. His many Gulf States friends, some of whom we do not know personally will be in our thoughts forever.

The Family of Lee Hickman

## Thrift Plan

Investments made by the Trustee during December, 1978 covering employee deductions and Company contributions through November, 1978 were as follows:

### Purchase of Common Stock:

10,116 Shares at a total cost of \$123,262.80 with an average cost per share of \$12.125.

The Trustee also made the following deposits:

At First Security Bank of Beaumont, \$111,963.60 in Savings.

At The Equitable Life Assurance Society, \$19,799.85 in Guaranteed Fixed Income Fund.

# Mobil

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## Plain Talks

Published by employees for employees

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Editor — Gary Dias

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Member

Houston

# Big FREEZE in 'Big D'

## GSU answers call for help



GSU crews joined more than 280 other crews from throughout Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana in ice-storm battered Dallas early last month to help restore electric service to thousands left without power.

As a result of the storm, which hit Dallas at 2 a.m. on Dec. 31, ice-covered tree limbs fell into power lines all over the city, leaving 75,000 customers without electricity at the height of the storm. The majority were quickly restored but some Dallas residents remained without power for more than a week as crews worked around the clock to repair the downed lines.

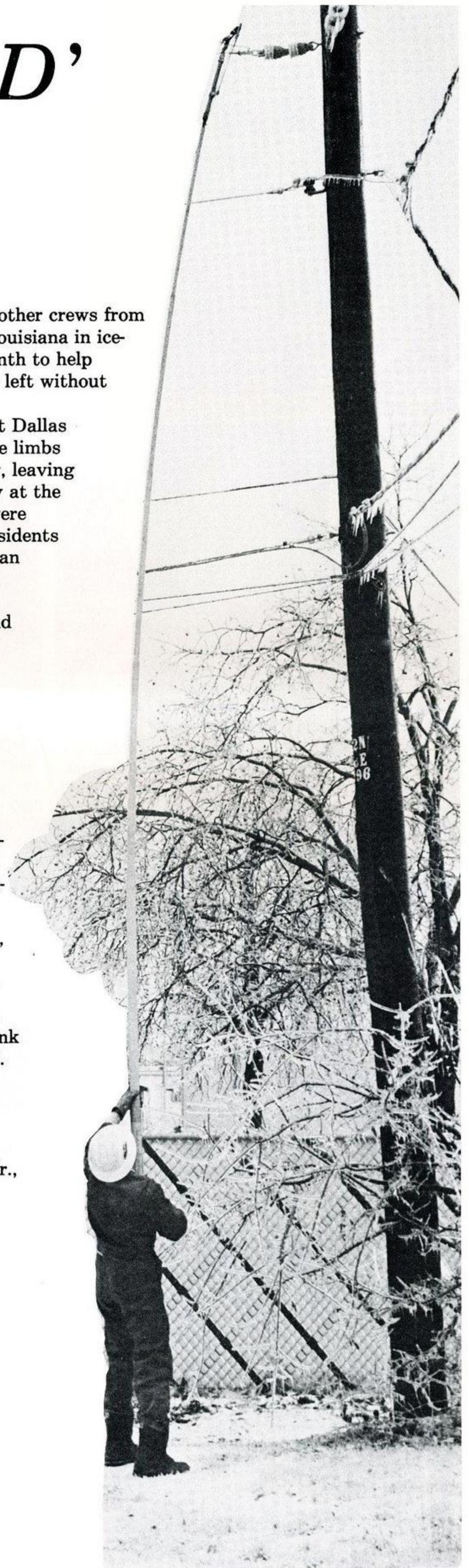
GSU dispatched tree trimming and heavy line crews and servicemen to Dallas to help in the service restoration in response to Dallas Power & Light's call for help. "We have been following Dallas' plight very carefully and when they asked for help, we were glad to oblige," said Norman Lee, president and chief operating officer. "In our business, when an electric utility has an emergency, it means people are inconvenienced or suffering and neighboring utilities pitch in to help. We don't want to see people going for long hours without electric service."

Gulf Staters sent to Dallas were John W. Beard, James L. "Buster" Davis, G. B. "Greg" Buck, Shelton W. Stevens, Melton E. Cowart, Frank W. Nance, Kent R. Kirk, Michael R. Allen and Thomas R. Coggins, all from Beaumont; Jerry L. Skiles, Nester M. Hillin and J. D. Jorden, from Vidor; R. C. "Bobby" Lebert of Sour Lake and Cesaire Guidry, Jr., Silsbee.

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*These photos and cover photo courtesy Linda Hawks, Dallas Power & Light*

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## Ask GSU's Cindy Provost and Mary Steib

# How many meters does a meter-reader read?

The following article, written by the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate's Annabelle Armstrong and reprinted from the Sunday Advocate, tells the story of the only two female meter-readers in GSU's Baton Rouge division.

The best part of their job, say Cindy Provost and Mary Steib, is that they are on the go and on their own.

The worst part? There are ornery dogs to contend with and, sometimes, ornery people.

Cindy and Mary are meter-readers. There are only two female meter-readers out of 21 in the Baton Rouge district of Gulf States Utilities.

Younger in age but senior in experience of the two is Cindy, 19, Istrouma High School graduate, who has read meters for seven months; and who, in turn, helped to train Mary, 23, graduate of St. John High School in Plaquemine.

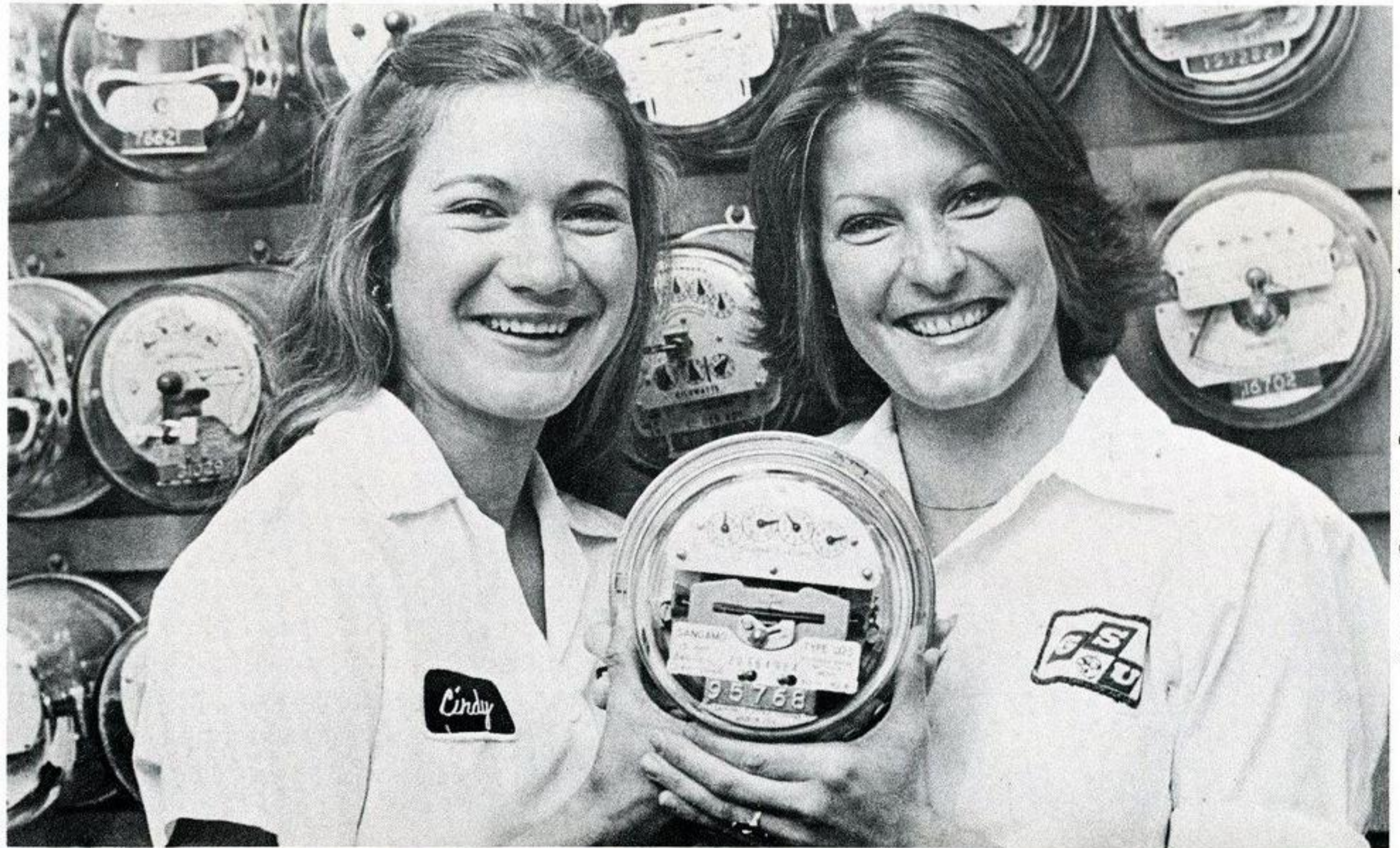
COMELY, BLUE EYED, and light-haired, both dress as required. They wear khaki pants and white shirts with blue GSU emblem and embroidered name.

Cindy wanted to be a model and has done some of this, but she went with a friend to Gulf States to apply for a job one day and impulsively decided to apply herself. A few months later she was contacted for meter-reader. "I never dreamed of this as a job," said Cindy. Now she sometimes dreams of meters.

There's a great deal of walking to do when one reads meters, and one reads them in rain or shine. On bad days they wear raingear, "and when it slacks we go out." There is no way to carry an umbrella when hands are full of cards to go into the computer. "If the cards get wet they won't go into the computer; so we have to be extra careful in bad weather," Cindy said.



A Lake Charles area homebuilder was recently awarded a National Energy Watch (N.E.W.) citation for building energy efficient homes, which meet N.E.W. energy conservation guidelines. Lake Charles consumer service representative Becky Watson is shown above presenting the award to James Fontenot of Sulphur, La.



Meter readers Cindy Provost (left) and Mary Steib.

**HOW MANY METERS** does a meter-reader read? "Depending on the route, 6 or 700 a day," Cindy states. Their workday hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

How far does a meter-reader walk? "I don't know. I've been meaning to get a pedometer," said Cindy. "It's hard to tell as we are going around houses, in and out of yards, and up one street and down the other. There's no straight line."

Cindy likes being outdoors. "I keep my weight

### Advertising campaign prepares La. customers for higher electric bills

The bills of many of GSU's retail electric customers in Louisiana may be just a little bit higher this month due to the company's recently approved \$18.4 million increase in annual retail electric rates in Louisiana but, thanks to a recently completed public awareness advertising campaign, the slightly higher bills won't come as a surprise to many of the company's 200,000 retail electric customers in the state.

Advertisements explaining the rate hike and its effects appeared in 26 newspapers and on six television stations throughout the company's Louisiana service area in mid-January. The ads, which explained how much a typical bill would be affected by the boost in rates, ran until the first week of this month, when customers first began seeing the results of the higher rate on their bills.

The ads were designed to illustrate the fact that electricity is still a bargain for GSU Louisiana customers, in spite of the rate increase, and included comparisons of the new rate to residential rates throughout the nation as well as explanations of the factors which create the need for rate relief.

down and stay in shape this way." She likes being responsible for her own work and "not having someone stand over me watching what I do." She also likes having a different route each day as it keeps the walking from getting monotonous.

**MARY, WHO GOT** her job through an employment agency after the chemical plant where she worked had a shutdown, said "I'd rather be walking and moving around than sitting in an office."

Both had to take and pass a test to get the job, and then there was a two-week training period.

Cindy taught Mary a little about the dogs-big and little. "Don't ever turn your back on them," said unbitten-as-yet Mary.

**ASKED IF THEY** talked to the dogs, Mary said Cindy talks to them, after she has rattled the gate or made some noise to alert the pet she is on the way. "If the dog won't back up we don't go in!" she said.

For safety measures they carry a spray can, with a pepper solution, and they have learned not to spray into the wind. Cindy did this once and got a dose of spray, herself. She rolled her eyes upwards. "I decided that someone up there didn't want me to read that meter."

Is it especially tiring to walk all day?

Said Mary, "The first couple of days I was tired but you get used to it."

**SHE CAN STILL** go to a disco at night, she added.

"I'm never tired," said veteran Cindy.

In their job they get a lot of attention. They meet "quite a few lonely little old ladies."

"Especially in the downtown area," Cindy said.

"There's one little lady who always invites me in for a coke. She seems to need company."

They get a lot of admiration from older women too. They smile as they report the remarks, such as "We are proud of you girls."

And when there are obnoxious characters who get too chummy, they can handle that. Said Mary: "You can always use the spray on them, too."

# 'Better Customer Service'

*Introduced last month at the Chairman's Management Conference in Beaumont, this theme will be GSU's 'guiding light' in years ahead.*

Better Customer Service!

That was the theme of the first annual Chairman's Management Conference which was conducted in Beaumont Jan. 15-16.

This first of its kind event is part of an ongoing effort to improve communications within the company and was the first of a series of employee information meetings set for 1979.

The theme of the conference, "Better Customer Service," was woven into every presentation made during the two-day meeting and will be the company's overriding policy in the years ahead. "Better Customer Service," is to become a way of life with us henceforth," said W. Donham Crawford, chairman of the board.

**IN COMPLIANCE WITH** the theme, every action taken by the company will be in the best interest of the GSU customers and will be portrayed as such. All Gulf Staters are urged to keep the best interest of the customer in mind while performing their day-to-day duties.

Some 150 upper management employees attended the sessions held at Beaumont's Red Carpet Inn. Charles Glass, vice president-Beaumont division and chairman of the conference's first session, opened the meeting. After Crawford's keynote address, Bob Jackson, vice president-financial services and secretary (who has since resigned to take a similar post with Central Illinois Public Service Co.), and Tom Burbank, vice president-rates, updated the group on the company's financial situation and rate picture, respectively. Norman Lee, president, ended the first session with a look ahead at company operations.

Les Moor, vice president-human resources, opened the second session, chaired by Al Pollans, vice president-accounting services, with a brief talk on the new Human Resources Department (formerly Personnel). He was followed by Bill Douglas, manager-personnel services, who described new training programs in progress or planned; Mike Durham, safety director, who emphasized the need for adherence to safety procedures and Ted Meinscher, manager-industrial relations, who discussed the improved communications and contacts among employees.

**ALSO REPORTING** on plans in governmental and public affairs areas of responsibility were Fred Repper, vice president-public affairs; Jim Turner, manager-communications; Jim Towers, director-governmental affairs for Louisiana and Bob Jinnette, director-governmental affairs for Texas. Ward McCurtain, manager-community affairs, reported on the company's community affairs activities.

Two guest speakers made appearances during the second session, Dr. Roland Frye, a noted psychologist who spoke on "Stress and Your Health," and Don Vernine of D. J. Vernine and Associates public relations consultants.

Vernine, speaking on customer relations, related the so-call "high bill" to the actual cost of electricity



*Don Vernine speaks on customer relations.*

per person per day. A monthly bill of \$240 for a family of four seems quite high, he said, but by dividing it by the number of days in the billing cycle (30), it becomes a more reasonable sounding \$8 per day. Taking it a step further, he added, you can divide this figure by the number of persons in the family (4) and your "high bill" represents an actual cost of only \$2 per person per day. "Electricity becomes even more of a bargain considering all the ways it is used every day," said Vernine.

Jack Worthy, vice president-Baton Rouge division, chaired the first session of the second day, which included presentations by Larry Humphreys, senior vice president-energy development, outlining plans concerning fuels production, nuclear, coal and oil plants; Joe Bondurant, senior vice president-division operations and system engineering, discussed division operations as they relate to the

customers' opinions of the company; Bill Barksdale, vice president-system engineering and system operations, described system engineering plans and Aubrey Sprawls, vice president-consumer services, reported on consumer services programs.

**ANOTHER GUEST SPEAKER**, Bob Dolan, vice president, Edison Electric Institute, opened the final session, chaired by Bill Heaner, vice president-legal services, with comments on the National Energy Act. "Producing the National Energy Act may have used up more energy than the Act itself will produce or save," said Dolan. "Now that it is enacted, its implementation is generating even more effort and requiring the exertion of even more energy. And, Gulf States, like every utility in our industry, will be impacted by this legislation for years to come.

Ed Loggins, vice president-administrative services, spoke next on the new bill form, which will take effect in April when the company switches from post card to envelope billing. Loggins also explained the implementation of a permanent space needs study, brought on by the rapid growth in GSU personnel. More detailed reports on envelope billing and space studies were presented by Carter Davis, manager-implementation and data service and Jim Braswell, manager-administrative services.

Before closing the meeting, Lee presented the President's Safety Award to John Conley, Western division manager, in recognition of his division's first place finish in the 1978 System Safety Contest.

Similar meetings for all management employees were conducted in each division. Plans also call for Crawford to continue the semi-annual series of systemwide information meeting with all employees beginning in the spring.

"The unified efforts of us all to provide better service to our customers will help us return to our familiar role as a leader in every facet of the electric utility industry," said Crawford.

## Hodges elected president of Varibus Corporation

The board of directors of Varibus Corporation, a wholly-owned subsidiary of GSU, has elected Edwards G. Hodges president and a member of the board. Hodges, formerly vice president and general manager operations for Varibus, replaces Leslie M. Moor as president of the firm.

In other action, the board elected Roy Eyler secretary treasurer, replacing Bob Jackson, who has resigned to take a position with Central Illinois Public Service Company. Eyler also serves as assistant secretary for the parent company.

A native of Fairland, Tex., Hodges joined GSU in 1949 upon graduation from Texas A&M University

with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He was named general manager-operations of Varibus in 1975 and in August, 1978, he was elected vice president and general manager-operations.

Eyler, a native of Donnellson, Iowa, attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison and the Texas Southmost College at Brownsville before entering the University of Texas at Austin where he received his BBA degree in industrial management in 1958. He was employed by Gulf States the same year in the Corporate and Finance Department. Eyler served as financial administration coordinator prior to his appointment as assistant secretary.

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# Top management reorganized

*A recently completed study by an independent consulting firm has resulted in a number of changes in the company's executive structure.*

Recently completed organizational studies have resulted in five executive management changes and eight upper level management moves.

On the executive level, Larry L. Humphreys, senior vice president-energy development, has been named senior vice president-engineering and construction (formerly energy development); Leslie M. Moor, vice president-administrative services, has assumed the position, vice president-human resources (formerly personnel); Edward M. Loggins, vice president-personnel, has been named vice president-administrative services, replacing Moor; William E. Heaner, vice president-legal services, will now report to the vice president-administrative services (Loggins) and Aubrey D. Sprawls, vice president-consumer services, will now report to the senior vice president-division operations and system engineering.

A new Engineering and Construction Department was formed at the recommendation of the management consulting firm, Theodore Barry & Associates, which was commissioned to do a management and operational review of the Energy Development and Power Plant Construction Departments. The upper management changes resulting from the merger of the two departments are as follows:

Pete T. Boerger, general manager-power projects, has been named general manager-fossil projects; James Gary Weigand, technical assistant to the chairman of the board, has been named general manager-nuclear projects; James E. Booker, director-nuclear licensing, has been named manager-River Bend Project; Clinton E. Calvert, manager-power plant construction, has been named manager-Sabine 5 Project; Ken W. Richardson, manager-River Bend Project, has been named manager-design engineering; Robert H. Townsend, manager-project services has been assigned the additional responsibilities of cost engineering/cost estimating and industrial engineering; H. Lee Hammack, production manager-system production, has been named manager-plant services and Roy J. West, manager-quality assurance, has been named manager-special programs.

**IN ANOTHER MOVE**, James E. Ward,

coordinator-methods & procedures in Administrative Services, has been named assistant to the president.

Humphreys joined GSU in January, 1977 and became senior vice president-energy development in September of that year. Prior to that he served as manager of the River Bend Project and executive assistant to the president.



*Humphreys*

A 1958 graduate of Linfield College, the Vancouver, Wash., native came to GSU from the Washington Public Power Supply System where he was deputy managing director. Humphreys received his master's degree in physical chemistry from Oregon State University in 1960. He is married to the former Mavis Simmons of Portland, Ore., and the couple has five children.



*Moor*

Moor had been vice president-administrative services since November, 1976 and was given collateral responsibilities as president of the Varibus Corporation, GSU's wholly owned subsidiary on May 1, 1978. A native of Beaumont, Moor joined the company in 1971 as executive assistant reporting to Sam Adams, recently retired senior vice president. He was named manager-material services in 1974.

**AFTER GRADUATING** from the University of Texas in 1953 with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering, Moor joined Sun Oil, where he worked until he came to GSU in 1971. Moor received his master's degree in business administration in 1971. He and his wife, the former Ann Terrill of Austin, have two sons; Les and Cris.

Loggins joined the company in 1958 after receiving his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Texas. After advancing through positions, which included director-industrial sales, superintendent Sabine Station



*Loggins*

and production manager-system production, he was named Western Division manager in 1975.

In 1977, Loggins was named vice president-technical services and in 1978, vice president-personnel. A native of Winona, Miss., Loggins is married to the former Patricia Smith of Hattiesburg, Miss. The couple has four children, Cindy, Martha, Russell and Sharon.



*Heaner*

**A NATIVE** of Brownsville, Tex., Heaner holds a bachelor of business administration and LLB degree from the University of Texas. He joined the company in 1960 as a claim agent and in 1962 was promoted to claim director. Heaner was named industrial relations director in 1966 and vice president-personnel manager in 1970. In 1976, he was made vice president-legal services, his present post.

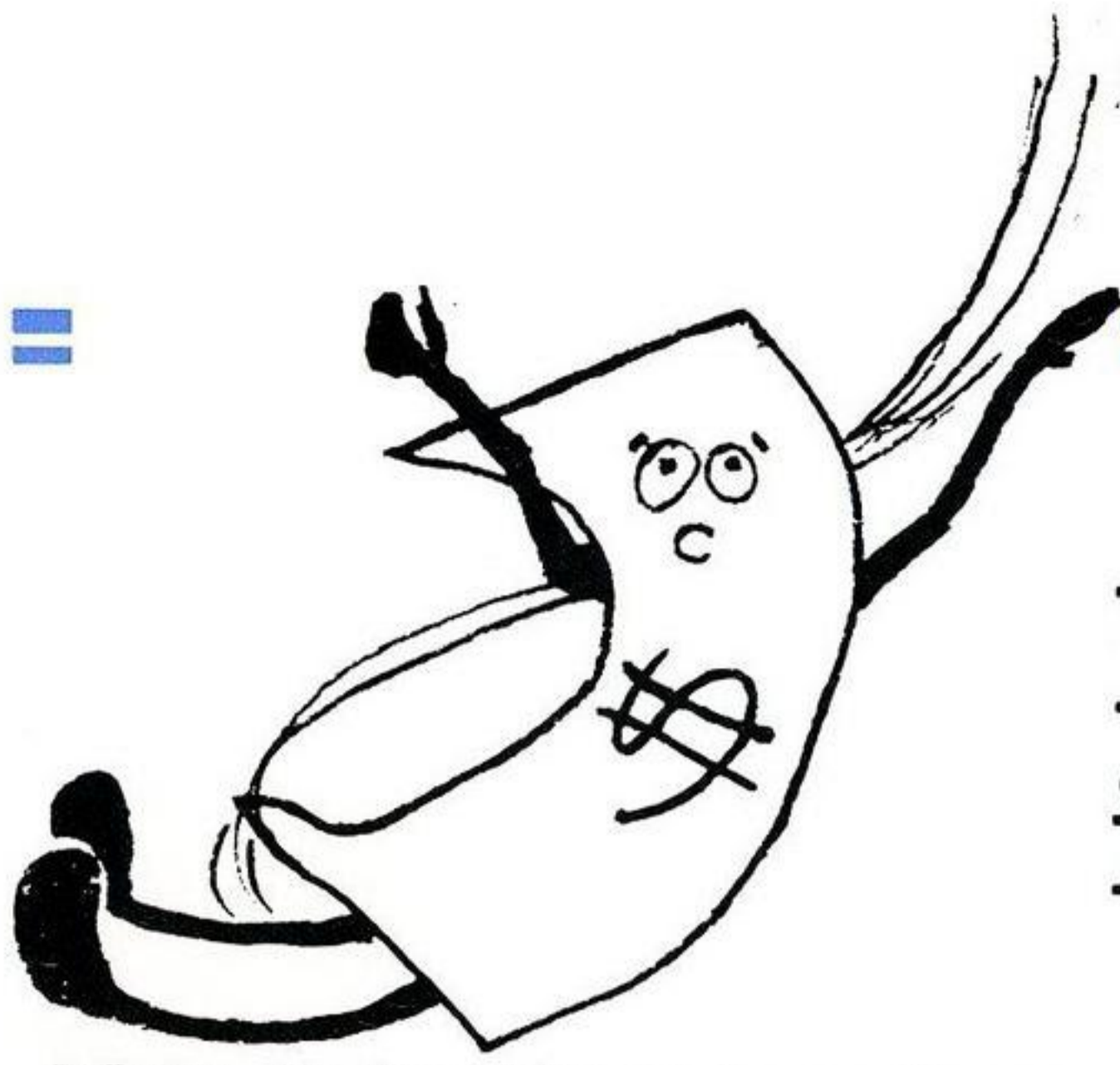
Heaner holds memberships in the State Bar of Texas, the State Junior Bar Association and the American Judiciary Society. He and his wife are the parents of five children; Ann, William, Joan, Mary and Julie.

Sprawls, a native of Clovis, N.M., is a veteran of some 30 years with the company. Prior to attaining his present position as vice president-consumer services in September of last year, he has served as Western Division manager since 1977 and director-consumer marketing since 1973.

**A 1949 GRADUATE** of Texas A&M with a bachelor's degree in engineering, Sprawls joined GSU the same year. He has served as an agricultural engineer, area development engineer, industrial engineer, district superintendent and sales superintendent. Sprawls was named director-residential & commercial sales promotion in 1969. Married to the former Jean Boernke of Wausau, Wisc., the couple has three children; Susan Kay, Mary Margaret and David Duane.



*Sprawls*



# Electricity: A true bargain in inflation-plagued U.S.

Inflation. It's the number one concern of many Americans today.

In fact, according to a recent Roper poll for the U. S. Department of Labor, the American people feel they are worse off today than they were five years ago and they believe things are likely to go downhill in the next five years. A University of Michigan survey found people were buying cars and other durable goods in anticipation of rising prices.

Gloom over inflation has apparently also inspired the recent wave of taxpayer revolts that have occurred across the country. Proposition 13 took California, a bellwether state and then swept into other states in recent elections.

Electric utility rates are also under attack despite the fact that electricity is a very real bargain, even in these days of runaway inflation.

**THE ONE TRUTH** that all U.S. consumers perceive today is the inexorable decline in the value of a single dollar bill. Real income may increase . . . but when the consumer takes his or her dollar bill into the marketplace, it consistently buys less and less. It is no wonder the scare headlines of double-digit inflation have stampeded consumers into the "buy it now" syndrome.

The 1927 dollar was worth just 29¢ in 1977, the 1950 dollar 40¢ in 1977, the 1970 dollar 64¢ and the 1973 dollar 73¢. If one had a dollar in 1927, it would buy a gallon of gasoline plus a two-pound chuck roast, two pounds of potatoes, a loaf of bread, and if you were lucky, a quart of milk. Today a dollar will buy the gallon of gas, and, with a little luck, there just might be enough left over to buy a loaf of bread.

This is, however, misleading. The normal trend in the economy is for the consumer to gain ground steadily rather than lose it abruptly. And, over the long term, the improvement is dramatic.

**A HELPFUL WAY** to bring home real cost increases or decreases to the consumer is to interpolate dollars into job time needed to purchase a particular good or service. The 1927 dollar, as was mentioned, was worth just 29¢ in 1977 but the 1927 worker (in manufacturing industries) earned 54¢ an hour (\$1.88 in 1977 dollars) versus \$5.63 for the same worker in 1977 (or \$1.63 in 1927 dollars).

Relating the earlier purchasing power example to job time, the 1927 worker could use one hour's wage to purchase one gallon of gasoline, then drive to the store and buy a one-pound chuck roast and two pounds of potatoes. The 1977 worker could take the earnings from one hour of work, buy one gallon of gas, drive to the store and purchase a two-pound roast and four pounds of potatoes and have enough left over to go back to the store the following day and once again buy a two-pound roast and four pounds of potatoes.

To the electricity consumer, this way of relating prices to working time is even more dramatic. On a national average, a kilowatt-hour of electricity cost 6.28¢ in 1927 but only 3.78¢ in 1977, but in examining electricity prices changes, it is important to consider increases in wages and increased levels of electricity usage.

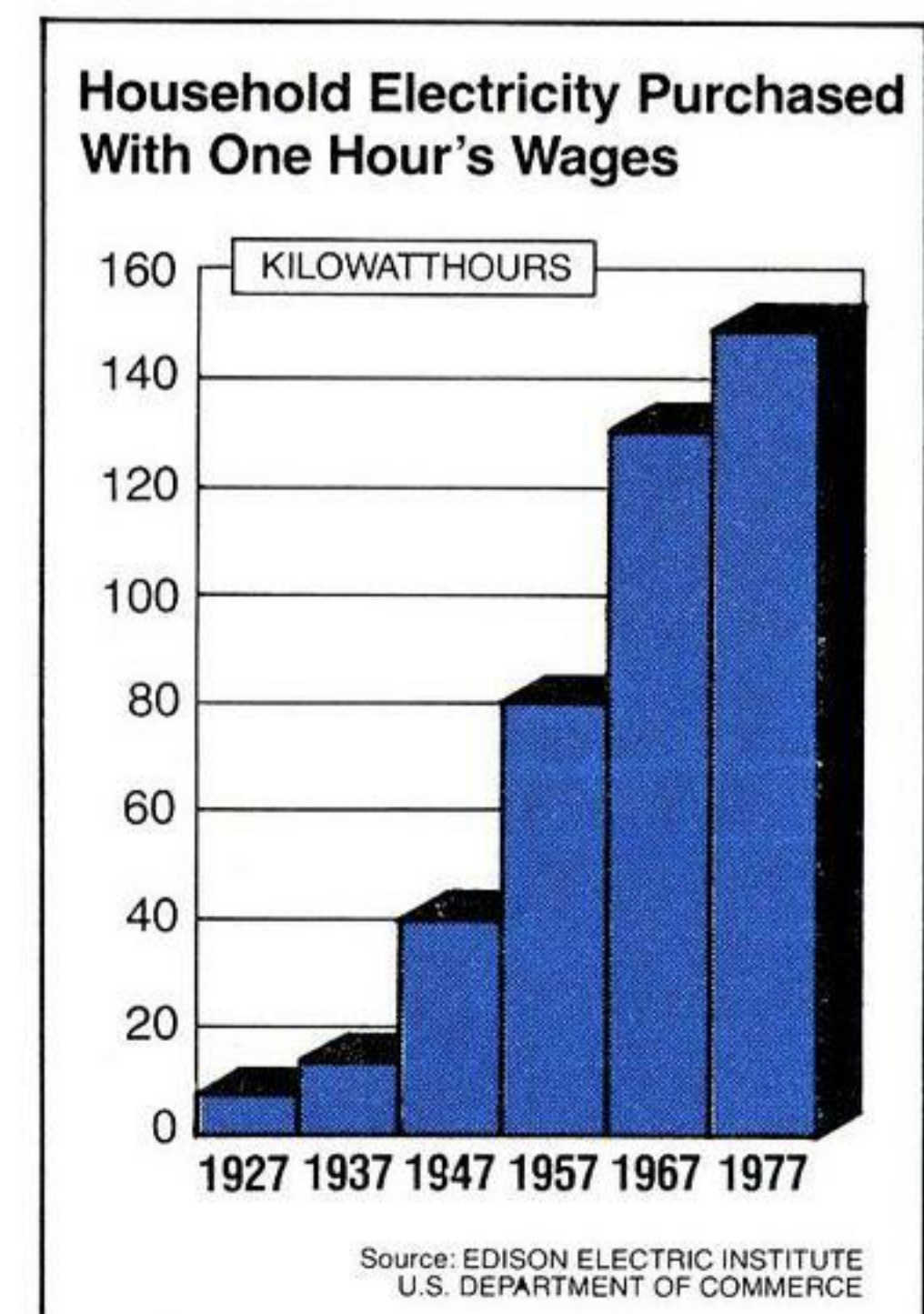
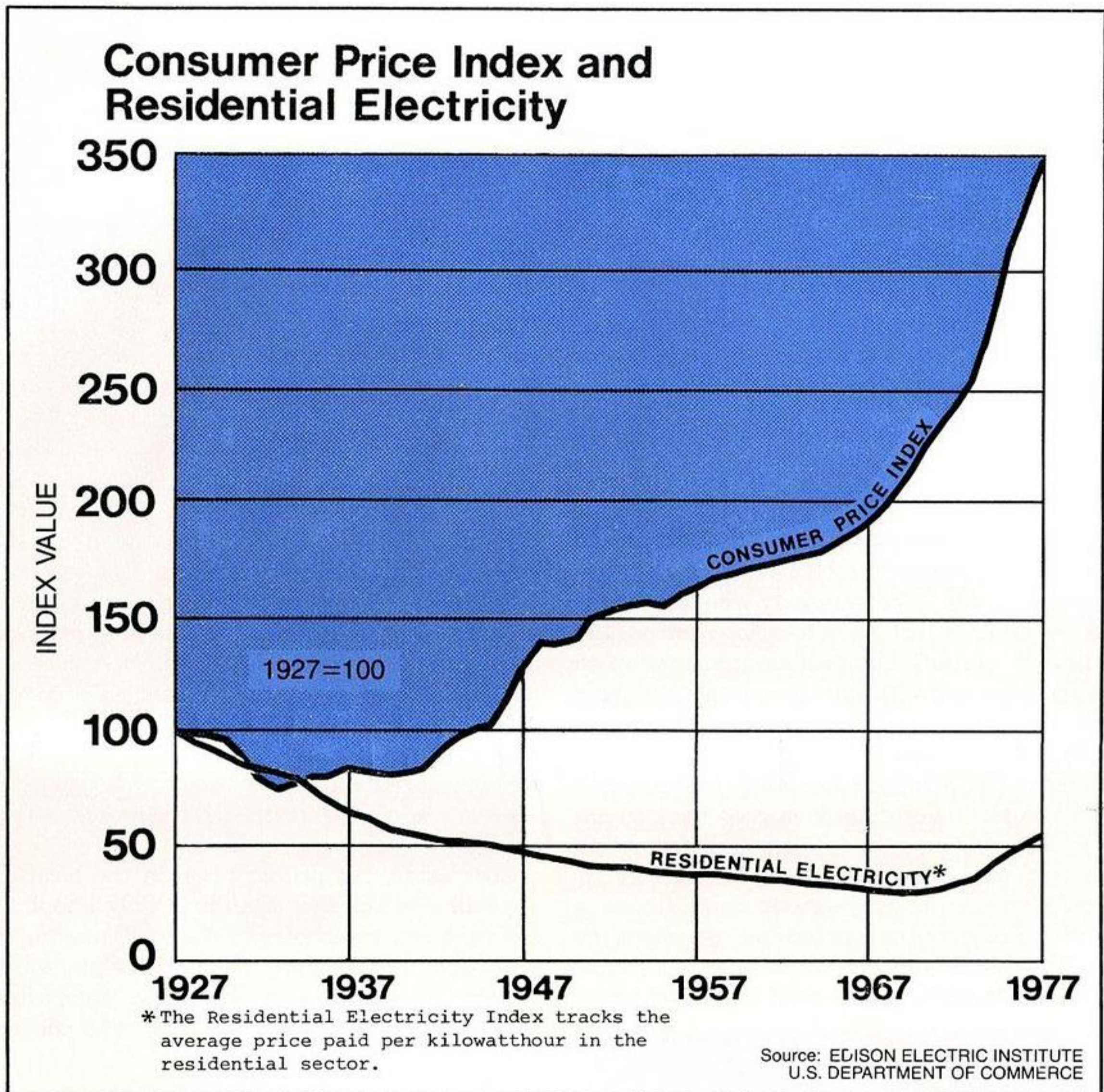
**IF TODAY'S** residential electricity customer had to pay 1927 electricity prices and earned 1927 wages, it would take more than two weeks' earnings just to pay the monthly electric bill for today's

usage. On the other hand, if the average residential customer in 1927 had been charged today's prices on his bill and paid today's wages, he could have earned enough to pay for the 1927 average electric usage in less than 15 minutes.

Actually, the average residential customer in 1927 had to work a total of four hours and 42 minutes to pay his monthly electric bill. The 1977 consumer had to work four hours and 52 minutes to pay the monthly electric bill — eight minutes longer. However, for his efforts, today's consumer receives nearly 20 times as much electricity.

An additional consideration is that while a 1977 dollar is not the same as a 1927 dollar, neither is the 1977 kilowatt-hour the same as a 1927 kilowatt-hour. Today's kilowatt-hour is far more useful.

There are numerous uses for electricity today that did not even exist in 1927 and those things that electricity does today that it also did in 1927 are done far more efficiently, all of which means electricity is even more of a bargain than the above analysis demonstrates.



# From doughnuts to dough-saver

## GSU's Baton

**W**hen Dutch Maid Donuts opened a franchise in Baton Rouge's Cortana Mall, who would have thought that several years later the tiny store was to become the home of an energy information center so totally innovative in concept and design that it has been labeled the first of its kind in the United States?

The result of some six months of planning, design and construction, the GSU Energy Store "opened for business" on January 22 with the sole purpose of providing consumers with information on the wise use of energy. "I can't find anybody who can tell me of any other utility which has a location such as ours where they do nothing but provide information on the conservation and efficient use of energy," said George Irvin, superintendent-consumer services for the Baton Rouge division.

The idea for the Energy Store is not new to GSU, he said. "I think the original idea goes back to our advisory boards on the Energy Information Centers. Way back when we started the Energy Information Centers on our various sales floors, a number of the advisors expressed concern about the location. They said 'you're not going to get people down to those locations. You need to go out where

the people are.' By then, however, we were already committed to the other program so we started it and it worked with some limited success."

**THE GROWING NUMBER** of Baton Rouge employees finally necessitated converting half the sales floor at the North Boulevard office into office space. "When that decision was made," said Irvin, "we realized we needed to do something about providing an information center for customers at some other location. So, we thought, why not do what the advisory board had recommended? Let's investigate the possibility of going to a mall."

Irvin, who supervised the construction activities at the mall, first approached the mall management in August. The months that followed were a whirlwind of activity preparing the store for opening by the mid-January deadline.

"I've about decided it would have been easier had we gone ahead and built our store in one of the other spaces," admitted Irvin. "But the net effect was that it was cheaper."

Cost aside, the primary reason the location was appealing is the fact that it is only about 30 feet from the No. 1 entrance to the mall, making it very accessible to the public. "That was a prerequisite — having a location that would be acceptable and desirable as far as the customer was concerned," said Irvin.

**THE SMALL DIMENSIONS** of the store created perhaps the biggest problems in the design and con-

struction of the facility. "When you've got electricians, painters and carpenters all working in a space that size, tempers get a little bit strained," Irvin pointed out.

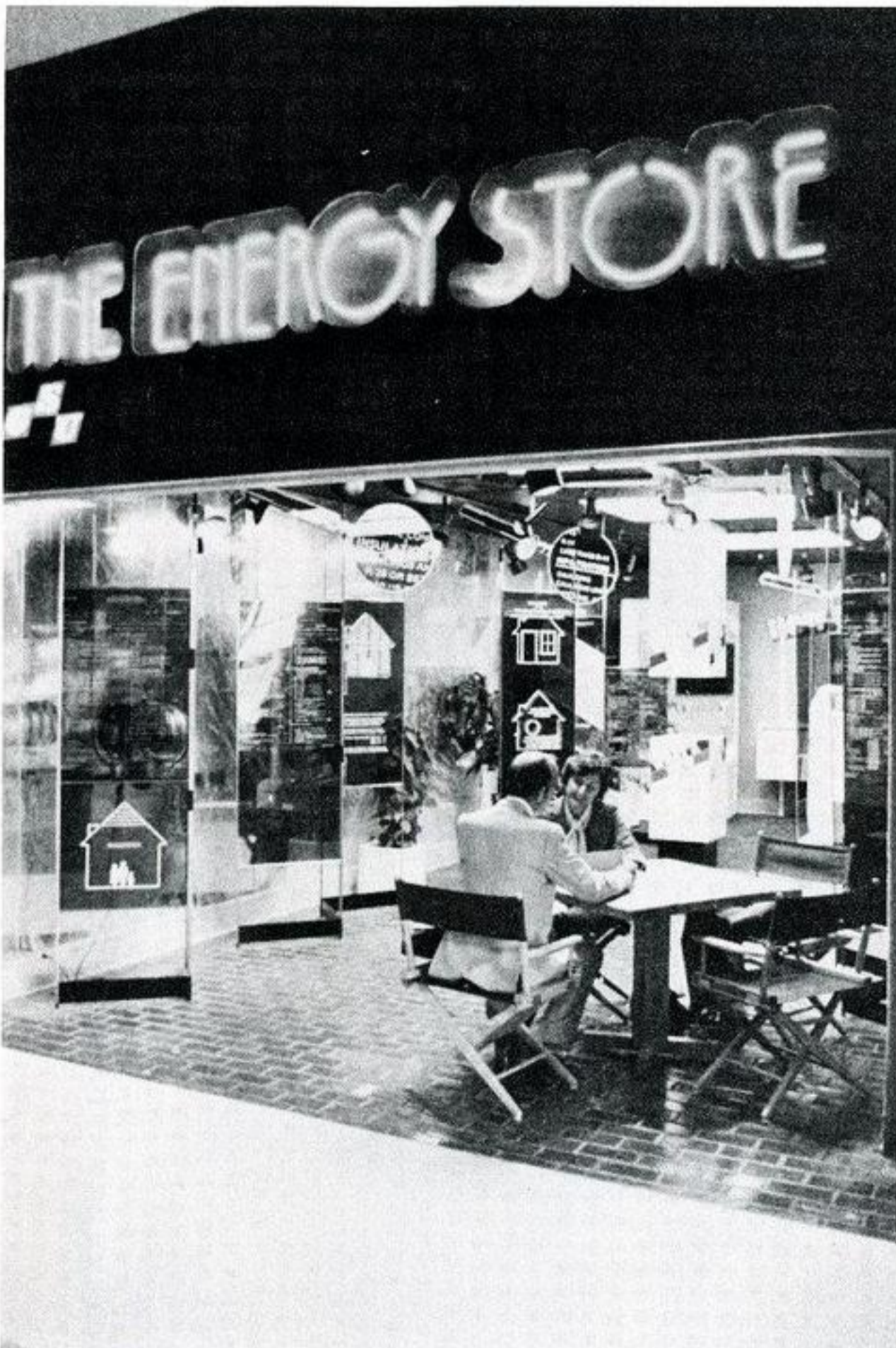
"The store itself is not that big (15 feet wide by 40 feet deep)," he added.

The biggest challenge of all, however, had to be the design of the store and its displays. "With the small dimensions we had to work in, the design was really the success of the store, as far as I'm concerned," said Irvin. "To be able to put as much as we have in there and not make you feel like you're closed up in a closet amazed me."

The man with the difficult task of designing the displays and other communications media for the store was Joe DeJean, director-customer relations. "Joe's creativeness is very evident because everything we've done in the store is innovative in concept," commented Irvin.

**DeJEAN FACED TWO** major challenges in designing the displays — space and aesthetics. "The physical space challenge, based on the narrow, deep space, was communicating an all-inclusive story in such a limited space," said DeJean, adding that the first step was to scale all the exhibits way down. "Scale models have a natural fascination, for adults and children alike, anyway," he said.

Tinted plexiglass, which allows see-through, was used extensively throughout the store. "It has to



"In look" of the store is a magic magnet in attracting customers.



Moving in terminates three months of planning, design and production, and initiates confusion.



# ENERGY

## Rouge

# STORE

breathe or else you feel all crowded," explained DeJean.

"We also mirrored one wall from floor to ceiling to make the room look bigger. Another effect of the mirror is that even if there's only one person in there looking around, reflections of his movements psychologically create a feeling of activity. Also, it lends 'pizazz' to what could be dull-subject matter."

Because of the moderate profile utilities have maintained over the years, said DeJean, whatever was "in" was "out" for utilities. "Now, we're probably one of the first in the nation to be so 'in' rather than 'out'."

IN DESIGNING THE displays, DeJean also faced the not so simple task of keeping the decor compatible with the other stores in the mall, the largest and most sophisticated in design between Houston and New Orleans. "Making all this typical, cold

hardware appealing to the eye was like trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear," he said.

But despite all the 'pizazz', the store was designed with one thing in mind, maintained DeJean — to communicate *effectively* with the customer. "We want to show him or her things they can do to continue to afford a comfortable lifestyle."

It's a basic obligation we have as a public servant!"

The store's displays, which were custom produced by Southern Displays of Houston, are centered around the five inspection areas of the National Energy Watch Program (N.E.W.) — glass, insulation, infiltration, cooling/heating systems and attic ventilation. N.E.W. is a national program of inspecting new and existing homes and certifying them as energy efficient.

In addition, there is an audio visual unit on which the consumer can select and view a tape on one of seven energy conservation topics. A "do it yourself" demonstration area in the rear of the store enables consumers to examine and even practice installing energy saving devices such as weatherstripping and caulking.

THE STORE, OPERATED under the supervision of Harriet Babin, supervisor-consumer services for Baton Rouge, is staffed with a fulltime clerk trained to answer any energy related questions consumers might have.

The company plans to open another Energy Store in Beaumont's Parkdale Mall next month as a kiosk in the center of the mall. The flexibility with which the displays were designed will enable the Beaumont store to utilize exact replicas of the Baton Rouge exhibits, "slightly modified", according to DeJean, despite the store's different format.

Why the Energy Store name and concept? "We needed to change from the typical utility company image," said DeJean. "To go into a sophisticated shopping mall like Cortana, we needed a name and look that was *untypically utility*."

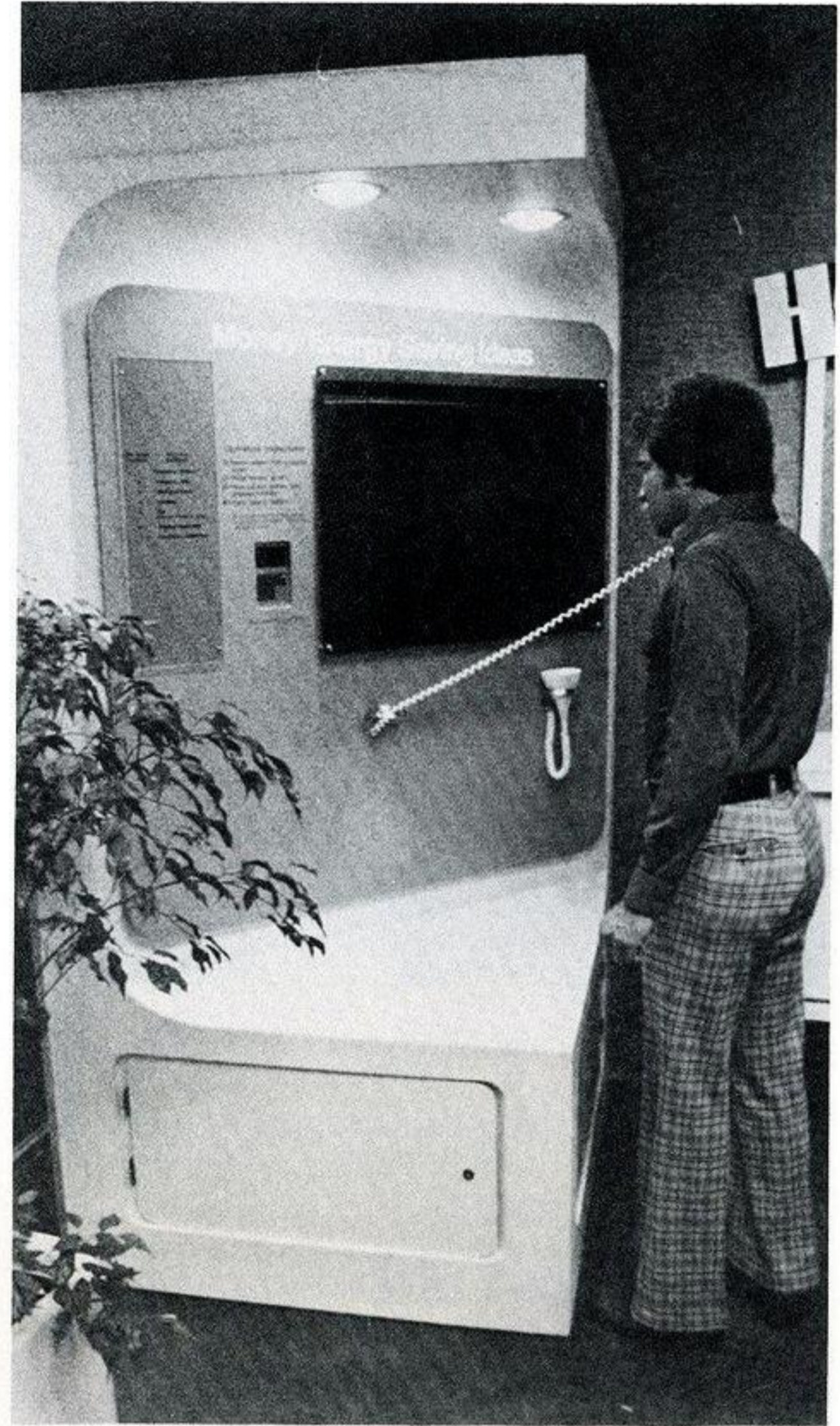
And, according to Irvin's account of one consumer's visit, the Energy Store is succeeding in projecting the unutility image. "One elderly lady, about 85 years old, read the sign "Energy Store" and come in there thinking it was something she could buy like health food.

"Lord knows, she needed some energy."

— Gary Dias



Scaled-down display communicates new construction techniques in about 12 square feet rather than the usual 48 square feet.



Self-contained audio-video console offers instant, random access to a variety of energy conservation subjects.



Research covers solar water heating, time-of-day metering, remote control of air conditioning, thermal storage and new construction techniques.

Photos by  
Henry Joyner and  
George Irvin



## Income tax time is upon us once again . . .

*And beginning this year there are some important changes in the federal tax laws that you, as a taxpayer, should know about.*

The Revenue Act of 1978 made several changes that will reduce income taxes for most persons in 1979, resulting in a decrease in the amount of income tax withholding deducted from most Gulf Stater's paychecks during the year.

In some cases, however, this will be more than offset by the increase in the social security tax beginning this year.

This general tax credit expired on December 31, 1978. Built into the income tax withholding rates and tables, it allowed each taxpayer to claim an additional credit of either two percent of taxable income, not to exceed \$180, or \$35 for each personal exemption.

Because of the expiration of the general tax credit, some employees, who do not claim all the withholding allowances to which they are entitled, will find their income tax withholding increased. This may be avoided by claiming all the withholding allowances to which you are entitled, including the special withholding allowance. Each single employee with only one job and each married employee with only one job, whose spouse is not employed, may claim one additional allowance for the special withholding allowance.

ALSO, THE AMOUNT of the earned income credit will be increased for 1979. In addition, starting in July, 1979, certain employees will be eligible to receive an advance payment of the earned income credit in their wage payment, instead of waiting until the end of the year. These employees must file a

certificate with their employer showing their eligibility.

The law has also been changed to allow a tax credit for qualified energy expenditures. For details, see the instructions for the 1978 Form 1040 and Form 5695, *Energy Credits*, and PUBLICATION 903, *Energy Credits for Individuals*.

Form W-4, *Employees Withholding Allowance Certificate*, has been revised to reflect these changes. You can use the worksheet in Form 1040-ES, *Declaration of Estimated Tax for Individuals*, to estimate what your taxes will probably be for 1979. This will help you decide whether you should change your withholding.

IF YOU HAVE been claiming additional withholding allowances based on tax credits, itemized deductions or alimony payments, note that the tables on the back of Form W-4 (revised December, 1978) have been changed to reflect the recent law changes.

Should you determine less tax should be withheld after reviewing your tax withholding situation, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recommends that you consider claiming all the allowances to which you are entitled. But, warns the IRS, you may not claim the same allowances with more than one employer at the same time. If you and your spouse are employed, you can divide the allowances between you, but both cannot claim the same ones. The more withholding allowances you claim, the less tax will be withheld from your wages; the fewer you

claim, the more tax will be withheld.

If you determine more tax should be withheld, the amount withheld can be increased by claiming fewer or zero allowances. You can also request that your employer withhold more tax. If married, you may check the box titled **Married but withhold at higher Single rate** on Form W-4. The usual situations when too little tax is withheld occur when the employee and his spouse are employed or if the employee has more than one job.

For help in completing Form W-4, get **Publication 505, Tax Withholding and Declaration of Estimated Tax**, which explains withholding in greater detail, or contact any IRS office.

*Editor's Note: Starting this year part of any unemployment compensation payment to single persons with incomes over \$20,000, and married persons filing joint returns with incomes over \$25,000, will have to be included as income on their tax returns. For details, contact any IRS office.*

## No changes in reporting 1978 Thrift Plan earnings

The Thrift Plan Committee reports that there have been no changes in the reporting of Thrift Plan earnings for income tax purposes.

According to the committee, none of the earnings (dividends, interest, company contributions or gains on the sale of stock) are taxable until a member terminates his employment with the company and liquidates his entire account.

Therefore, no earnings in your Thrift Plan Account should be included in your income tax returns until you leave GSU and your entire account has been liquidated.

# On The Move

**BAKER, SUZETTE M.** Stenographer, Beaumont General Services, promoted to Legal Stenographer, Legal Services.

**BLOCK, JIMMY W.**, Serviceman First Class, Orange T&D, promoted to Utility Foreman, T&D Line.

**BROWN, JAMES R.**, Lineman First Class, Baton Rouge T&D, promoted to Utility Foreman, T&D Line.

**BRYAN, BRANDON C.**, Coordinator-Corporate Planning, Beaumont Corporate Services, promoted to Economic Advisor, Energy Development.

**BURRIS, BARBARA G.**, Stenographer-Executive, Beaumont River Bend Project, transferred to Beaumont Nuclear Projects.

**CARRELL, CHERYL B.**, Stenographer-

Executive, Beaumont Power Plant Construction, transferred to Beaumont River Bend Project.

**DAUGHERTY, JOHNNIE M.**, Stenographer, Beaumont General Services, promoted to Personnel Department Clerk, Personnel Services.

**DUCOTE, ROLAND J.**, Communications Serviceman First Class, Baton Rouge T&D, promoted to Communications Foreman.

**ENGLAND, LESLEY A.**, Engineer, Beaumont Power Plant Engineering & Design, promoted to Assistant Project Engineer.

**FUKES, FLORINE P.**, Employment Interviewer, Beaumont Industrial Relations, promoted to Senior Employment Interviewer.

**JACKSON, RONALD L.**, Lineman Second Class, Silsbee T&D, promoted to Utility Pilot, Beaumont System Operations.

**JONES, WALTER W.**, Section Head, Baton Rouge T&D, changed to Right-of-Way Man.

**KILLOUGH, JAMES K.**, Co-pilot, Beaumont System Operations, promoted to Pilot.

**KITCHENS, VAN N.**, Substation Mechanic First Class, Orange T&D, promoted to Utility Foreman, T&D Line.

**KUCERA, DEBORAH K.**, Stenographer, Beaumont Energy Development, promoted to Stenographer-Executive, Power Plant Engineering & Design.

**LANDRY, JO M.**, Stenographer-Senior, Beaumont T&D, promoted to Stenographer-Executive.

**McKNIGHT, KENNETH C.**, Senior Engineering Assistant, Baton Rouge T&D, promoted to Party Chief.

**McLAUGHLIN, JAMES A.**, Application Engineer, Beaumont Engineering Standards & Applications, changed to Engineer, Planning Department.

**NAYLOR, ALFRED E.**, Executive Assistant, Corporate Services, promoted to Manager-Planning, reporting to the Vice President-Rates and Economic Analysis.

**PEVETO, OLIVER F.**, Utility Foreman, Orange T&D, changed to Inspector-Contract Crews.

**RICHARD, SANDRA F.**, Stenographer-Executive, Beaumont Quality Assurance, transferred to Beaumont Fossil Projects.

**RIDER, RONALD W.**, Utility Pilot, Beaumont System Operations, promoted to Co-pilot.

**ROGERS, RODNEY D.**, Technical Supervisor, Beaumont River Bend Project, promoted to Director-Operations Support, Beaumont Nuclear Projects.

**SMITH, PHILIP R.**, Senior Budget Analyst, Beaumont Financial Services, promoted to Coordinator-Business Systems, Accounting Services.

**WARD, JAMES E.**, Coordinator-Methods & Procedures, Beaumont Administrative Services, promoted to Assistant to the President.

**WENSEL, JOHN M.**, Utility Pilot, Beaumont System Operations, promoted to Senior Utility Pilot.

**WILLIAMS, LLOYD L.**, Party Chief, Baton Rouge T&D, changed to Section Head.

# Deaths



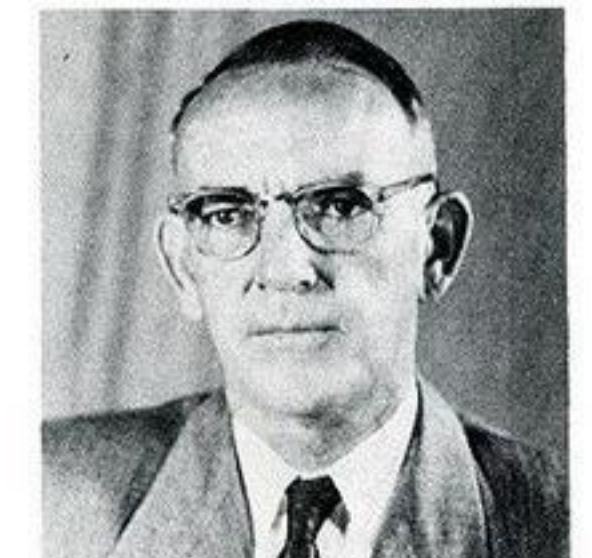
Lynell J. Henry



John D. Fleming



P. Ronaldson



Harvey Bowlin

Four retirees and three active employees died since the last notices were published in *Plain Talks*.

The deceased retirees include **Lynell J. Henry**, **John D. Fleming, Jr.** and **Pamphile F. Donaldson**, all of Baton Rouge and **Harvey Bowlin** of Baker, La.

Missing now among the active employees are **Lee A. Hickman**, Beaumont; **Earl Robert Saide**, Orange and **Cary S. Parker**, Baton Rouge.

Henry, a former laborer in the Baton Rouge Gas Department, retired in 1976 after 24 years with the company. A native of Lobdell, La., he joined GSU in 1952 as a laborer at Louisiana Station. He progressed to laborer II in 1963 and was transferred to the gas department in 1967.

Survived by his wife, Shirley, he died on Nov. 29.

Fleming died Dec. 9. A native of Baton Rouge, he retired in 1970 as superintendent at Louisiana Station. He joined the company in 1923 as an oiler at that generating plant.

A member of the Louisiana Engineering Society, Fleming was active in the chamber of commerce and Masonic Lodge No. 372.

Donaldson, who died Nov. 27, was employed in division production in Baton Rouge. He is survived by his wife, Mabyn.

Bowlin retired in 1969 after 32 years of service. A labor foreman since 1949, he was employed in 1937 as a lineman. A native of McComb, Miss., he died Dec. 23.

Hickman, 25, died December 18 after coming in contact with an energized 7,620 volt conductor at a subdivision located north of Beaumont. A lineman 2/C, he was born in Beaumont and attended schools in Silsbee, Tex. He was very active in the Boy Scouts of America for over 15 years and had served as a scout master and Exploer adviser.

Saide was a senior engineering assistant in Orange at the time of his death.

Parker died Dec. 11. He was employed at Louisiana Station, where he worked as a 2nd fireman.



Lee Hickman



Earl Saide



Cary Parker

## PUCT to abide by Carter guidelines in future rate cases

Texas utilities have been informed by general counsel John Bell of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) that the commission staff intends to abide by President Carter's economic guidelines in future rate cases.

Carter's guidelines call for rate increases of no more than 5-7 percent.

Bell said the PUCT will "make every attempt to limit, to the maximum extent possible, any such rate increases to a level consistent with the presidential guidelines."

According to Bell, any utility asking for a rate increase in excess of the guidelines will have to demonstrate unusual extenuating circumstances in order for the increase to be granted.

GSU's last increase in retail electric rates in Texas, a \$10.7 million hike effective July, 1978, represented an increase of 6 percent over the previous rates.

# Service Awards



**Daniel V. Garon**  
Division Production  
Baton Rouge  
**40 Years**



**Earl E. Bowlin**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**30 Years**



**Weldon L. Dube**  
Division Production  
Conroe  
**30 Years**



**Leonard J. Gaspard**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Port Arthur  
**30 Years**



**Norman R. Lee**  
Executive Dept.  
Beaumont  
**30 Years**



**Virgil M. Shaw**  
Planning Dept.  
Beaumont  
**30 Years**



**D. W. Smith**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Port Arthur  
**30 Years**



**Edwin L. Bush**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Port Arthur  
**20 Years**



**Sam Gallier**  
General Services  
Beaumont  
**20 Years**



**Joel A. Moore**  
Information &  
Data Services  
Beaumont  
**20 Years**



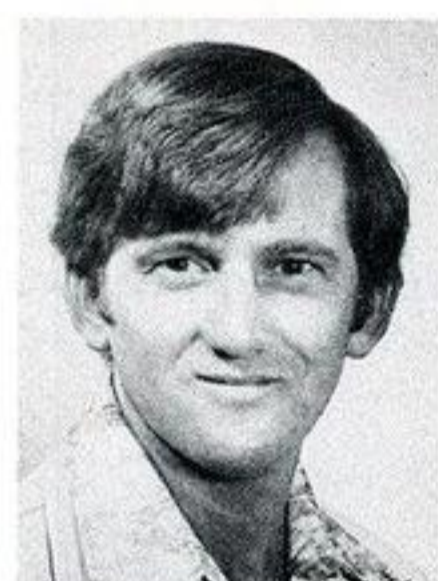
**James B. Purkey**  
System Eng. Design  
Beaumont  
**20 Years**



**Joseph D. Schatzle**  
Division Production  
Lake Charles  
**20 Years**



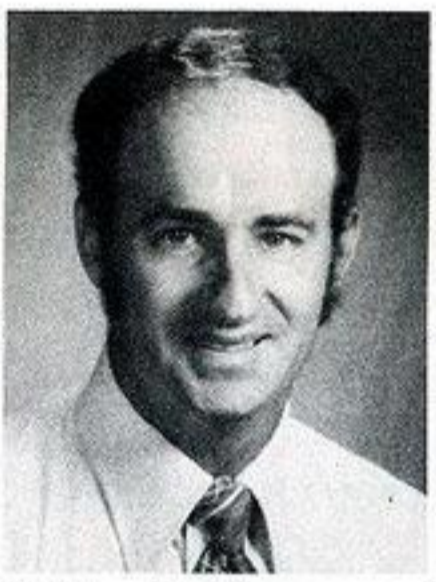
**Frank H. Weaver**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Beaumont  
**20 Years**



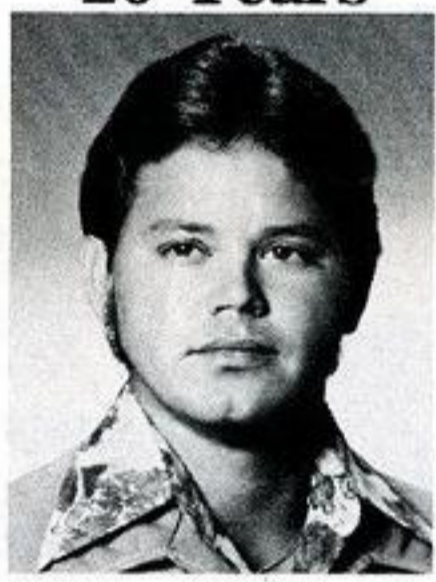
**Wallace J. Aultman**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Gonzales  
**10 Years**



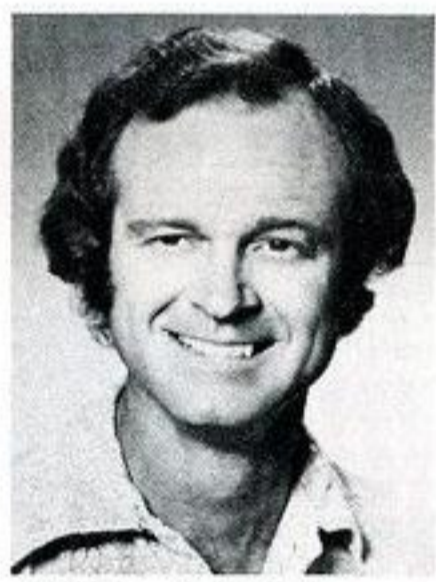
**Warren M. Bremer III**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



**Bobby L. Broussard**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Beaumont  
**10 Years**



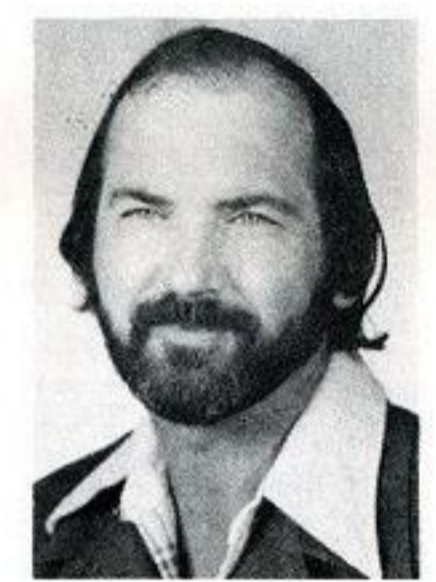
**Michael E. Ducote**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



**Robert G. Fouse**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



**Martin A. Guillory**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Lake Charles  
**10 Years**



**Deryl C. Hart**  
Division Production  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



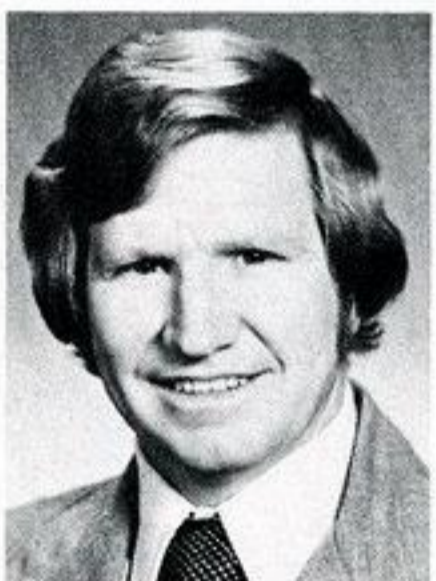
**Floyd L. Helton**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Conroe  
**10 Years**



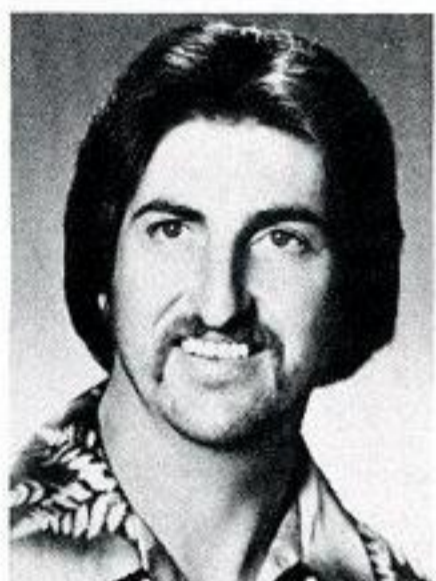
**Letticia B. Henderson**  
General Services  
Beaumont  
**10 Years**



**Joan M. Hudson**  
System Eng. Design  
Beaumont  
**10 Years**



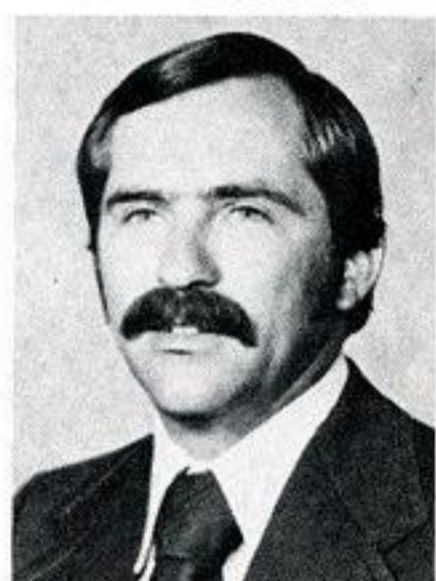
**Gordon R. Jean**  
Division Production  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



**Lance P. Nowlin**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



**Marie T. Nugier**  
Division Accounting Dept.  
Lafayette  
**10 Years**



**Edwin L. Mack**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Conroe  
**10 Years**



**George L. Riling**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Lake Charles  
**10 Years**



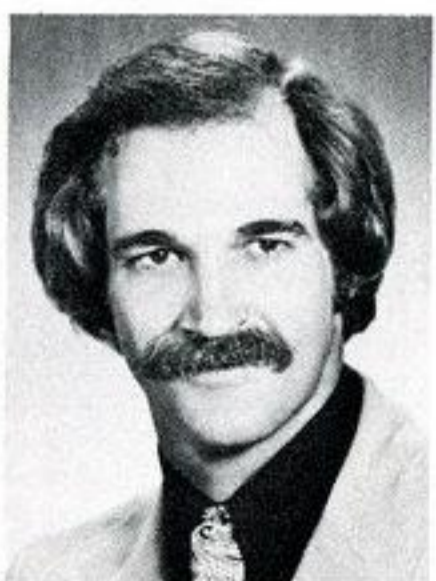
**Terry C. Ross**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



**Albert Singleton**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Conroe  
**10 Years**



**Louis E. Sylvester**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



**James R. Tate**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**



**Leonard D. White**  
Electric T&D Dept.  
Baton Rouge  
**10 Years**

## Classified Corner

For Sale — Solid wood, hand-carved exterior door, \$40. Metal detector was \$100, will sell for \$40. Bassinet \$8. Loren Pearce, Bmt. X758.

extras. Will consider trade. Call Mary at X401 in Bmt. or 898-4197 after 5:30.

For Sale — 1976 Ford Pickup. F-150 with XLT package; undercoated, AM-FM stereo-tape, heavy duty bumpers & suspension, radials, new exhaust system, starter & battery, double gas tanks, more

Custom Knitting — Hand-knit items made to your order ... in patterns and colors of your choice. Select baby clothes, sweaters, mittens, hats, afghans, or choose any knitted pattern available. Call Valerie, Bmt. X429 or 722-7178.

*If there's something you want to buy, sell, trade, give away or otherwise advertise, just jot down the information along with your name and extension number and send it to Plain Talks editor, Beaumont. Sorry, but no ads of an employment nature will be published.*

# Inside GSU



The company's new year commitment to the Nelson Coal Project is illustrated by these four young ladies modeling T-shirts which sport the initials OTUB, standing for ON TIME UNDER BUDGET. The girls are from left: Ellen Brittain, Jackie Ellender, Angela Latham and Cherlyn LeBlanc. When completed, the unit will be the company's first coal-fired unit and will add an additional 540 megawatts of generating capacity to Roy S. Nelson Station at Westlake, La. (from Martha Caldwell).



Suzanne Hanks, 17-year-old daughter of Wiltz C. Hanks, Jr., Lake Charles Communications Serviceman 1st class, recently won the Lake Charles Junior Miss title. The 11 contestants were judged on scholarship, poise, appearance, physical and talent, in that order. An interview the day before the pageant counted 50 percent. Suzi was awarded a trophy, one dozen red roses, a crown, the Junior Miss banner, dinner for two at Red Fox Inn, a \$200 scholarship and a three month membership at the Roman Health SPA. A senior at Barbe High School, she is president of FBLA and historian of the Octagan Club. (from Dorothy Bennett).



Les Moor, former vice president of administrative services, was honored with a farewell party recently, upon his appointment as vice president of human resources. Moor is pictured above with former secretary Maxine Russell.

## Four Gulf Staters retire

Four Gulf Staters recently joined the ranks of the retired.

Retiring Jan. 1 were Robert L. Wynne, Jr., Leon R. Andrus and Edward Duhon. Wilbert Carney, Jr., retired on December 1.

Wynne, manager-budgets in the Financial Services Department, joined the company in 1938 as a customer accounts clerk in Beaumont. Advancing through several accounting jobs in the Treasury Department, he was promoted to general accountant in 1953 and assistant chief clerk in 1954. A native of Beaumont, Wynne was appointed assistant secretary in 1960. He was appointed manager-budgets in 1976 after serving as assistant treasurer-budget manager since 1975.

Andrus and Duhon were both Lake Charles employees. Andrus, an appliance repairman 1/C in the T&D Service Department, joined GSU in 1940. A native of Oberlin, La., Duhon retired as a utility foreman in the T&D Substation Department. He was employed in 1944.

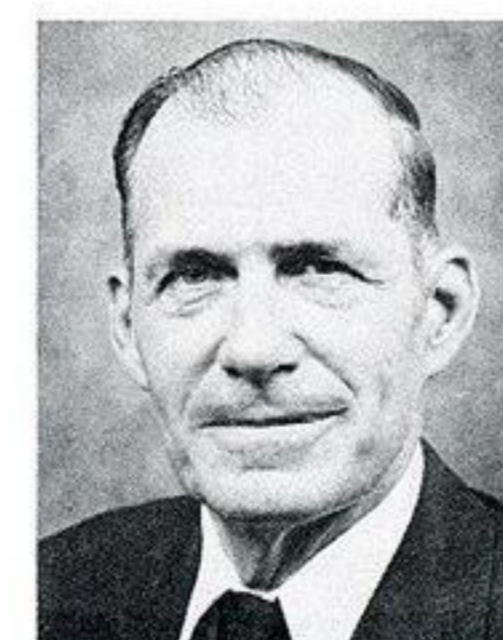
Carney, who retired early, was employed as a mechanic's helper in the Production Department at Louisiana Station.



Robert Wynne



Leon Andrus



Edward Duhon



Wilbert Carney

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# GSU Christmas Album



## Port Arthur



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# Conroe



# Madisonville



*Orange*



*Jennings*

*New Caney*



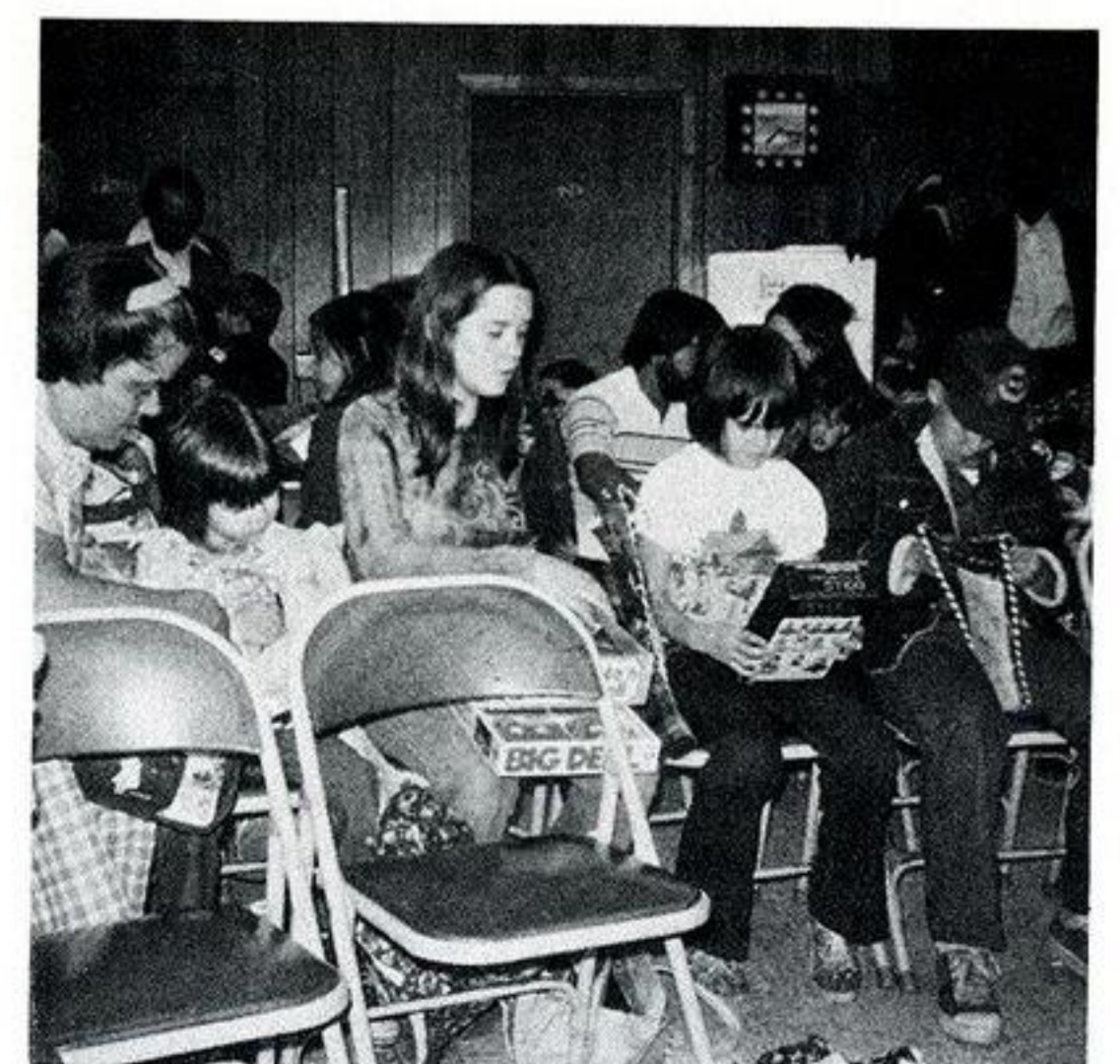




# Sulphur



# Navasota



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# Lake Charles



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# Beaumont Service Center



# Neches Station



# 100 'light' years recalled.

One hundred years ago, Thomas Alva Edison invented the light bulb in his Menlo Park, N.J. laboratory. It was Oct. 21, 1879, when the inventor literally brought the world out of darkness.

In 1882, Edison opened the first commercial central power station — one of many that would evolve into power companies, including Gulf States, and provide electrical power for the nation.

In all, Edison had 1,093 patents in his name, but the incandescent lamp proved to be his best gift and, according to Edison, the hardest. "Genius," he once said, "is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration."

His genius gave us light and our dedication to you keeps improving it.

  
**GULF STATES UTILITIES COMPANY**

CENTENNIAL OF LIGHT



1879 1979

