

# PLAIN TALKS

FEBRUARY  
1980



## THE COVER

Under Board Chairman Don Crawford's leadership, the month of February has been designated as a time for emphasizing our company's nuclear power plant construction project at River Bend, near St. Francisville.

The month marks a year since company officials announced plans to resume construction of River Bend Station. GSU first publicly announced plans to construct its first nuclear fueled generating unit in 1971.

Because of the importance of this project to all GSU employees, their families and the communities we serve, it was decided to feature an architect's conception of River Bend as the cover photograph for this month's Plain Talks, rather than using an employee photograph. Future issues, however, will continue to feature photographs taken by Gulf States' employees.

River Bend will be a 940 megawatt, General Electric Boiling Water Reactor (BWR) situated in the Baton Rouge Division. Stone & Webster, a Boston firm knowledgeable in nuclear power plant construction, is the architect/engineer.

**Editor's note: The January Plain Talks, which featured the Christmas Album, included three incorrectly identified photographs. The two pictures on the bottom of pages 10 and 11, both of which showed a young boy with Santa Claus, were actually taken in Conroe, rather than Beaumont. The little boy with the train, pictured in the middle of pages 10 and 11, was in Port Arthur, rather than Sabine Station.**

Mr. Sam Badger  
Gulf States Utilities Company  
Beaumont, Texas

Dear Mr. Badger:

We have just had the final inspection of our home for energy efficiency. This project has been most satisfying and agreeable.

The key to its success has been Mr. Gene Koci. His competence, patience and friendly attitude make excellent advertisements for GSU. In him, you have a very valuable employee.

We heartily commend his services since saving energy is one of our top priorities. Your company has shown remarkable foresight in providing this service.

In appreciation,  
Ruth M. Kuhlman

**Editor's Note: As supervisor of energy audits for the company's Beaumont Division, Koci works with area homeowners upgrading their homes to the standards of energy efficiency set by the National Energy Watch program.**

Mr. Joe Bailey  
Gulf States Utilities Company  
Huntsville, Texas

Dear Mr. Bailey,

Thank you for taking time from a busy schedule to talk to the graduate class about energy conservation. Some of these people are teaching in the public schools, some on the college level and some are reaching adults in their homes. Wherever and whenever people are reached, they need to conserve energy and to know ways by which they can cut down. Your presentation reminded us of some of the ways we already know and then you made additional suggestions that will be passed on and used by all of us.

We appreciate what all of the utility companies are now doing in helping the American public about the energy question. We are especially proud of Gulf States for their leadership in the field of conservation.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Louise McCormick  
Sam Houston State University

## PLAIN TALKS

Volume 59 — Number 2 —  
February, 1980

Published monthly for employees and annuitants of Gulf States Utilities Company. Produced within the Public Affairs Department, Fred C. Repper, vice president, by the Communications Department, Henry Joyner, manager. Address all communications to Editor, PLAIN TALKS, Gulf States Utilities Company, P. O. Box 2951, Beaumont, Texas 77704, Phone (713) 838-4366.

**Editor:**

Susan Huff

**Correspondents:**

Adelaide Bankston

Shivaun Bourgoyne

Bonnie Duval

Connie Herford

Bobby Hilborn

Les Jones

Earl Landry

Lydia Mitchell

Edith Patterson

Anna Raymond

Rose Reeves

D. W. Rutherford

Suzonne Taylor

David Thornhill

Doris Wallace

George Weathers

Nina Wiley

Ritchie Yott

# CONTENTS

## PLAIN TALKS

### Features

**5** River Bend Becomes Household Word in Baton Rouge Area. Allegations about River Bend, the 940 megawatt nuclear power plant now under construction by the company, appeared in a Baton Rouge newspaper in early January.

**6** Quality Assurance Vital to Nuclear Plant Construction. Quality assurance is a factor at River Bend from the beginning, covering the design specifications of an item, continuing during manufacture, shipment, storage and installation of the item and including when the item performs as specified.

**7** Management Conference Speakers Offer Predictions for the Future. GSU will be impacted by changing American life, company officials were told during their second annual management conference.

**8** Meter Security Program: Western Division Counters Theft of Electricity.

**9** Laborer Turns Preacher: Neches Station Retiree Labors for the Lord.

**10** Line Foreman Fashions Homemade Aircraft with Wood, Auto Engine. Bobby Feagin of Navasota spent 10 years building a small aircraft powered by a 53-horsepower Volkswagen engine.

**12** Q&A: Dr. Gary Weigand on River Bend Allegations.

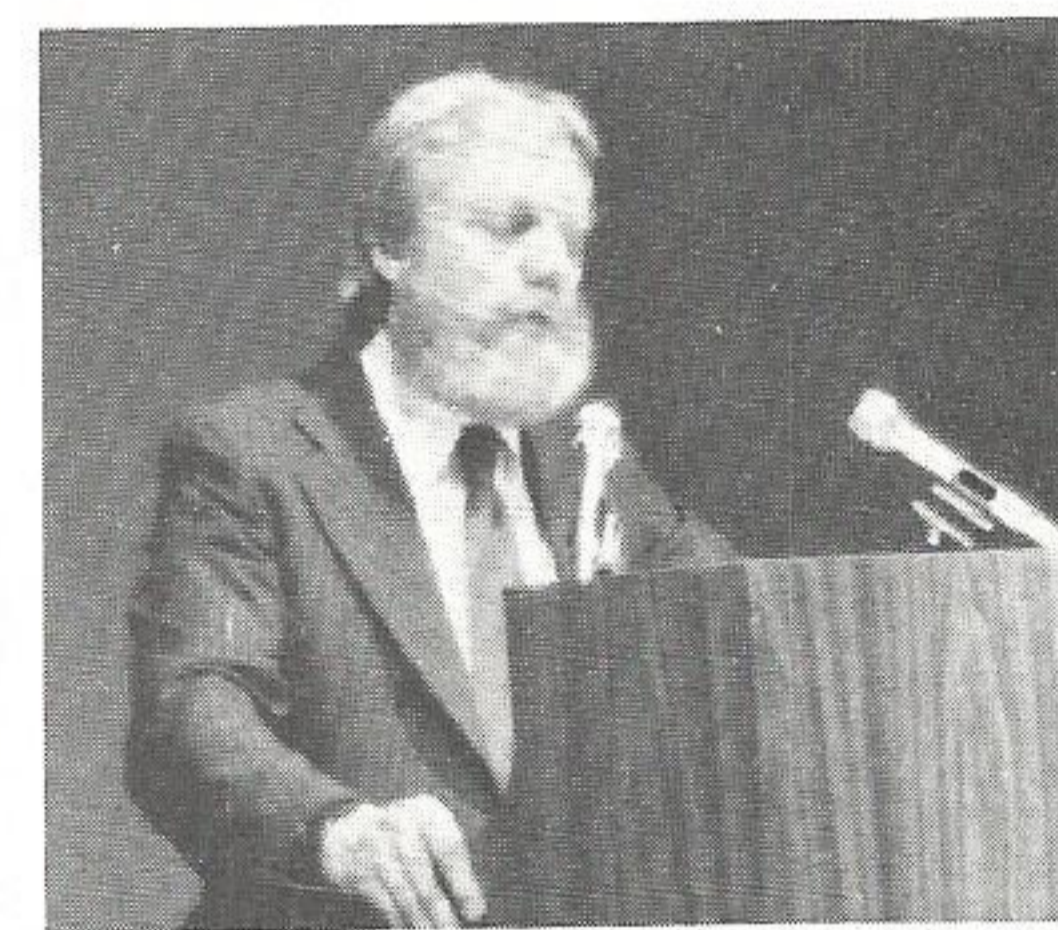
**16** Testing Lab Checks Safety Items for Effectiveness. GSU operates one of the most up-to-date di-electric testing laboratories to found anywhere, reports Ray Thompson, system safety coordinator.

### Departments

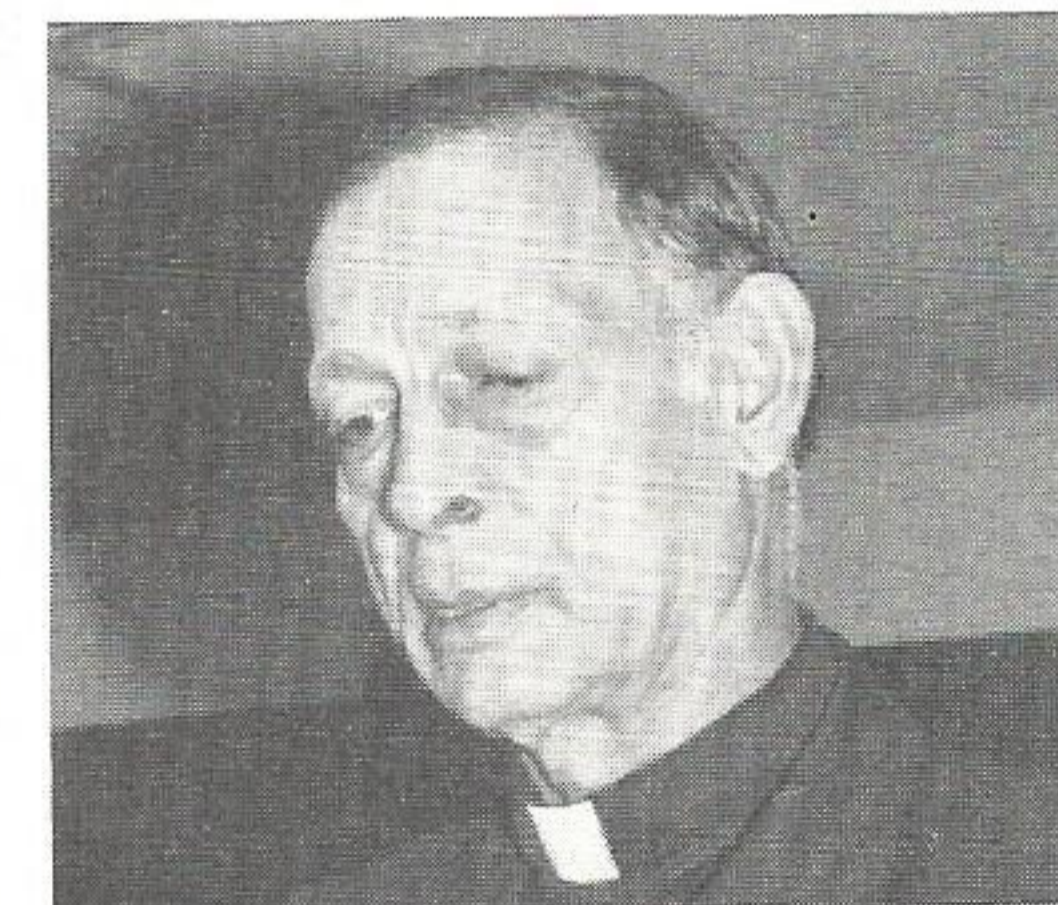
- 4** Newsbriefs — concise reports of company events  
**8** Inside GSU — two pages of items of interest to employees  
**16** Service Awards — recognition of employees  
**18** Light Side — national and international developments  
**19** Comments — Former Customer Cites High Energy Costs



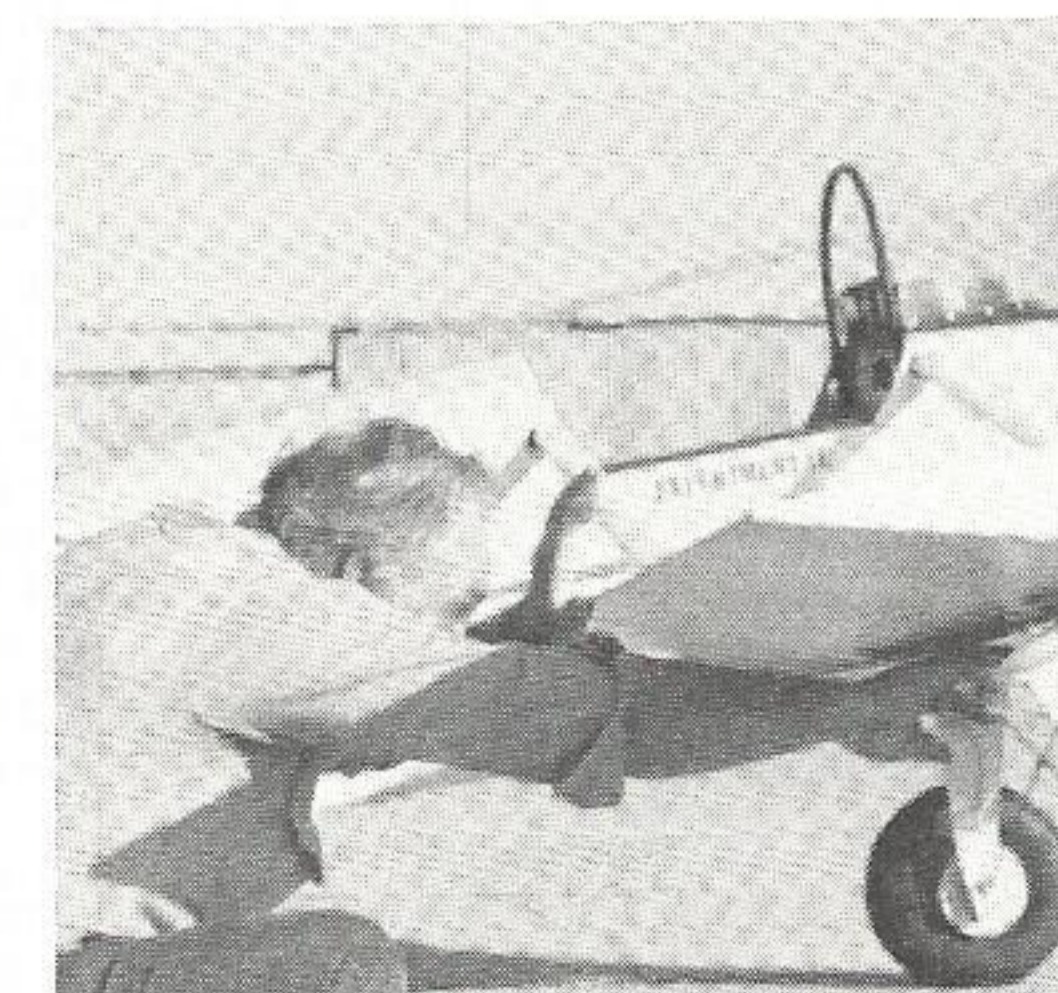
6



7



9



10

## Triplett, Green promotions given

LaMelle Triplett has been named manager-disbursement accounting, effective January 1. In her new position, Mrs. Triplett, who was formerly director-disbursement accounting, reports directly to the assistant controller.

In another move, R. T. "Skippy" Green was named director-accounts payable, also effective January 1. Green reports directly to Mrs. Triplett.

Mrs. Triplett joined the company in 1948 as a stenographic clerk in plant accounting. She also worked in the voucher section before moving into payroll and employee benefit work in 1953.

A native of Jonesboro, La., she is a graduate of a Jonesboro high school and has taken several business and self-improvement courses through the years. She and her husband, Jack, live in Beaumont.

Green has been with GSU since September, 1959. He has been responsible for some phase of the accounts payable functions since July, 1974. His previous assignments were all related to accounting and included positions in general accounting, internal auditing, customer accounting and system billing.

A native of Beaumont, Green holds a B.B.A. degree in general business from Lamar University. He and his wife, Sue, have two children — Cindy and Ricky.

## Directors elect four new officers

A treasurer and three new vice presidents were elected by the board of directors during their February 7 meeting in Beaumont.

The promotions included:

— Bobby J. Willis, from assistant controller to treasurer.

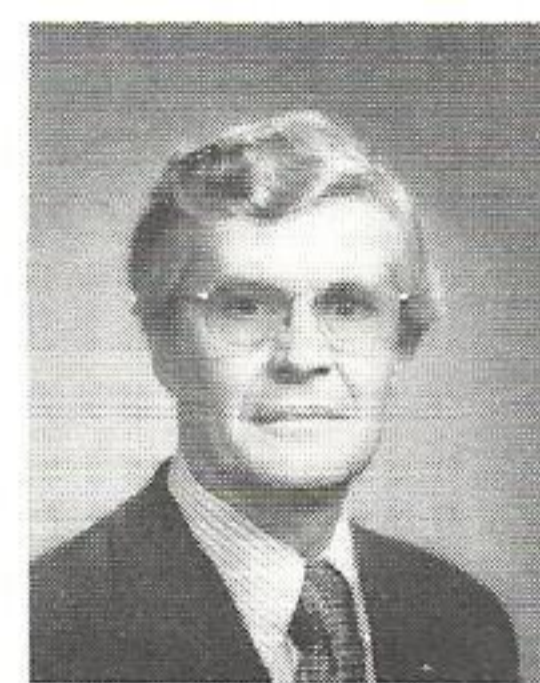
— Phillip T. Boerger, from general manager-fossil projects to vice president-fossil projects.

— Dr. E. Linn Draper Jr., from technical assistant to the chairman of the board to vice president and technical assistant to the chairman of the board.

— Edward J. Serwan, from general manager-fuels and materials to vice president-fuels and materials.



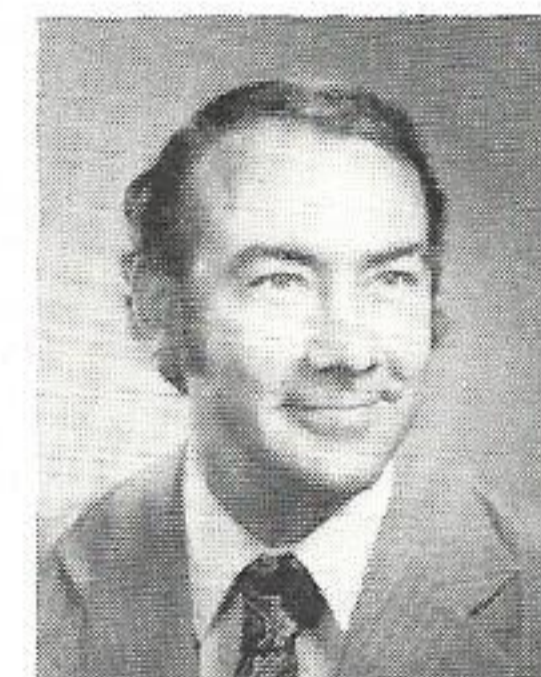
Willis, 44, has been with GSU since 1962, when he joined the company as a junior accountant. He worked in various accounting and purchasing positions before becoming director of financial accounting in 1977. In 1978, he became manager of accounting services and in 1979 was elevated to assistant controller. He is a graduate of LSU.



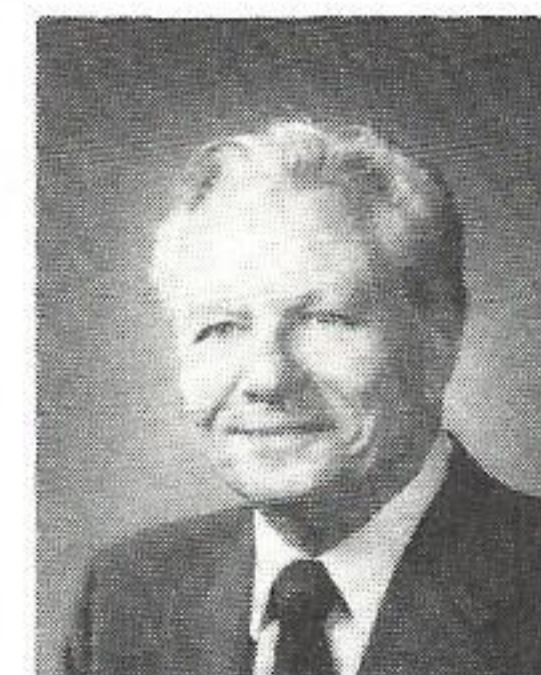
Boerger is a retired Army brigadier general who joined GSU in 1978 as general manager-fossil projects. During his 32 years in the Army, Boerger held various administrative and engineering positions in the United States, Korea, Vietnam and Iran. Before coming to GSU, he worked for Giffels Associates Inc., an architectural and engineering firm

in Michigan. A West Point graduate, Boerger has masters degrees in civil engineering from the University of Minnesota and in international affairs from George Washington University.

As the executive in charge of fossil projects, one of Boerger's prime responsibilities is construction of the Nelson 6 coal unit near Lake Charles.



Dr. Draper has become widely-known both locally and nationally during the year he has been with GSU. An expert in the field of nuclear energy, Draper has appeared often before civic groups, legislative committees and other forums.



Serwan came to GSU in late 1978 as manager of fuel services. Before that, he had been manager of corporate environmental protection at BASF-Wyandotte in Geismar, La. He has a bachelor degree in chemistry from St. Louis University.

# River Bend Becomes Household Word in Baton Rouge Area

River Bend has become more of a household word than ever in the Baton Rouge area.

The 940 megawatt nuclear power plant, which GSU is building near St. Francisville, became a hot media commodity in early January when the Baton Rouge Sunday Advocate published a story about allegations of unsafe construction activities at the site.

The article, which was spread across the top of the newspaper's front page on January 6, was only the first of many stories that were written during the next several days about the plant, the allegations and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission investigation. Most of the accusations involved welding in the containment vessel.

Company officials quickly realized that the news media and the public had to be reminded what GSU was doing to assure that River Bend was a safe plant.

On Thursday, January 10, a news conference was held at the plant site with reporters from the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate and State-Times, all three Baton Rouge television stations, one radio station, the Associated Press and the St. Francisville newspaper in attendance.

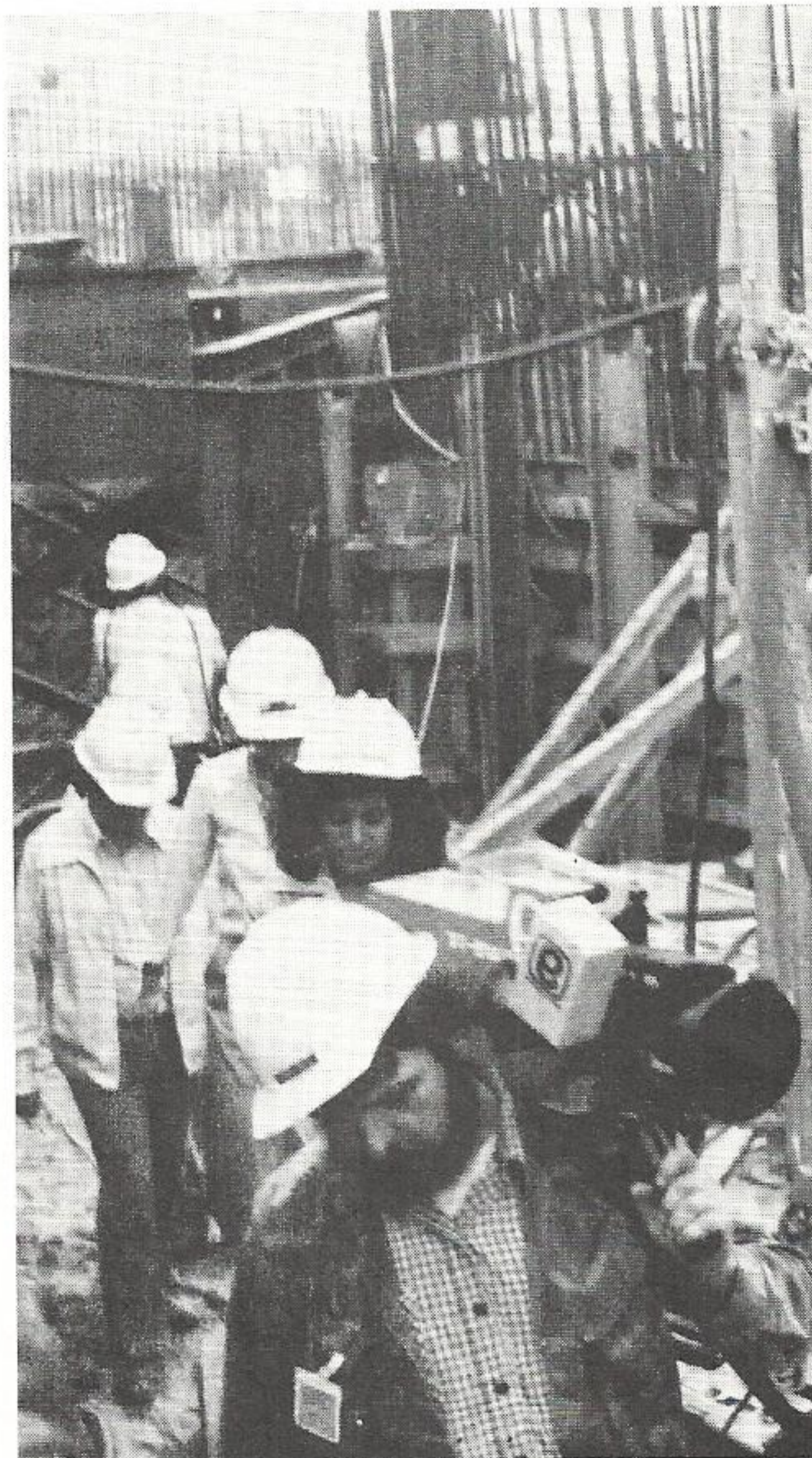
Larry Humphreys, executive vice president in charge of the company's River Bend Nuclear Group, detailed the project's quality assurance program, which exists solely to ensure that River Bend is built properly and safely.

Humphreys said all workers are told when they first come on the site that they are required to report any activities that might be improper.

He expressed disappointment that the former River Bend

worker who made the allegations did not bring his concerns to the attention of the company or quality assurance personnel before going to the NRC.

Humphreys emphasized that there are more than 100 quality assurance personnel at River Bend and another 100 quality assurance workers and auditors at vendor shops throughout the nation.



"GSU monitors Stone & Webster (the project contractor) who monitors the subcontractors who monitor the workers," Humphreys said. "We have people checking people checking people."

Quality assurance findings are routine matters, the River Bend executive said. He cited several instances where the quality assurance program had identified problems and made certain they were corrected.

Dr. Gary Weigand, vice president for River Bend operations and technical systems, told reporters that nuclear plants are designed to standards and specifications "without parallel anywhere in industry."

Humphreys told the news conference that "we may as well get used to this. I don't know of any site anywhere that doesn't have allegations pending."

Although most such allegations are eventually found to be without substance, the NRC must investigate any and all, Humphreys pointed out.

In answer to a question, he declined to criticize individuals who report something they believe to be improper. "I don't want to demean an attitude that says, 'Hey, here's something you ought to know.' People make mistakes, and I want to know about it when they do."

Shortly before the news conference, the NRC investigators told GSU officials they had checked five of the 12 allegations and had found nothing wrong.

Humphreys relayed the news to the reporters, and that turned out to be the major story which resulted from the news conference and subsequent visit to the site itself.

GSU was notified in mid-February that the NRC had found no substance to any of the 12 allegations. The Baton Rouge Sunday Advocate played the story as prominently as it did the initial one about the allegations.

As a result of the NRC's all-clear on the first five allegations, 7,000 cubic yards of concrete were poured on January 15, 16 and 17, forming the 10-foot-thick foundation for the plant's reactor containment vessel.

# Quality Assurance Vital to Nuclear Plant Construction

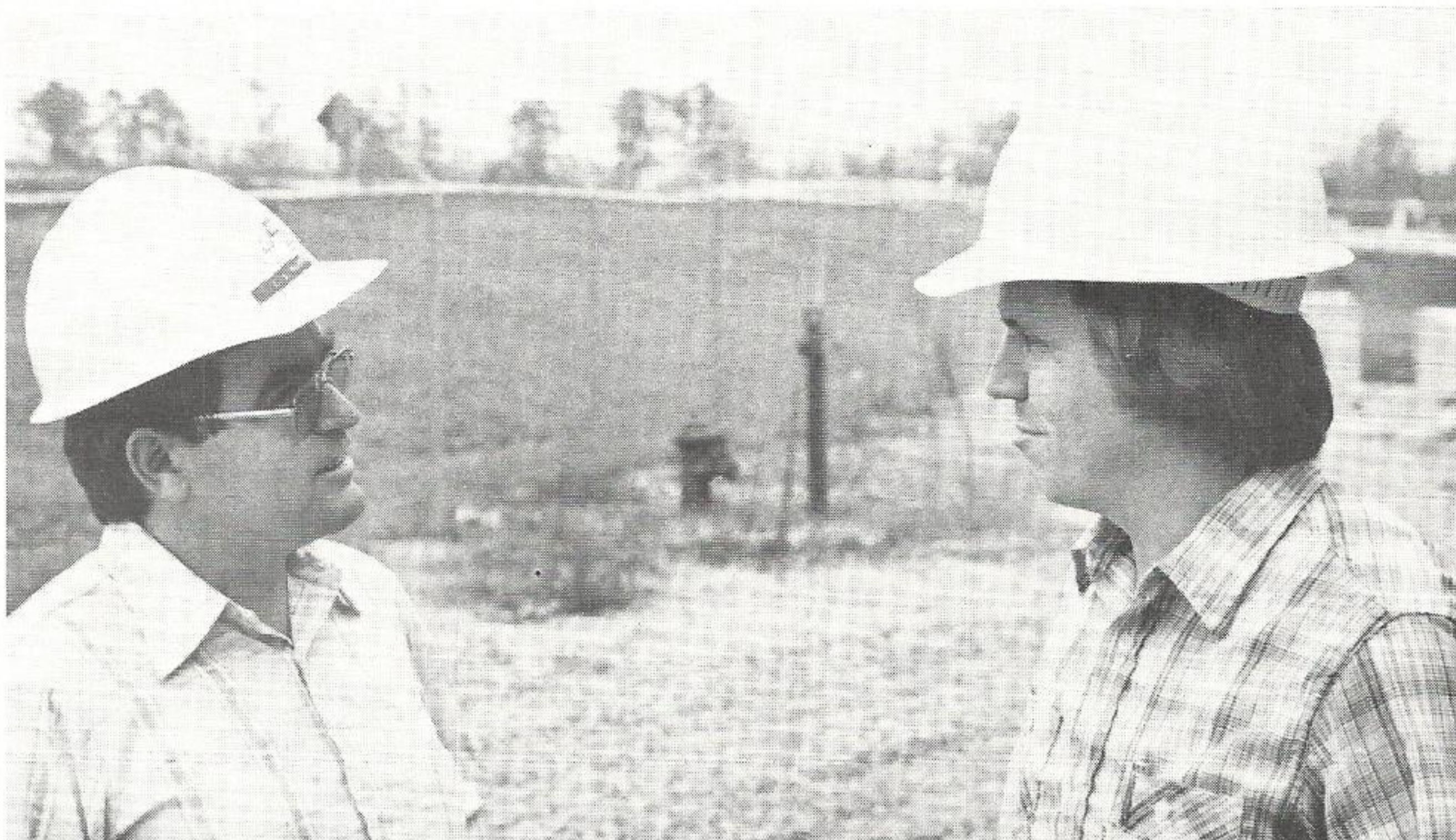
**E**veryone, from members of the board of directors to the smallest contractor, knows quality assurance is vital in the construction of River Bend. All agree that quality assurance is a necessity that must be accomplished despite the tedious, time-consuming nature of the job.

No one feels more strongly about the importance of quality assurance than Tom Crouse, quality assurance director for the River Bend Nuclear Group. Crouse, with over 11 years of experience in nuclear quality assurance, is impressed with the attitude of GSU senior management.

"Safety is top priority for senior management," he said. "The board, Mr. Crawford, Larry Humphreys — they all are deeply concerned about the safe construction and operation of River Bend. And, the same feeling has filtered down to every worker."

Asked if any animosity existed at the site between quality assurance inspectors and workers, Crouse revealed a much different relationship.

"Our QA (quality assurance) personnel get along well with the workers. The contractor's people understand the need for the endless audits and inspections and respect the fact we've got a job to do. At the same time, we respect the pride in workmanship found among the Stone & Webster employees."



*Tom Crouse, River Bend quality assurance director (left), and Craig Lundin.*

He related how an inspector found a faulty weld in a reinforcing bar that led to the firing of the welder concerned.

"On this job, there is no second chance. Make a mistake and don't report it — or try to cover up — and you're fired. No questions — fired."

He related that most errors are reported by workers. One Stone & Webster employee reported damage to reinforcing bars that resulted in repair, even though the damage was slight. "He was concerned about quality, which is the feeling among the workers here," added Crouse.

Quality assurance is not limited to on-site inspections. It begins with the design specifications of an item, continues during manufacture, shipment, storage and installation of the item, and is finalized when the item performs as specified.

"Subcontractors and vendors also have quality assurance programs. We audit the bidders for each item to make sure they have a QA program and are capable of manufacturing in compliance with the specifications. We also audit during shipment, upon delivery and during storage."

Crouse's counterpart for Stone & Webster is Craig Lundin, project quality assurance manager. Lundin has worked in QA on seven nuclear power plant projects. He was the senior quality assurance man on two of the projects.

Lundin praised the professionalism displayed by Crouse and his people. "Even though there are only eight GSU quality assurance people on the site, they do a very thorough job of keeping close tabs on my inspectors."

Stone & Webster has more than 100 quality assurance personnel at River Bend.

# Management Conference Speakers Offer Predictions for Future

**“Farmer, laborer, clerk — that’s a brief history of the United States.”**

That remark was made by John Naisbitt, publisher of Trend Report and a noted syndicated columnist, who was describing the United States’ current transformation from a mass industrialized society to what he calls “an informational society.” It marks the second major change for American society, with the first having been the shift from an agricultural to an industrial society, Naisbitt noted as he addressed Gulf States’ second annual management conference in Beaumont in mid-January.

Board Chairman Don Crawford and Naisbitt were keynote speakers during the conference.

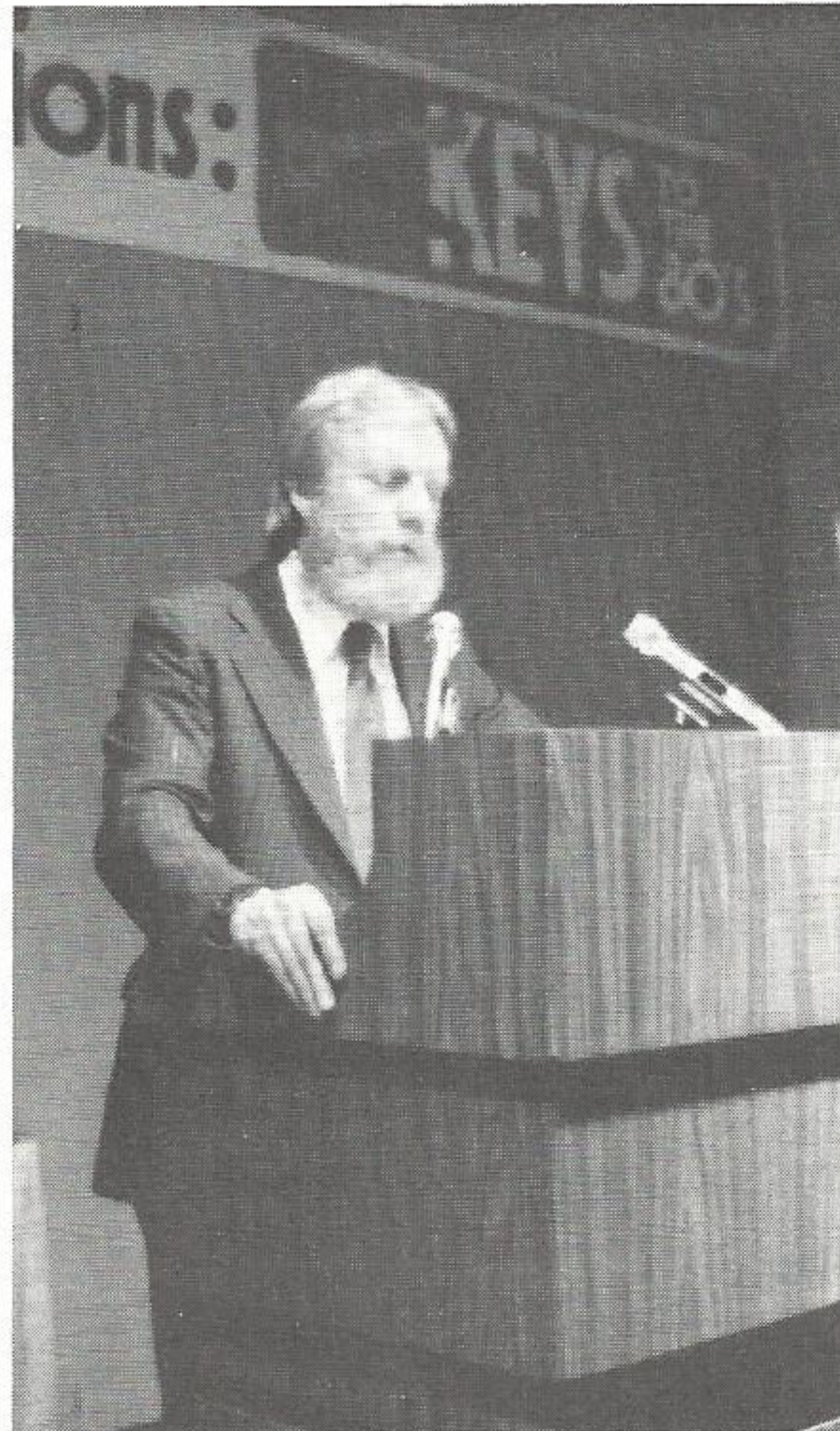
Naisbitt, whose specialty is anticipating social trends, told the company’s top executives that today’s society is increasingly “literary-intensive” and “data-drenched.” Ironically, he said, at the same time, the generation graduating from high school is less skilled than their parents for the first time in America’s history.

According to Naisbitt, well over one-half of the working people in this country are already in information occupations.

Citing continuing decentralization of all organizations, Naisbitt said continuing energy problems will lead to even stronger states, partly because of their struggle for control of energy resources.

The 1970s were a time of emerging regionalism for some of the same reasons, he pointed out.

The growth rate for federal regulation has been declining, he



said, laughingly admitting, “You may not be able to tell it.” Even so, for the utility industry, he conceded, federal regulation will continue to be an important factor because of the nation’s overriding concern over energy and environment.

Naisbitt, who is a senior vice president of Yankelovich, Skelly & White, was chairman of the board for the Center for Policy Process in Washington for four years. He was chairman and president of the Urban Research Corporation in Chicago from 1968 to 1975 and served on the White House staff as a special assistant to President Johnson.

His weekly syndicated newspaper column, “A Changing America/Trends and Forecasts,” appears in major newspapers throughout the country.

In his keynote address to the gathering, Crawford reviewed the 1970s, focusing on company achievements since 1978.

“The first major accomplishment,” he said, “has been the more precise identification of the company’s situation and what

will be necessary to maintain its traditional role as an industry leader.”

A second achievement, according to Crawford, was “the development of a talented, dedicated team of officers and managers, combining the expertise of many disciplines . . .” He described GSU’s Management Council, an advisory group of the company’s most senior officers, as being one such group. The Strategic Planning Group, whose purpose is to weigh alternative courses of action and to make recommendations to management, has also played a significant role, he said.

Completion of Sabine Station Unit No. 5, the company’s last planned oil/gas-fired generating unit, and continuing construction of the Nelson No. 6 coal plant and the River Bend nuclear unit have enabled company officials “to define our construction program more precisely and on a basis that can be financed,” Crawford suggested.

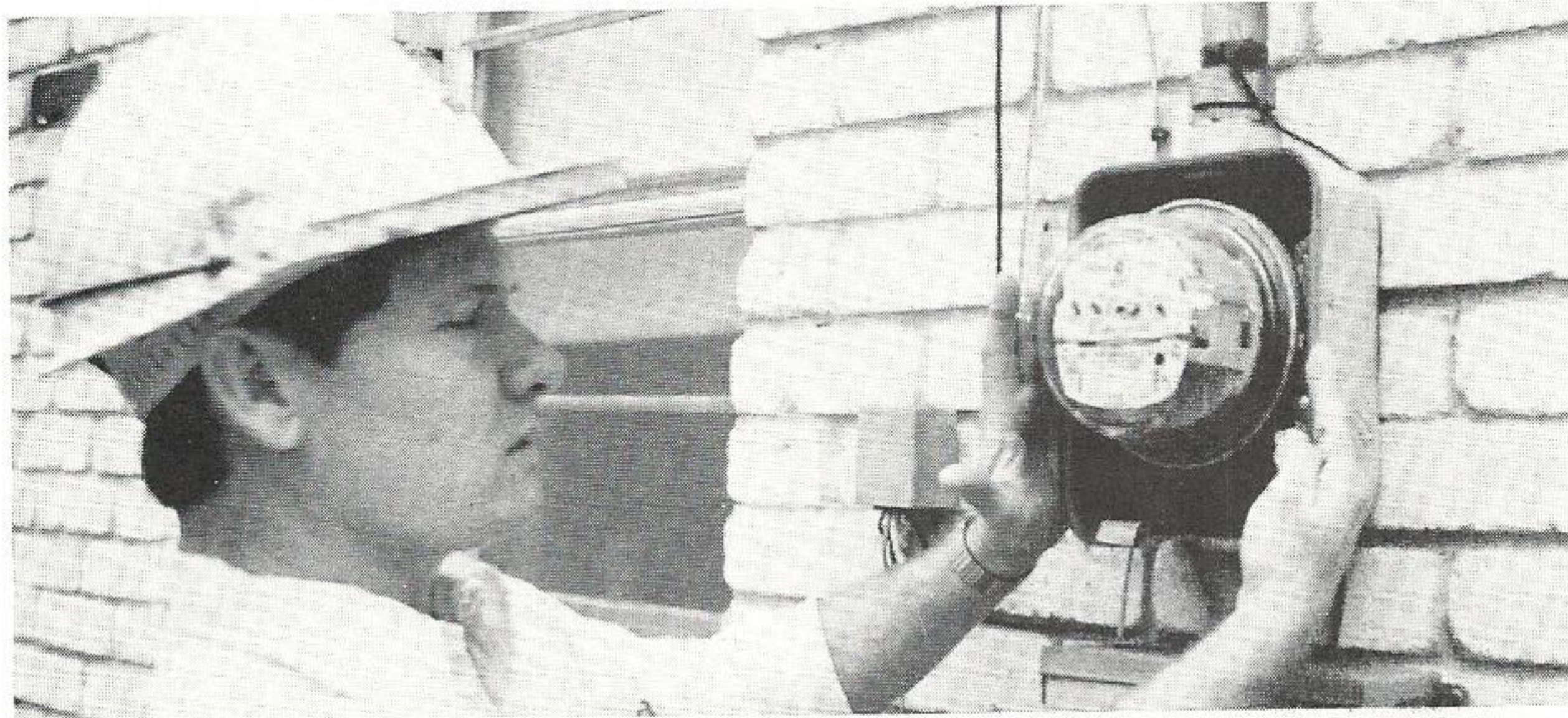
He said plans are to build smaller, standardized units near the company’s lignite holdings, once the coal and nuclear plants are completed. He cited such plants as having the advantage of being “easier and quicker to build, resulting in further savings.”

Crawford also had some predictions for the 1980s.

While the “soaring energy crisis” will continue to “hit the U.S. economy hard in 1980,” Crawford said, “this pessimistic outlook *should* turn out to be a blessing.”

According to Crawford, “The severity of the impact on the nation’s economy will be such that the politicians may have to toss demagoguery aside and cut taxes — hopefully personal as well as corporate — in order to spur economic growth.”

# Meter Security Program: Western Division Counters Theft of Electricity



*Butch Norwood, meterman-first class, inspects a residential meter.*

**A**merican ingenuity is still alive and well throughout the Gulf States' service area.

Unfortunately, some customers use their mechanical know-how to steal electricity from the company, either by diverting energy outright or by rigging meters so that they record only a percentage of total usage.

Charles Enloe, supervisor of credit and collections for the Western Division in Conroe, admits that electricity thievery is nothing new.

"It was going on all along," he says, adding, "we just never had someone to go out and investigate."

Now something *is* being done in the Western Division, where the company has initiated a meter security program that teams a meter reader with a meterman in a fact-finding jaunt that often uncovers such theft.

The teams are further assisted by a computer that identifies customers with questionable bill records. For instance, explains Hardy Stabler, meterman-first class, any large, all-electric house that suddenly shows low-kilowatthour usage is probably suspect, unless the occupant is out of town.

Meter readers accompany a meterman on their own route so as to lend an element of surprise to the effort. Some customers are

probably pretty sure of when to expect a meter reader during his regular monthly route, but a meterman unfamiliar with a route might accidentally alert a customer to his appearance.

Stabler explains that there are several ways in which a customer can divert electricity. One way of detecting tampering with a meter is when a blue seal — the color that indicates normal conditions — turns out to be a trick seal — one that will open — when someone pulls on it. Once a customer gains access into a meter, then that person may be able to jam its disks.

Several customers in the Western Division have used hairpins to jam the disks and cause inaccurate readings. One customer placed a hanging basket in front of her meter, which was located in a garage, so as to conceal the hairpin jutting out its side. The tampering was not discovered for months.

Enloe reveals that people who are caught stealing electricity react differently. One man showed embarrassment, telling Enloe it had "bothered" him for months, but that he "just kept doing it." Others deny knowing anything about it.

Sometimes the current customer is not responsible for tampering with a meter. For instance, says Enloe, one former

customer had strapped a resistor to the back of his meter, causing it to measure only a certain percentage of total usage. The meter remained sealed. Although a new occupant was unaware of the thievery, he benefited from it and was asked to pay the estimated difference for his months of occupancy in that particular residence.

Once the investigation is complete, the next step is up to Enloe's department.

"If we know they're stealing beyond a shadow of a doubt, we'll go back in microfiche records and do bills accordingly from the day when the tampering apparently took place," he says.

While that method works for old customers, the procedure for new customers might be to estimate a bill on the basis of appliances in the home and the square footage. If it's a trailer or home that has been lived in previously, then the bill may be estimated on the basis of bills for former residents.

In addition to charging for stolen electricity, Gulf States also bills dishonest customers for the meterman's time and labor, use of his truck, the cost of any necessary repairs to a meter and one-half hour labor for a clerk to draw up the charges.

While longtime customers may be permitted to pay the additional money in monthly installments, new customers who have not established credit ratings are required to pay everything at once.

Ironically, says Enloe, those who steal electricity are among those with "excellent paying records."

That stands to reason, says Enloe.

After all, "It fits their budget," he explains.

by Susan Huff



# Laborer Turns Preacher: Neches Station Retiree Labors for the Lord

---

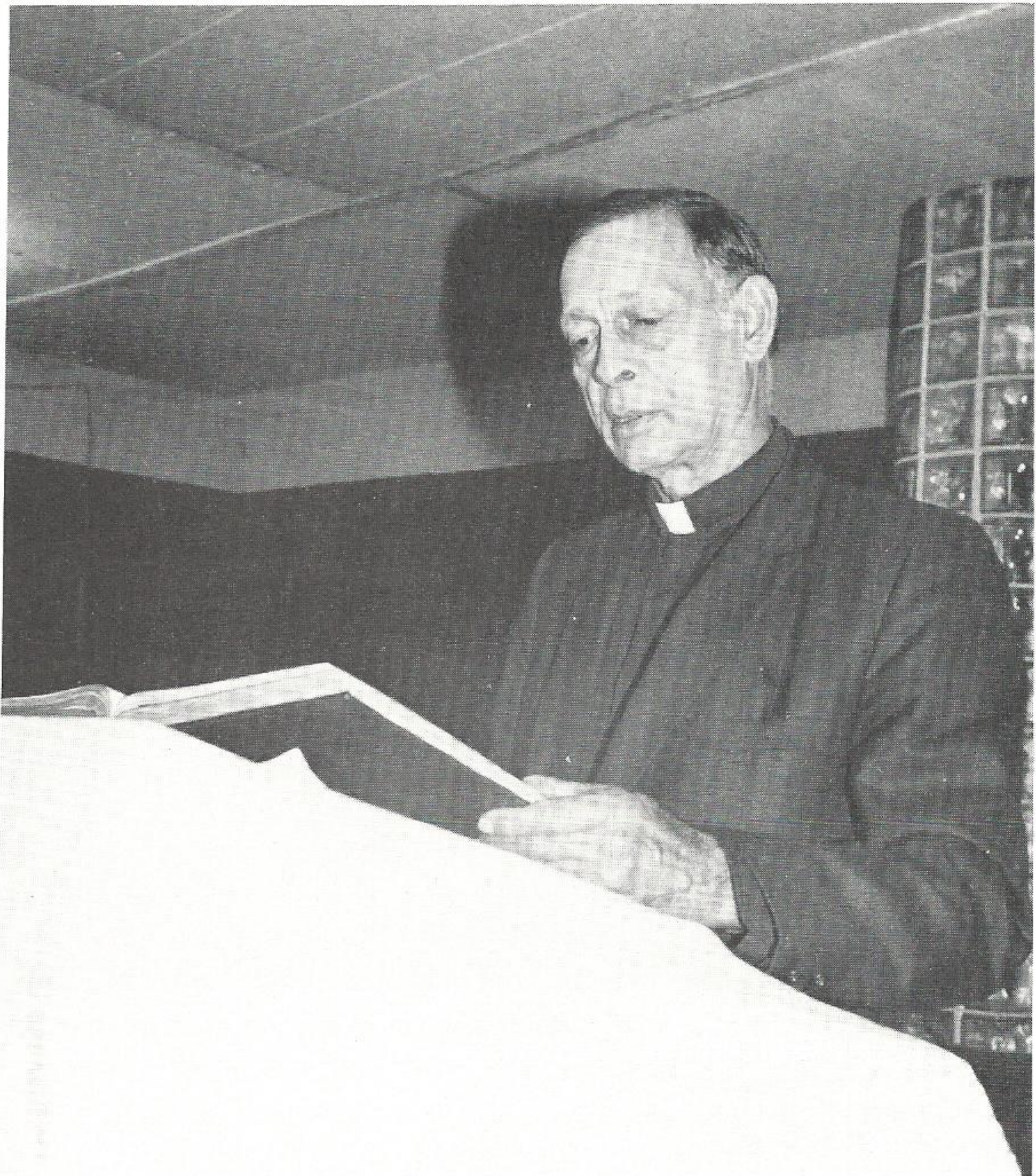
**W**hen Leonard Sterling retired from GSU last October, ending 28 years of service as a laborer at Neches Station, that didn't mean the slightly-built 65-year-old planned to take life easy.

Instead, Sterling began devoting his energies fulltime to his position as pastor of Beaumont's Pentecostal Church of God in Christ, located at 2650 Sabine Pass.

Known by Neches Station co-workers as "Rev," Sterling recalls that he believes he was first called to preach in the early 1960s while he was working at the power plant near No. 7 unit. Before retiring from the facility, he had been involved in the ministry for 17 years, with the last six spent as the parttime pastor of Pentecostal Church of God in Christ.

He and his wife, Clementine, reared nine children — six sons and three daughters.

At a time when the couple might be expected to settle down to enjoying their 23 grandchildren, Sterling finds himself busy serving a congregation of 18 adults and about 25 children.



When he's not busy with church duties, Sterling says he enjoys carpentry work, hunting and fishing.

Much of his time, however, is taken by church services held twice on Sunday and once on Tuesday and Thursday, as well as visiting the ill and other pastoral activities.

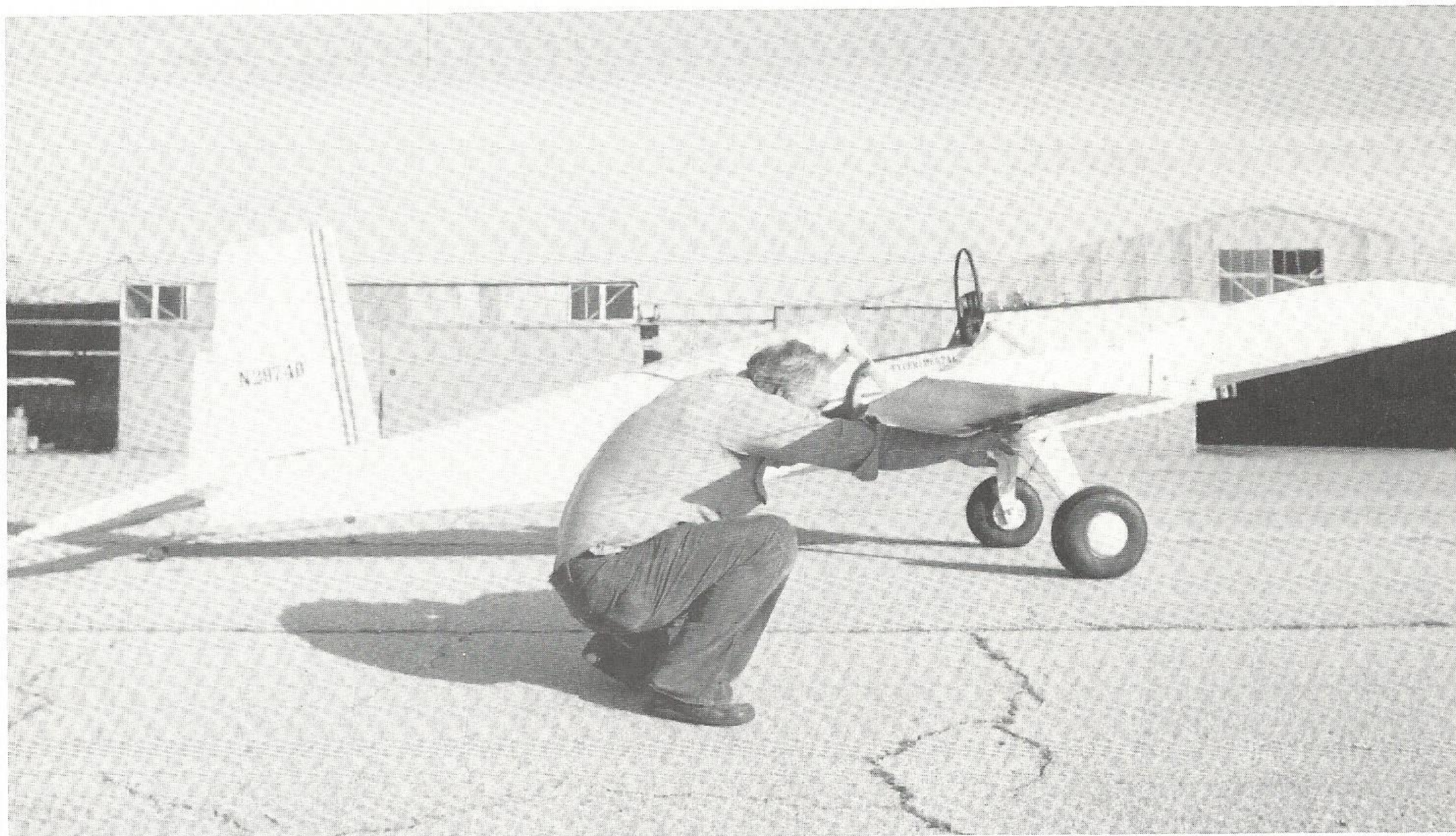
Noting that he feels the Lord directed him to the ministry, Sterling says he has "been praying for people ever since."

But the work has not been without its rewards.

"The Lord has blessed me," he insists.

by Earl Landry

# Line Foreman Fashions Homemade Aircraft with Wood, Auto Engine



*Bobby Feagin checks the wings on his homemade aircraft. Wingspan is only 24 feet.*

**I**t took 10 years of off- and on-again work, but Bobby Feagin finally has a way to fly.

The Navasota District line foreman finished building his own single-passenger airplane late last summer — a project that he had started in 1969.

Powered by a 53-horsepower Volkswagen engine, the experimental aircraft is outfitted with an altimeter, as well as air speed, oil pressure and oil temperature gauges.

But when Feagin takes to the sky, he has no contact with anyone else because the small craft does not have a radio.

Feagin recalls that his wife, Kathy, “hit the ceiling” when she first heard of his plans to build an airplane. After logging about 45 hours of flight time in the craft, however, Feagin reports that she now “feels more comfortable” with the idea.

At least one other family member — 18-year-old high school senior Elizabeth — told her father she would “love” to fly with him if it would hold another person. Elizabeth also has hopes of someday attempting skydiving.

According to Feagin, he would encourage Elizabeth to take up flying “if it weren’t so expensive.” Son Kenneth, 22, has shown little interest in flying.

Feagin estimates that it costs him about \$3 an hour to fly his plane, including cost for fuel and wear and tear. That figure is a lot cheaper than charges for renting a small plane — about \$27.50 an hour, explains Feagin. Flying instructions run about \$18.50 an hour, he adds.

The wooden airplane, constructed mainly of mahogany and spruce with Dacron, but with some fir and white pine, can

cruise at about 75 miles per hour at 2,900 revolutions per minute. Feagin says he has taken it as high as 6,000 feet.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) officials had to inspect his plane for air-worthiness before he could take it up. Now that he has flown at least 40 hours, the FAA will again inspect the craft to lift the 25-mile flight restriction now in effect.

Feagin has been with Gulf States since 1956, when he started out in Huntsville as a helper. The Hempstead native learned to fly during the 1960s at Montgomery County Airport in Conroe.

A tiny airplane, his homemade craft weighs 534 pounds and has a wingspan of 24 feet. Once the flight restriction is lifted, reveals Feagin, he will probably fly the craft from its hangar at Hearne Municipal Airport to the strip at



*The craft carries most major gauges, but lacks a radio.*

Navasota. Then, he'll simply remove the wings, attach a bracket to the side of the plane and tow it home with his car.

It will be stored under a canopy in his backyard shop.

In the nearly five months that Feagin has operated the craft, he says that he has noticed "no bad characteristics."

"It flies real easy and seems real docile," he explains.

Feagin, who learned to fly on a two-passenger Piper Super Cub, even suggests that his craft "really seems to fly better than that Super Cub." The larger craft was powered by a 150-horsepower engine.

For now, he will be most pleased to see the flight restriction lifted, freeing him to "pretty much go just where I please."



# Q&A: Dr. Gary Weigand on River Bend Allegations



Editor's note: Dr. Gary Weigand, vice president for River Bend operations and technical systems, reviews the January media reports of allegations of unsafe construction activities at the site. According to Weigand, GSU's recent experience had the ultimate effect of reassuring the media, the public and workers at the site that safety is a top priority at the company's first nuclear power plant project.

Named to his present position only a couple of months ago, Weigand was previously the general manager of nuclear projects. He served as a technical assistant to the chairman of the board when he joined the company in July, 1978. After

receiving his B.S. degree in marine engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1958, Weigand went into service with the Navy. From 1966 until 1971, he was an officer on nuclear submarines, and for two years following that, he served as an executive officer on a nuclear submarine.

In 1978, he was promoted to commanding officer of the nuclear-powered missile submarine, the *U.S.S. Nathaniel Green*, and in 1976, he became a staff officer for the Chief of Naval Education and Training.

Weigand earned two other degrees, both from the University of Washington. He received his M.S. and Ph. D. degrees in physical oceanography.

PT: Dr. Weigand, what was the chronology of events that led up to the January 6 newspaper stories about the allegations?

W: It developed roughly this way. An individual who had worked for a sub-contractor for Stone & Webster, the architect/engineering firm handling the project, was fired. He had worked for the firm that's constructing the containment vessel for the reactor. Shortly after that, he apparently contacted both the NRC and reporters at the Baton Rouge newspaper, alleging that there were 12 deficiencies in the work done by this sub-contractor. The allegations basically concerned welding in the containment vessel, which resembles a large tank. The allegations were made about a week before Christmas.

PT: Why was there a delay between the time the NRC received the information and the time the paper published the story about the allegations?

W: Basically, the busy Christmas season and their difficulty in interviewing the person who had made the allegations. He had moved out of the area by that time.

PT: Did that person ever approach anyone at Gulf States about his allegations?

W: The individual that made the allegations never came to Gulf States with the allegations and never reported to his supervisors or co-workers on the job that he thought there might be problems. It was only after he was fired that he made them.

PT: Just what is Gulf States' policy regarding reporting of apparent discrepancies?

W: Workers on the site are encouraged to report any problems they feel might exist. That policy is one that has already paid significant dividends. We've had many small problems, but they've been brought to our attention early. I can think of half a dozen cases right off where sometimes a fairly new worker has spotted something that he didn't think was quite right. In a few cases, there would be a problem. Sometimes it would be okay. Still, we want to do everything we can to ensure that the plant is built correctly. This policy, as near as I can tell, has been very effective. Of course, GSU has a staff of about eight quality assurance employees, headed by Tom Crouse, whose job is to oversee the Stone & Webster quality assurance group, which in turn has the responsibility of not only watching the Stone & Webster people, but the sub-contractors, too. There's another group called the quality control group that is right there checking the work as it's being done.

PT: In Gulf States' case, did the NRC investigators pretty much follow an established procedure in checking out the allegations?

W: The NRC has a standard procedure they follow when they receive information or allegations. They normally have some of their investigators talk to whoever makes the allegations, then try to decide whether there is any substance to them. I understand they had three conversations with the man making the allegations. They decided after the story appeared in the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate that — regardless of their evaluation of the substance of the allegations — an investigation would be required just to set the record straight.

PT: What happened next?

W: They sent two inspectors to the site, who began a detailed investigation of the allegations. This involved looking at a great deal of supporting documentation, mainly records, and also actually looking at some of the welding. The inspectors also checked some of the material in the field and talked to some employees of the sub-contractor accused of being responsible for the alleged deficiencies.

PT: What was the outcome of their investigation?

W: They have cleared GSU of all 12 allegations.

PT: Was GSU's quality assurance program modeled after that of any other utility already involved in nuclear construction? How did we go about setting our program up?

W: Quality assurance in nuclear programs goes back many years and there is what you'd call a standard industry approach. By industry I mean both the electric utilities that are the owners of a project and the architect-engineers and constructors of such projects. In addition, the NRC specifies in quite some detail exactly what kind of quality assurance program is required. Our program — as well as those of most utilities — goes well beyond those bare-bones requirements, taking advantage of the nuclear experience of the past 20-25 years. Our quality assurance program was in place well before construction began. Quality assurance is involved in engineering and design of the plant, as well as procurement of all the items that will eventually go into it.

PT: What do you feel was the overall impact of the whole episode?

W: Actually, the experience was probably beneficial in the sense that the public and our own employees have probably seen just how much importance Gulf States attaches to safety — both in construction and ultimate operation of River Bend. A few days after the story first appeared, we invited area reporters to the site for a press conference, followed by a tour of the plant. I think the media was receptive to Gulf States' viewpoint, and, indeed, exhibited that fairness in the stories that resulted from the tour.

## Company begins new safety program

A new safety recognition program has been developed that will feature a hardhat/hardcap decal depicting the number of accident-free years an employee has worked since joining GSU.

The decal is designed so that as an employee completes additional accident-free years, the number on the decal can be replaced with the next number, explains Mike Durham, manager-occupational health and safety.

Upon receiving the decal, an employee should place it on the right side of their hardhat or hardcap.

Durham adds, "Your on-the-job safety achievements represent many things, but the primary accomplishment is your ability to continue enjoying life."



## Gulf Stater heads Shriners' group

Another Gulf Stater has been elected president of the Montgomery County Shriners, reports Nina Wiley of Conroe.

Charles Enloe (pictured on the left) recently stepped down as the organization's 1979 president, turning the gavel over to Leo Adams (right), who will lead the group in 1980. Both men are Western Division employees.

Qualifications for a Shriner include being a Master Mason and a Thirty-Second Degree Mason. Shriners support 19 orthopedic hospitals and two burn centers.

## Melba McGee ends 34 years' service

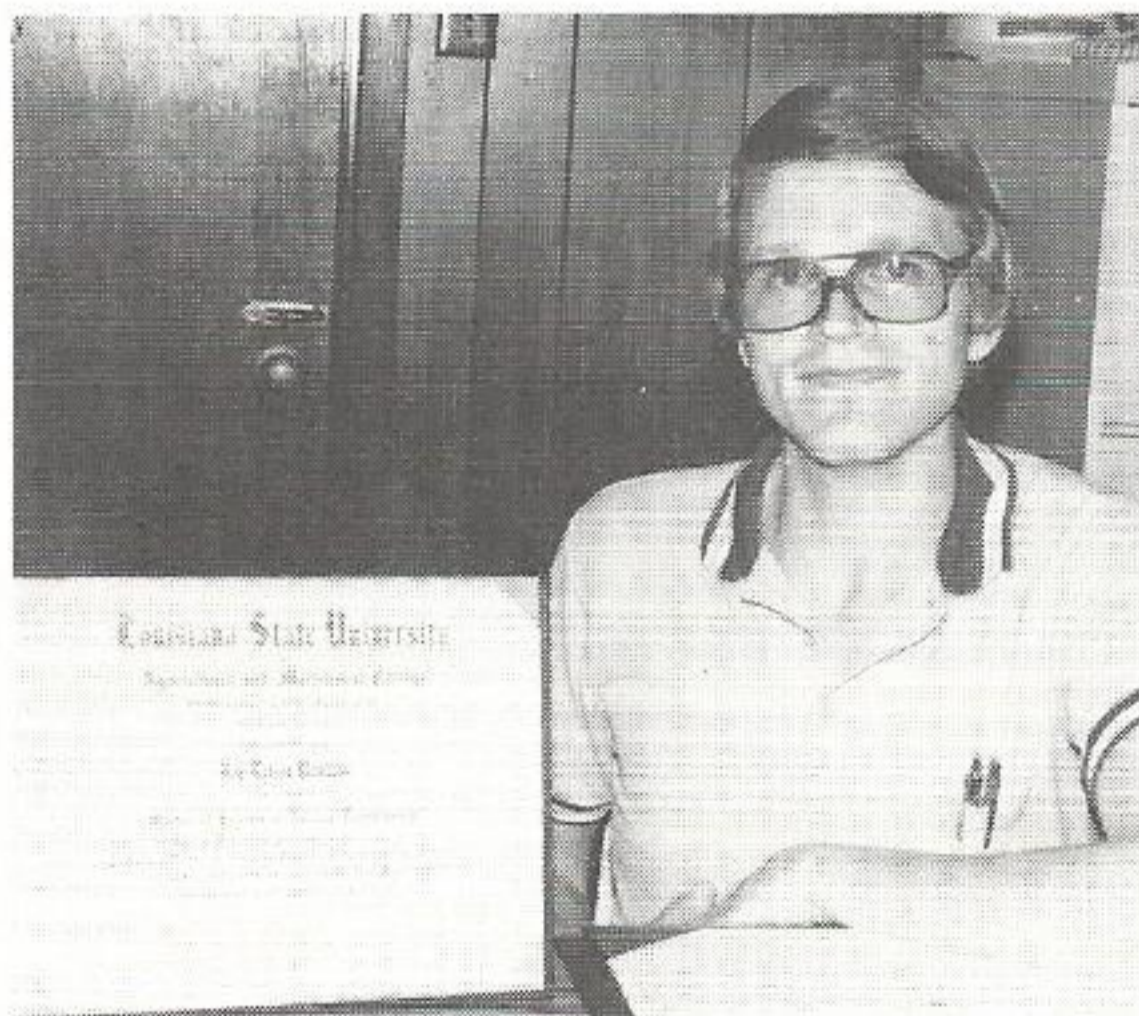


When Melba McGee retired at the end of January, she was ending 34 years' service with Gulf States.

Friends and co-workers honored the departmental clerk in Information and Data Services with a farewell party attended by about 150. They presented her a microwave oven.

## Employee earns 4.0 in graduate study

Joe Burton, maintenance engineer at Louisiana Station, recently earned his Master of Science degree in nuclear engineering at Louisiana State University.



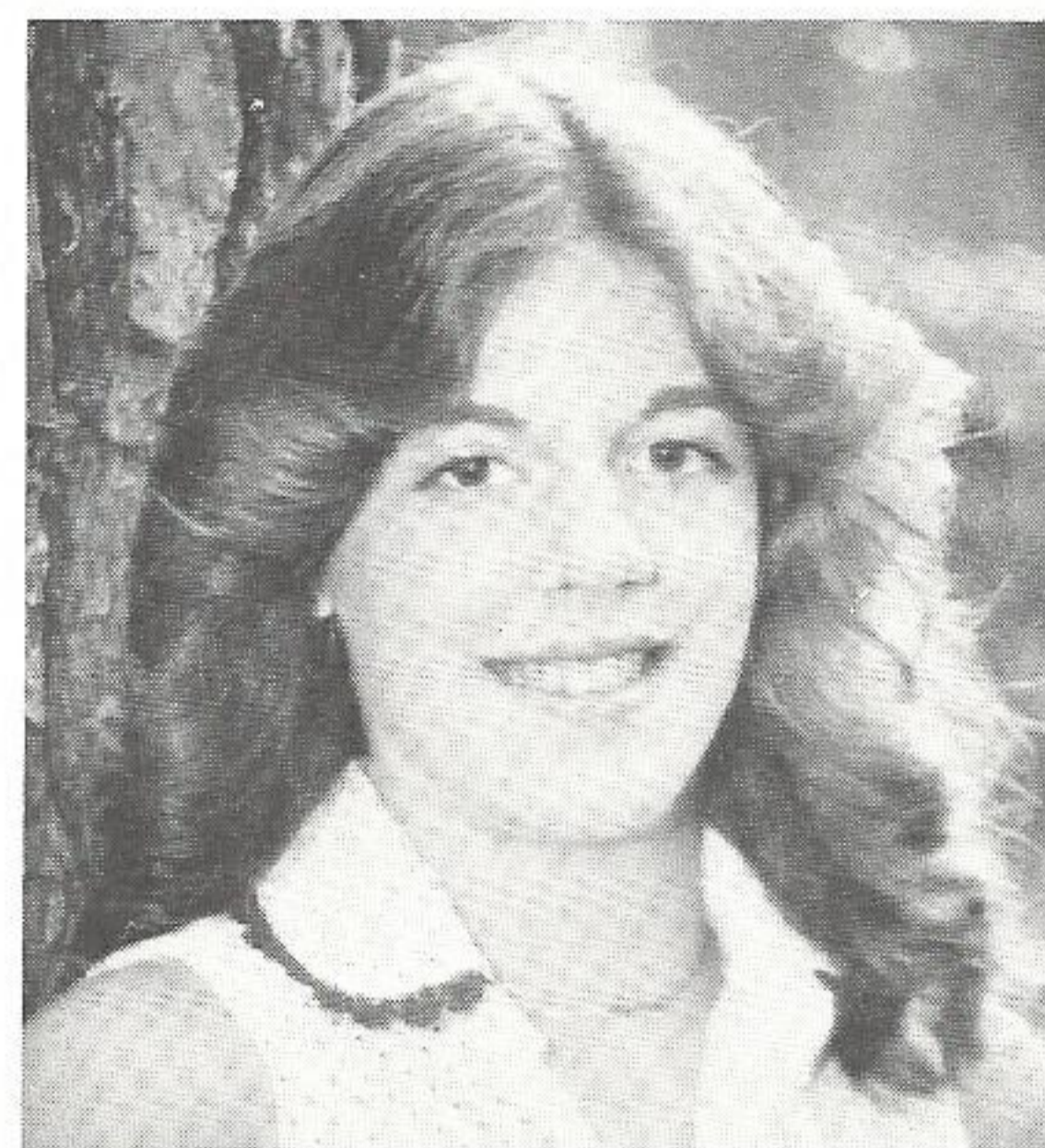
A GSU employee since 1973, when he was hired on in System Production in Beaumont, Burton earned a perfect 4.0 average during his final semester.

## INFO LINE available for employees

Beginning February 1, employees were able to use the telephone to find out what's happening in the company. INFO LINE is a new internal communications tool created to put everyone in touch with news and events within GSU.

To get the recorded message, dial the prefix to get into the system network, then dial 155. If you get a busy tone, wait and dial again.

The first day of operation, calls came in at the rate of one every two minutes. Board Chairman Don Crawford kicked off the new concept with a brief message urging employees to use INFO LINE to stay abreast of current company happenings.



## First girl heads school's student body

Kathy Stelly, daughter of Orange District Superintendent Jim Stelly, was recently elected president of the West Orange-Stark student body for the 1979-80 school year.

A senior, Kathy is the first female to ever serve as president of that school's student body. It's not a first for her family, however. Her dad, a native of Lake Charles, was also president of his high school student body.

## GSUer's daughter earns college degree



Regina Brown Dennis, daughter of Joe and Wilma Brown, earned her bachelor of science degree in art in mid-December from Lamar University. Her father is the piping and welding inspector for Sabine No. 5.

A graduate of an Orange high school, Regina is married to Rick Dennis of Beaumont.

## Co-workers honor former employee

Margaret White was honored with a party hosted by her co-workers at the Lake Charles Service Center late last year when she left the company.



She had served as a departmental clerk in T&D Engineering for the Lake Charles Division.

## Lewis Creek, Baton Rouge employees win safety awards

Employees at Lewis Creek Power Plant and in the Baton Rouge Division were the winners in the 1979 President's Award safety contest.

Their families were the winners, too, says Mike Durham, manager-occupational health and safety, noting that physical well-being can contribute to a family's emotional and financial well-being.

Lewis Creek Power Plant won the Production Operations category of the contest, while the Baton Rouge Division won the Division Operations category.



Division Vice President Calvin Hebert accepted the award for Baton Rouge. He's pictured above, placing the award on a wall, while Ronnie Blackburn (center), safety representative, and Ralph Shirley (right), claims

supervisor, observe.

At Lewis Creek, Plant Superintendent Floyd Langlois, accepts the award from D.O. Gipson, general maintenance supervisor. Bill Linnehan is standing in the center.

# Testing Lab Checks Safety Items for Effectiveness

**G**ulf States operates one of the most up-to-date di-electric testing laboratories to be found anywhere, reports Ray Thompson, system safety coordinator.

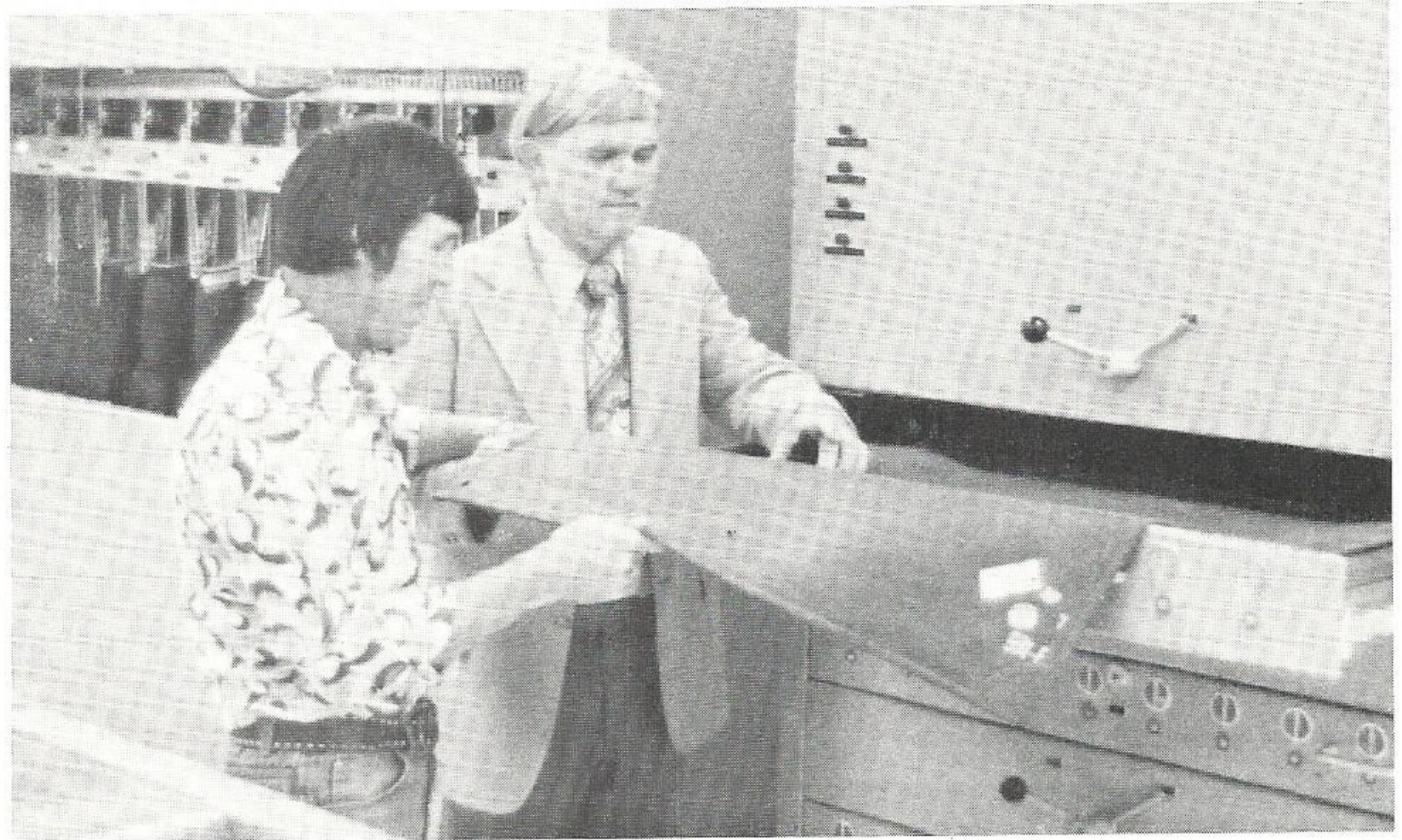
Anything "di-electric" is a non-conductor of direct electric current — and that's just the kind of materials tested in the lab, which is located at the Beaumont Service Center.

A former lineman himself, Thompson emphasizes the importance of having protective equipment, including rubber gloves, sleeves, blankets and line hose, in top condition.

Although the new American Standards Testing Materials (ASTM) standards covering protective equipment, which will be adopted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), requires the testing of rubber protective equipment, GSU's safety department had been meeting with a manufacturer of the testing equipment since early 1977, planning for the lab. Construction of the building housing the lab began in 1978, Thompson recalls. Thompson established design requirements for the facility and equipment.

Walter Sikes, the safety representative in charge of the lab, explains how some of the equipment works.

The glove and sleeve tester places the articles in series with 30,000 volts of electricity. Should an article fail, the test equipment will automatically reject it and shut off, allowing the operator to remove the defective protective equipment. Although the Baton Rouge Division had done some di-electric glove testing in the past, the primary way gloves were tested before the lab opened was for someone to fill them with air



*Walter Sikes, left, and Ray Thompson, right.*

and visually search for a leak, says Sikes.

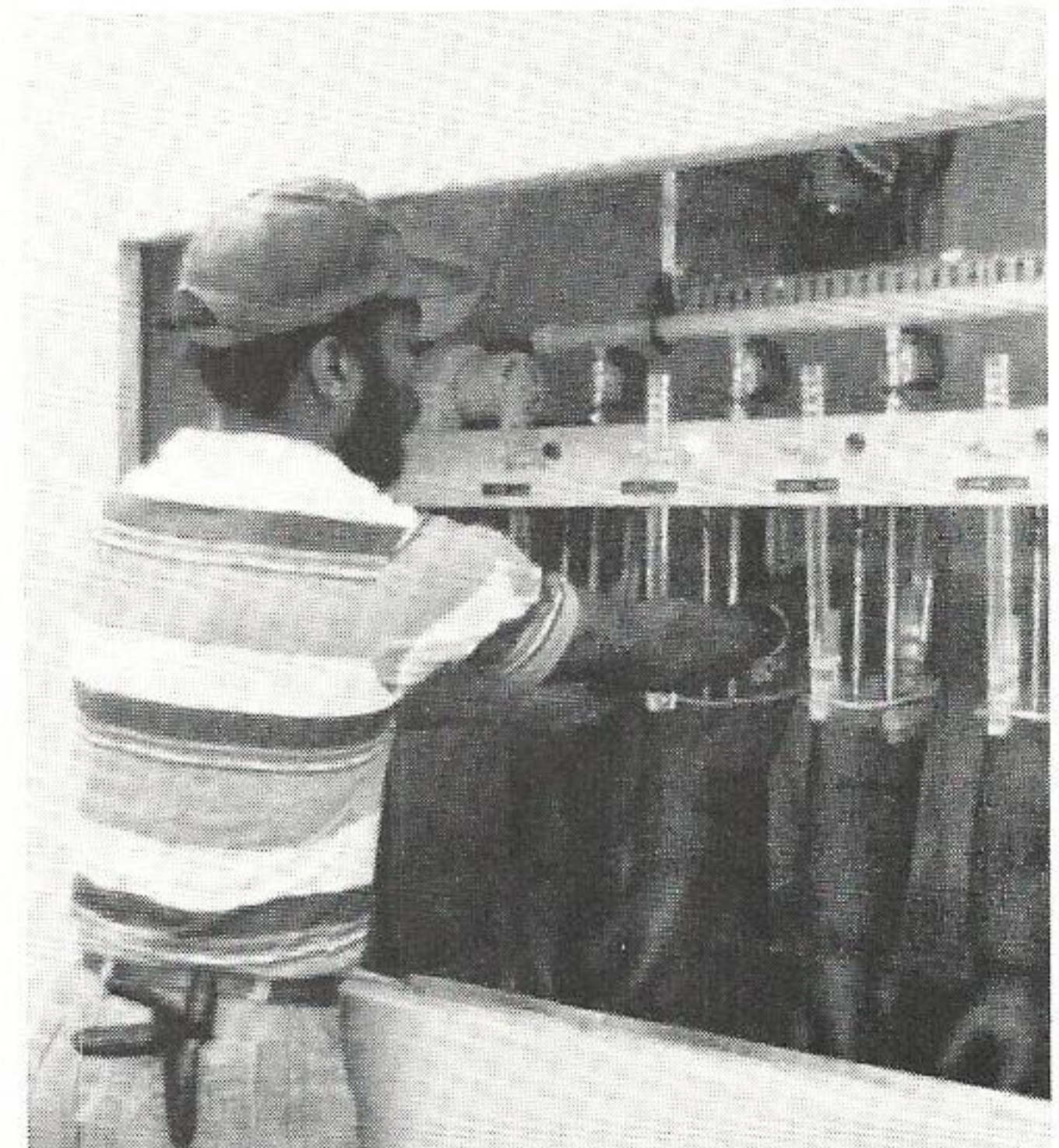
Separate pieces of equipment check rubber blankets and line hose. Defective blankets may be vulcanized as many as three times before they are rejected, but a defective glove is immediately replaced with a new one from factory-certified stock.

Protective equipment is brought to the lab from all over Gulf States' service area by mailroom couriers. Lab workers clean and dry the items, then test them before returning them by courier.

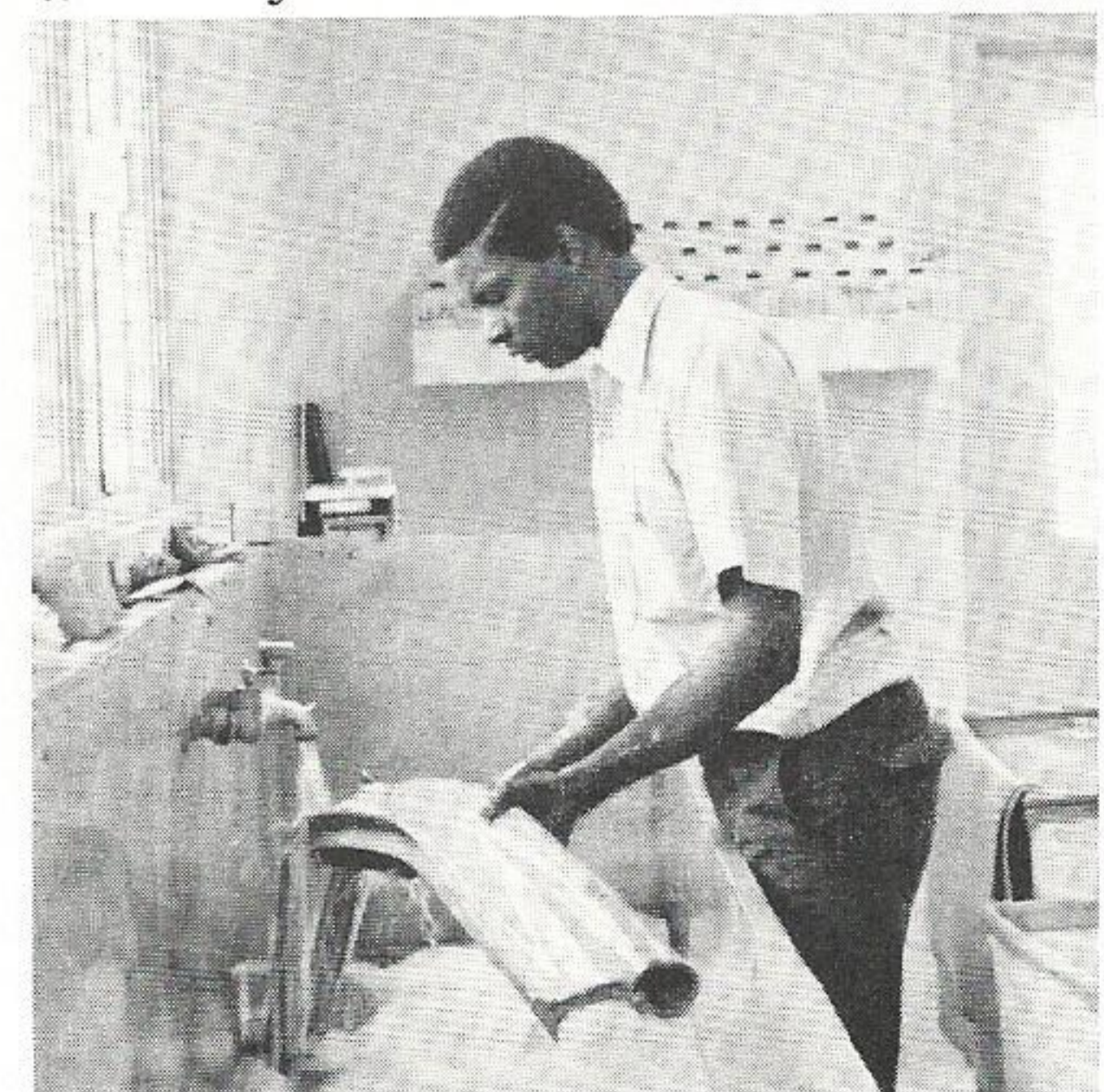
Other safety checks made at the lab include hydraulic oil in the aerial basket trucks. Sikes notes that the oil may become contaminated with something that might conduct electricity. The test lab is also designed to test aerial basket liners, hot sticks and rope.

Another machine, located outside the lab, is designed to check the fiberglass portion of aerial basket trucks.

Employees who have a chance to be in the Beaumont area are encouraged to visit the test lab and observe it in operation, says Thompson.



*Ronald Dellahoussaye, utility man-test laboratory.*



*Everett Wycoff, temporary worker, washes items before testing.*

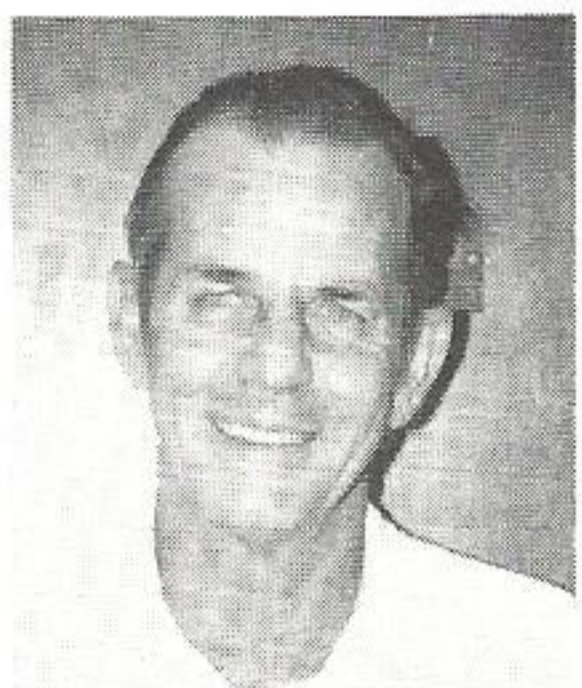


# SERVICE AWARDS

**30  
YEARS**



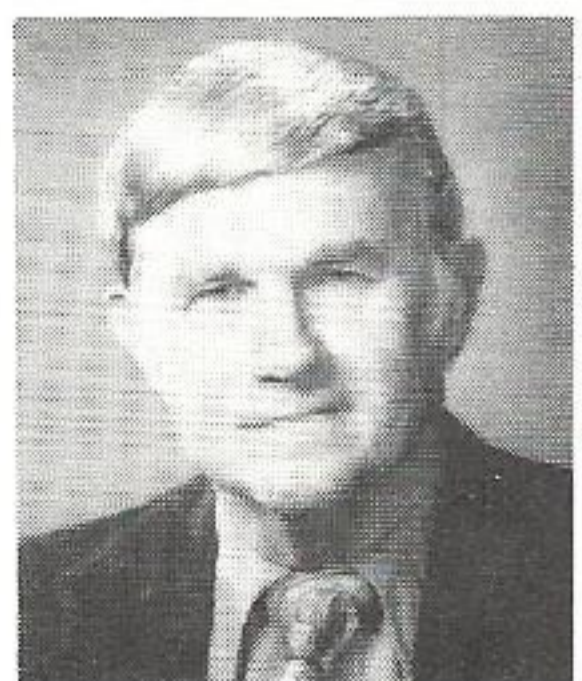
**Gilbert Broussard Jr.**  
Electric T&D  
Lafayette



**Fred D. Eubanks Jr.**  
Electric T&D  
Baton Rouge



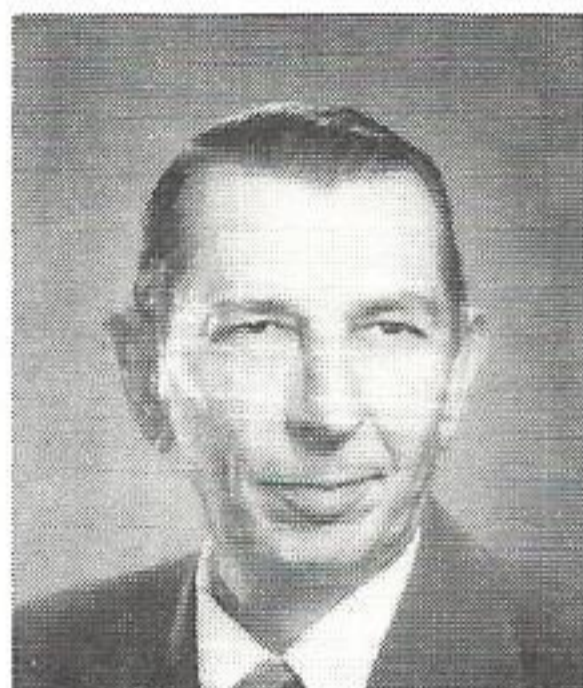
**Gilbert Lauter**  
Electric T&D  
Conroe



**Ray P. Thompson**  
Human Resources  
Beaumont



**James W. Dunham**  
Electric T&D  
Port Arthur



**Lewis C. Guthrie Jr.**  
System Engineering  
Beaumont

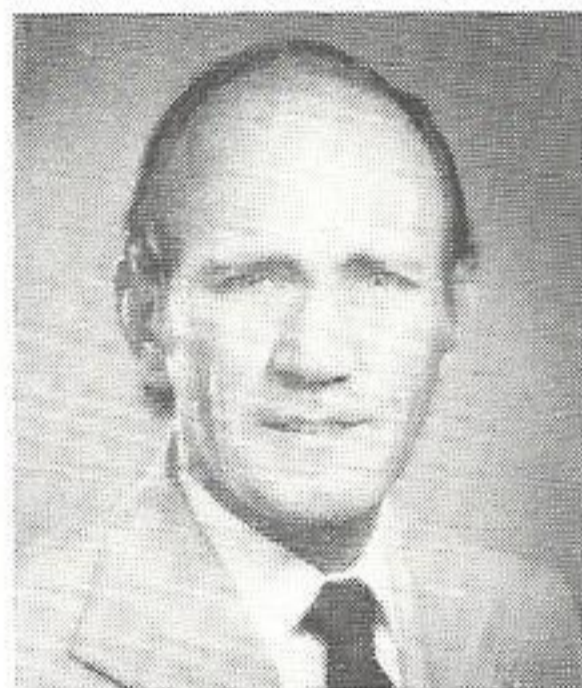


**Johnnie Penn**  
Gas Department  
Baton Rouge

**20  
YEARS**



**William H. Atwell**  
Electric T&D  
Lake Charles



**Charles G. Duncan**  
Division Accounting  
Beaumont

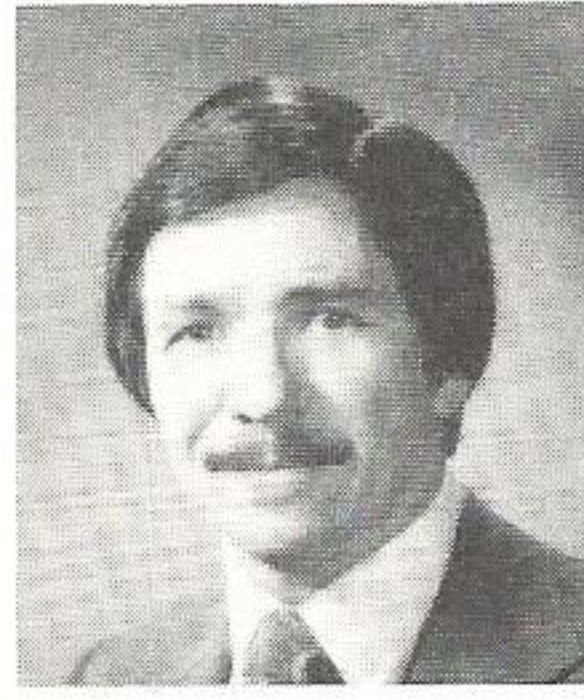


**Russell C. Thomasee**  
Electric T&D  
Lafayette

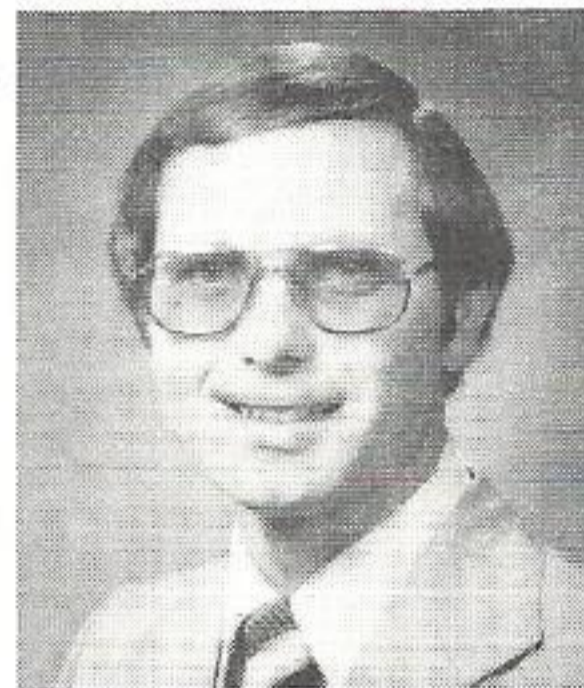


**Therman C. Varnado**  
Gas Department  
Baton Rouge

**10  
YEARS**



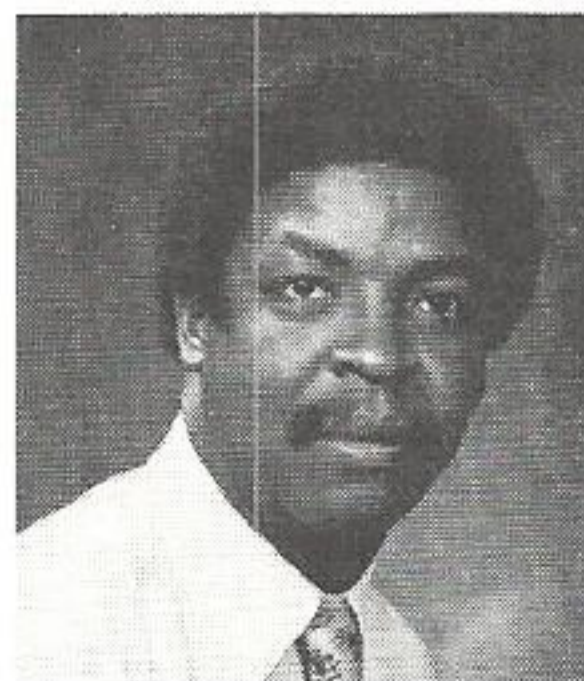
**Ervin W. Berger**  
Accounting Services  
Beaumont



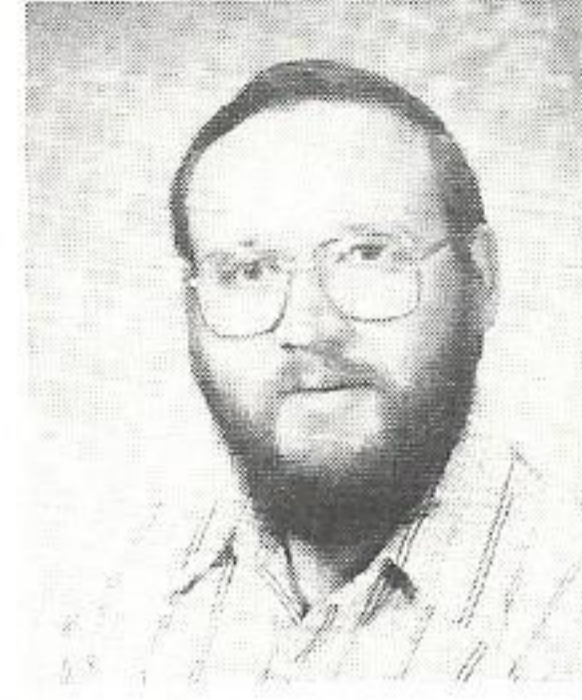
**Paul L. Grimes**  
Real Estate  
Beaumont



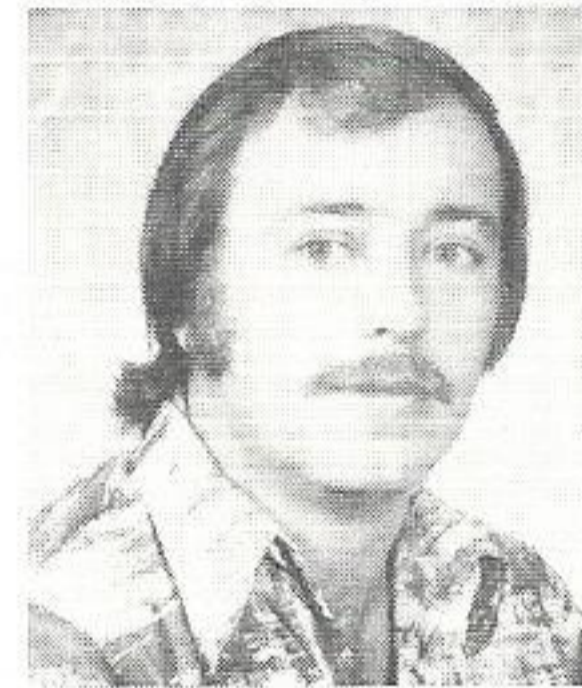
**Joel E. Jeffcote**  
Division Accounting  
Conroe



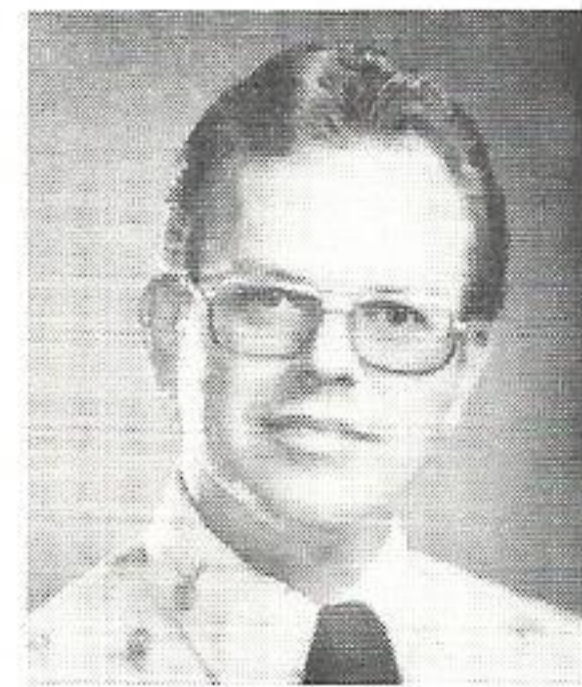
**Curtis L. Ross**  
Division Accounting  
Huntsville



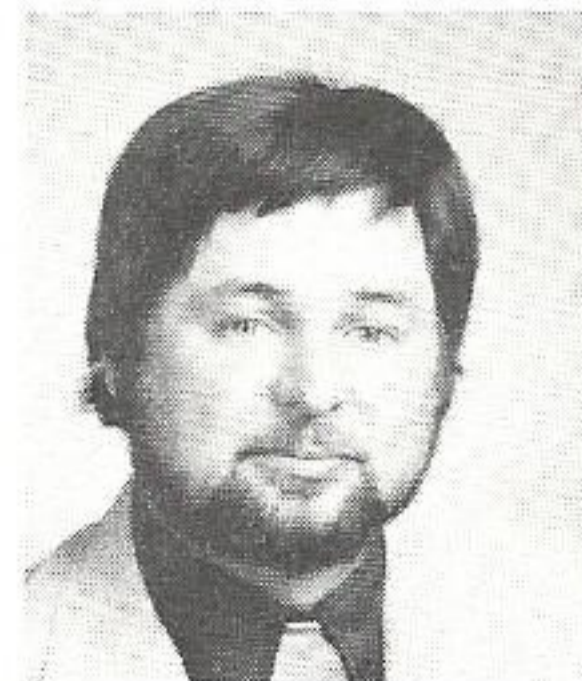
**Gene P. Cotten**  
System Production  
Port Arthur



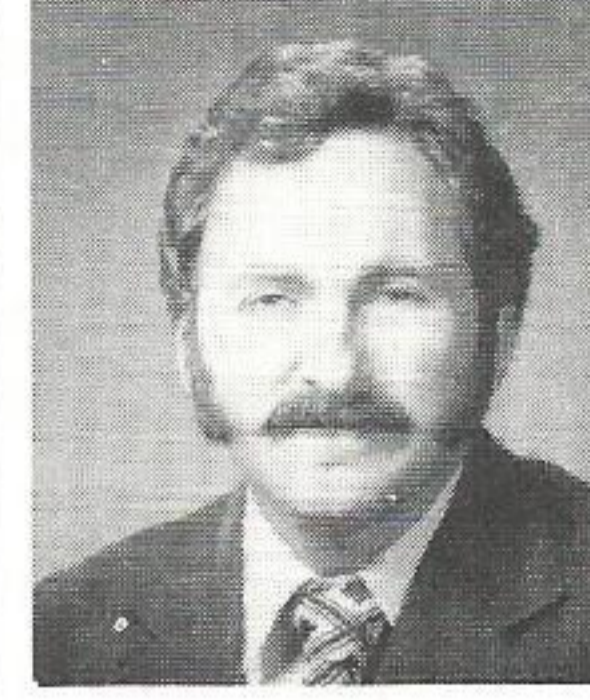
**Richard P. Guyote**  
Division Production  
Port Arthur



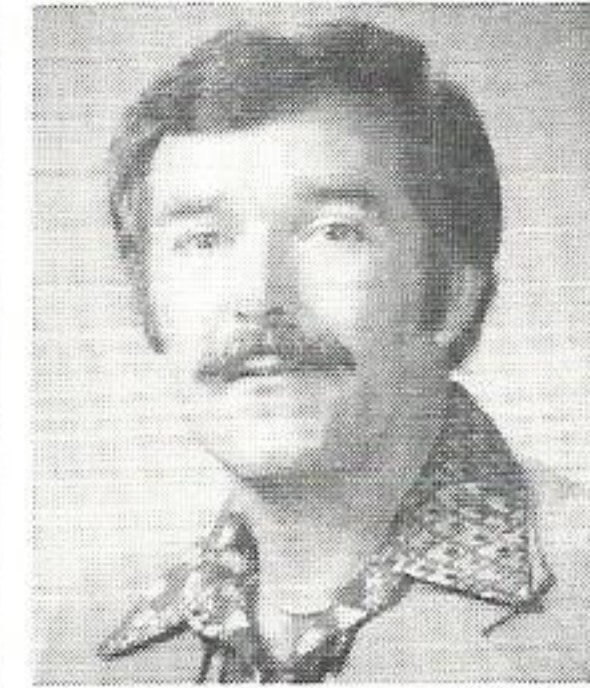
**Darrell B. Martin**  
Division Production  
Beaumont



**Paul D. Wahl**  
Division Accounting  
Port Arthur



**Rupert L. Ellis**  
Engineering Design  
Beaumont



**Leslie Jones**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont



**David L. McCauley**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont

## Slurry pipelines offer economical alternative

Coal slurry pipelines will not displace railroads in the movement of coal, but they will share the job of moving future increases in coal production, predicts the Slurry Transport Association (STA).

According to the association, the pipeline role is to develop competition for rail transport, which in many cases is the only available form of transportation for coal.

A National Coal Association study estimates that, of the 725 million tons of coal probably produced in the United States in 1979, about 65 percent was transported by rail carriers. That means that about 470 million tons of coal were carried by rail for all or part of the distance from coal mines to points of consumption. The study estimates that all but 15 percent of the coal shipped by rail in 1977 was captive to rail shipment — that is, there was no practical alternative form of transportation.

According to STA, slurry pipelines give the communities and states of the Northern Great Plains region an option of exporting their coal for conversion elsewhere. If the coal is exported by pipeline, such areas could avoid the impacts of steadily increasing rail costs.



## Arizona utility to test solar air conditioning system

An advanced solar-powered air conditioning system will be field tested at a new Arizona Public Service Company (APS) service center near Phoenix, reports the Edison Electric Institute.

The project is a joint research venture of Saudi Arabia and the United States under an Agreement for Cooperation in the Field of Solar Energy, which was signed in 1977.

The Solar Energy Research Institute will manage a cooperative agreement between the Department of Energy and Honeywell Incorporated, the prime contractor for the test project. The 13-ton air conditioning system, which will be installed in the APS Paradise Valley Service Center, will be powered by a Rankine-cycle engine. A solar-heated fluid will drive the Rankine engine, which will be coupled to a direct-expansion air conditioner. The in-

stalled solar system will be capable of generating electricity that can drive an air conditioning unit or can be fed back into the APS electric system when air conditioning is not needed.

The Arizona site was chosen for its climatic conditions, which are similar to those in Saudi Arabia.

## Media Institute criticizes network nuclear coverage

Television's three network evening news programs do not provide their viewers with enough information to make rational judgments about nuclear energy, according to a study released in December by The Media Institute.

The Atomic Industrial Forum's Info newsletter quotes the report as describing coverage of nuclear energy by the three evening news shows as "minimal" in the decade before Three Mile Island. In another major conclusion, the study indicated that "bias was often introduced into what should have been objective reporting" about nuclear energy.

The Media Institute is a Washington, D.C., non-profit foundation devoted to better news coverage of business and economic issues. Its report was based on a six-month study of videotapes and transcripts of network evening news programs that appeared between August, 1968 and April, 1979.

## Former GSU Customer Cites High Energy Costs in New Residence

**A**s far as one former GSU customer is concerned, absence *does* make the heart grow fonder.

When our hero lived in Beaumont, he complained about his electric bills as much as the next guy. Now that he's living in Jacksonville, Fla., he's beginning to realize how well off he really was.

In a recent letter to a friend, who is a GSU employee, the former Beaumont wrote, "God, do I miss my monthly GSU bills now! This public utility is for the birds. Where is private enterprise when you need it?"

Attached was a page from the Jacksonville newspaper contain-

ing several stories and charts about electricity costs there, versus other areas of the country.

One chart showed that in January, 1980, the cost of 1,000 kilowatt-hours in Jacksonville was \$68.01. The average cost in Dallas, the chart pointed out, was \$49.70 and in Central Louisiana it was \$47.16.

The reason for the high power costs in Jacksonville isn't so much that the Jacksonville Electric Authority is city-owned as it is that the authority is 100 percent dependent on oil to fire its generators. As the newspaper pointed out, "... among other oil-fired utilities — public and

investor-owned — the JEA's residential rates are about average . . ."

GSU, of course, uses large amounts of natural gas and some oil, and is in the process of adding coal and nuclear to its fuel mix.

It shouldn't be difficult, then, to convince our transplanted Texan that it's dangerous — and costly — to rely on only one fuel source, especially oil.

If he had still lived in Beaumont in January, 1,000 kilowatt-hours would have cost him \$48.69 instead of \$68.01.

Enough said.

by Kim McMurray

## Study Shows Best Energy Options

**R**eliance on a single fuel source *is* dangerous.

That fact, long accepted by the utility industry, is supported by the findings of a \$4.9 million study by the National Academy of Sciences.

The study concluded that conservation, synthetic fuels, coal and nuclear power are the best options available for the U. S. to meet its energy needs through the remainder of the 20th Century.

Major findings of the study were:

— Conservation deserves highest priority because the current rate of energy growth could be halved over the next 20-30 years without hurting the economy.

— Synthetic fuels could avert a critical situation resulting from a shortage of fluid fuels that now supply 75 percent of U. S. energy needs. Development of a synthetic fuels industry is needed to produce oil and gas substitutes from coal and shale.

— Coal, despite environmental drawbacks, could make a useful short-term contribution to electricity needs. Most coal output after 1990, however, should be used to make synthetic fuels.

— Oil and gas supplies can be stretched with "vigorous exploration" efforts combined with recovery methods that squeeze more oil from existing fields.

— Solar power is too expensive to provide more than 5 percent of U. S. energy needs in this century.

— Geothermal steam or hot water is already feasible in some areas and should be encouraged where it can be economically substituted for oil.

# The safety of nuclear power plants is our top priority, too.

In his recent statement on nuclear power, President Carter said, "Safety has always been and will remain my top priority."

We agree with the President.

Our industry initiated months ago a comprehensive program to enhance nuclear safety, accepting the responsibility President Carter is calling upon the industry to assume.

The Nuclear Safety Analysis Center (NSAC) in Palo Alto, California, has been established to gather, review and analyze nuclear plant operating experience, communicating information systematically and expeditiously to the industry.

The Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO), now being organized in Atlanta, Georgia, will establish industry-wide benchmarks of excellence for nuclear plant operation; including qualification and training of personnel.

INPO and NSAC will be fully functioning in 1980.

The President also said, "We cannot shut the door on nuclear energy. Once we have instituted the necessary reforms to assure safety, we must resume the licensing process promptly so that the new plants we need to reduce our dependence on foreign oil can be built and operated."

We agree with the President.

The recent events in Iran have given a new urgency to the need for continuing the safe development of nuclear power. Listed below are nine nuclear plants that are ready now or will be available for commercial operation in 1980. Licenses for these plants should be issued promptly.

<b>Salem No. 2</b>	Public Service Electric and Gas Co. Salem, New Jersey
<b>Sequoyah No. 1</b>	Tennessee Valley Authority Daisy, Tennessee
<b>Diablo Canyon Nos. 1 &amp; 2</b>	Pacific Gas and Electric Co. Diablo Canyon, California
<b>North Anna No. 2</b>	Virginia Electric and Power Co. Mineral, Virginia
<b>McGuire No. 1</b>	Duke Power Co. Cowans Ford Dam, North Carolina
<b>LaSalle County No. 1</b>	Commonwealth Edison Co. Seneca, Illinois
<b>Summer No. 1</b>	South Carolina Electric and Gas Co. Broad River, South Carolina
<b>Farley No. 2</b>	Alabama Power Co. Dothan, Alabama

These nine plants represent more than nine million kilowatts of needed electricity capacity, equivalent to burning almost 100 million barrels of oil a year.