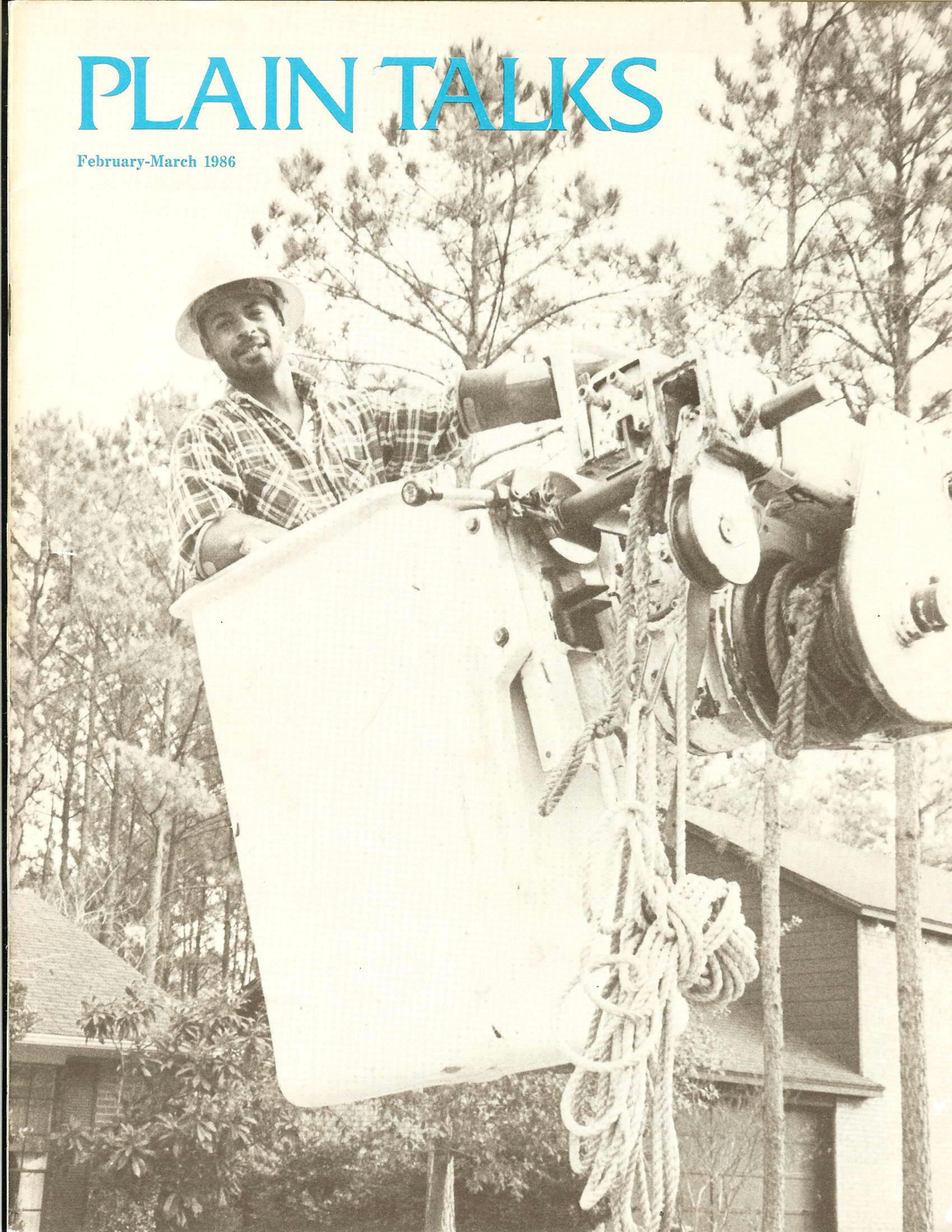


# PLAIN TALKS

February-March 1986





# CONTENTS

Volume 65

Number 2

<b>News briefs</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Lewis Creek, Beaumont Division earn awards</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Early Retirement Option: only eligible employees may apply</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Divisions implement Good Cents Program</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Working together for Gulf States</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Marketing offers incentive program</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>A visit with Jean Hebert</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Good telephone manners equal good business</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Inside GSU</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>On the move</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Retiree update</b>	<b>19</b>

## PLAIN TALKS

**February-March 1986**

Published for employees and retirees of Gulf States Utilities Company. No portion of the contents of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. Address all communications to PLAIN TALKS, Gulf States Utilities Company, P. O. Box 2951, Beaumont, Texas 77704, Phone (409) 838-6631.

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Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-change forms (GSU0012-00-81) and return them to the mailroom in the Edison Plaza. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.



## New firm says thanks

Mr. Norman Lee  
Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas

Dear Mr. Lee:

I am sure that you would agree that the completion of a successful project deserves a note of thanks. This note of thanks is on behalf of John Bordelon, your administrator of economic development; for his exhaustive efforts in assisting Unidynamics, St. Louis, in our search for a suitable plant location in the Gulf Coast area.

Through one of your ads in the Economic Development Magazine, we learned of Gulf States' Computerized Match Program. After discussing our needs with Mr. Bordelon, he provided a number of potential sites that suited our needs. Following several plant site visits and the many courtesies extended by Messrs. Bordelon, John Tarver and Ms. Sheri Kysiak, we eventually settled on the former Armco facility in Conroe for our southern manufacturing facility.

Mr. Jack Herrmann, our vice president of midwest operations, and I were very impressed with the organizational professionalism, the coordination of the facility inspections, and the people involved who made our trip a success. We lacked nothing in information and eagerness from Mr. Bordelon's staff. I am pleased to write this letter and as a new customer of Gulf States Utilities, we look forward to working with your firm in the future.

Very truly yours,  
Anthony A. Lane  
Director  
Human Resources

## Thanks...again!

Ms. Jan Smith  
Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas

Dear Ms. Smith:

I would like to thank you for allowing our participation in your Small Disadvantaged Business reception. It was an outstanding program which has already been beneficial to my company. I am sure it will continue to be so in the future.

Rarely have I been involved with a company which truly shows a genuine interest in and understanding of the problems of small business. It was a pleasure meeting you and your staff, and I hope to continue a mutually beneficial business relationship. Thanks again.

Sincerely,  
Greg Cheveallier  
S&S Supplies, Inc.

## Kitchens praised

Ed Hutchins  
Gulf States Utilities  
Orange, Texas

Dear Mr. Hutchins:

Last week, your district service foreman, Mr. Van Kitchens, held a training session for several of our engineers and electrical maintenance personnel. The session covered a broad range of day-to-day electric utility activity. Sabine River Works personnel must now master these operating and maintenance skills that have been, until now, performed by your people.

Mr. Kitchens obviously has a vast background in the practical aspects of your system. He represented Gulf States Utilities in a very professional manner as he led the detailed discussions. Consequently, our inexperienced people were treated to an outstanding presentation.

Mr. Hutchins, we believe sessions of this type lead to a better understanding of each other's

system and peculiarities. We are hopeful that Mr. Kitchens can follow up the "classroom" session with a practical field meeting in the near future.

Thank you for Mr. Kitchens' efforts.

Sincerely yours,  
Joe T. Woods  
Sabine River Works

## Courtesy noted

Norman Lee  
Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas

Dear Mr. Lee:

As a longtime customer of Gulf States Utilities, it is always a pleasure to encounter people who are employees worthy of recognition for their conscientiousness and dedication to their jobs. Most recently, I had the pleasure of discussing a credit problem on behalf of one of my clients with Mrs. Harrison of your Credit Department (Diania Harrison, customer contact clerk, Baton Rouge). She was very helpful in resolving the problem at issue and is worthy of praise for the good manner in which she promoted the image and integrity of Gulf States Utilities Company.

Sincerely,  
Richard B. Nevils  
Attorney At Law

## THE COVER

**T**eamwork is a key to success at Gulf States, and Donnie Thomas of Huntsville, featured on the cover, is an important member of the team.

Thomas, a lineman-3rd class, and several other employees from throughout GSU are spotlighted in this issue's "Working together for Gulf States" photo feature, beginning on page 10.

The cover shot was taken by Carol Payne, based in Huntsville.



## Packet offers appliance tips

A free packet featuring buying information for major appliances is now available for employees and customers, announces Jo Ann Smith, GSU manager of consumer information.

"At Home with Appliances — the Good Cents Approach to Buying and Using Home Appliances to Save Energy" is available at GSU local offices and by inter-office mail by telephoning Energy Talks.

The packet contains 10 booklets with information on what to look for when shopping for major appliances, what special features are available and tips on the use of a large number of appliances, including washers and dryers, dishwashers, ranges, refrigerators and microwave ovens.

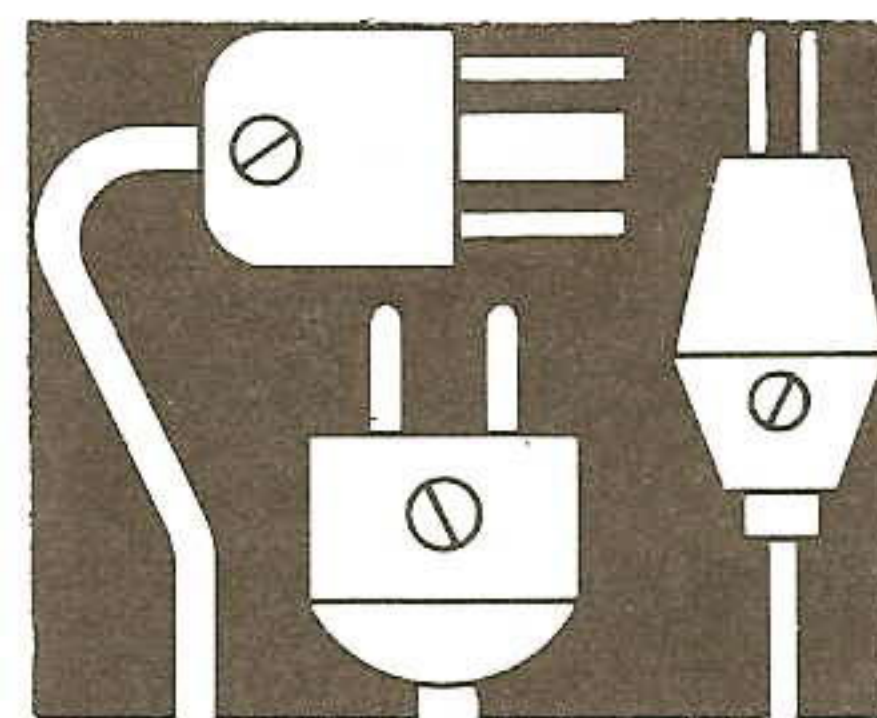
"Consumers have much to consider when buying appliances

such as microwave ovens," Smith says. The microwave booklet, for example, spells out what types of foods can be cooked in the appliance, how to defrost and roast and the types of ovens available.

"These booklets can help customers — including those who are employees — with nearly every aspect of home appliance purchase and use," she continues, "from saving energy to getting the features that will be most beneficial to you and your family."

"By applying the information in this packet to the purchase of a large appliance, such as a water heater, you may be able to save between 40 to 60 percent in operating costs of that appliance," she adds.

"Energy management is just one feature offered with many of today's appliances," Smith notes. "Technology has provided the consumer with a wide array of time- and labor-saving features



that can make life difficult for the appliance buyer, but much simpler and more convenient for the appliance owner who has made a wise choice."

For the free packet, employees should contact Marketing personnel at their location or call Energy Talks at extension 733-3080 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Ask the operator for the packet and provide your name and GSU work location.

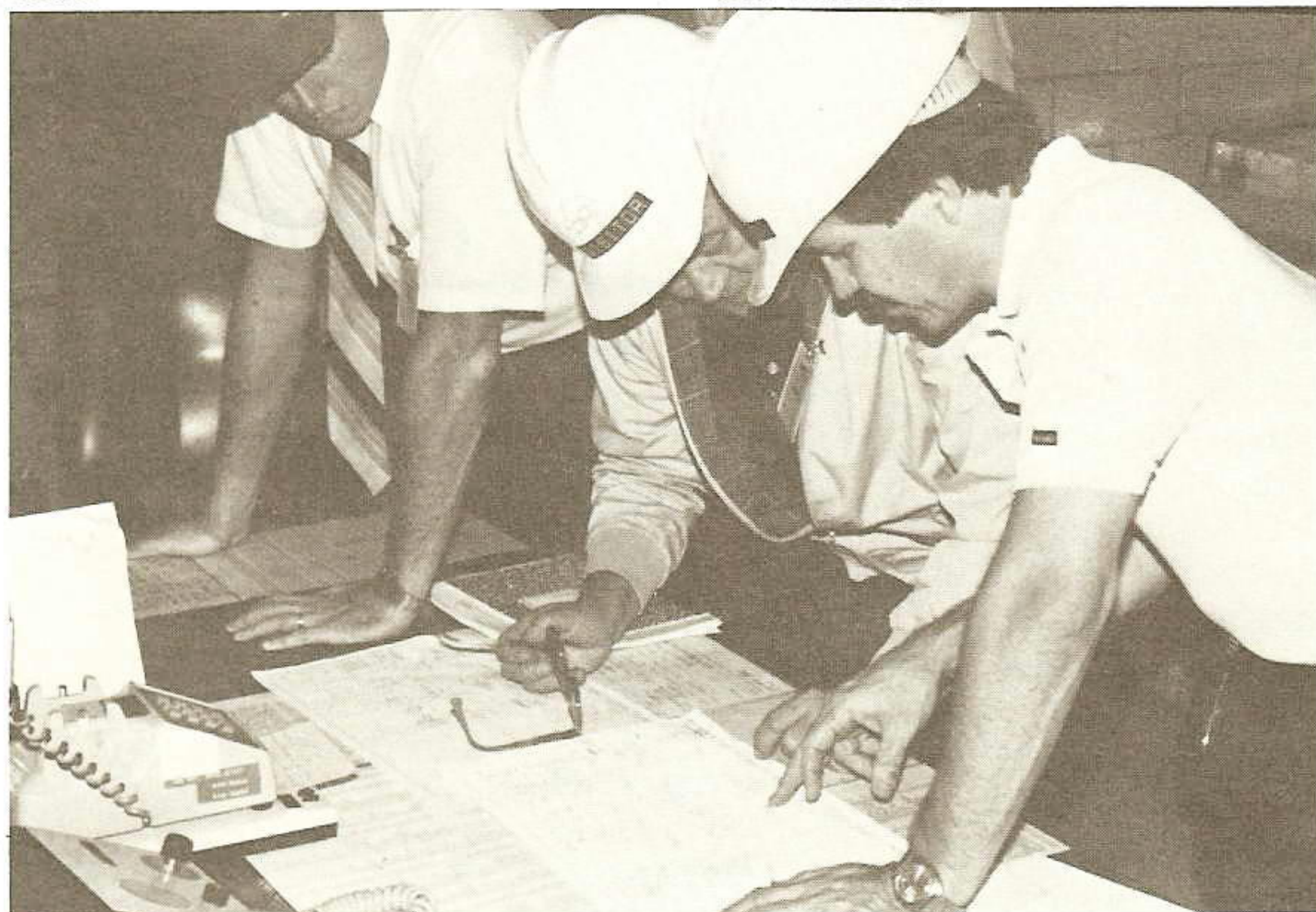
Customers may also obtain copies of the packet by calling Energy Talks' outside number — 1-800-231-3080.

## Visitors tour Willow Glen

Representatives of Potomac Electric Co., based in New Jersey, recently toured Willow Glen Station to learn more about burning natural gas as a boiler fuel.

The firm, which previously only used oil, was reportedly attracted by the lower price of natural gas, but wanted reassurance about the safety of using gas.

Willow Glen employees followed up the plant tour with a question-and-answer session for the visitors.



Robert Robinson (far right), Willow Glen unit supervisor, makes some points about natural gas as a boiler fuel to visitors from Potomac Electric Co.



David Trahan (left) accepts his ESP award from Plant Superintendent Jim Hurley.

## Trahan receives \$50 ESP award

David Trahan, test technician-1st class at Nelson Coal, was awarded \$50 under the Employee Suggestion Program for a safety suggestion he made.

Trahan suggested installing drain lines on the deluge system for use when under a freeze warning.



# Lewis Creek, Beaumont Division earn awards

by Robert Adams

Lewis Creek Station and the Beaumont Division won the 1985 President's Safety Award, with Lewis Creek capturing the power plant award with a perfect safety record and Beaumont winning the division title for the second year in a row. Norman Lee, vice chairman of the board, presented the awards at ceremonies in late February.

The President's Award measures plant and division performance, according to Mike Durham, manager-occupational health and safety. The award is based on a combination of on-the-job injury rates and vehicle accident rates, he said. "Lewis Creek is the first power plant since the establishment of the GSU President's Safety Award for production to earn a perfect safety record by having no chargeable injuries or vehicle accidents," Durham commented.

Mike Case, safety and health representative-production, said that dedication to safety by all plant personnel "starting at the top" resulted in the perfect record.

Bill Tholborn, safety and health representative-division, attributed much of the success of the safety effort in the Beaumont Division to the safety steering committee. The committee "gets employees active in safety by getting them involved and keeping safety up front at all times," explained Tholborn.

Durham also noted the performance records of Neches Station and River Bend Station, which were ineligible for the awards since they were not operating. River Bend has worked over 3 million man-hours without a disabling injury and Neches Station completed over 1 million man-hours without a disabling injury, he said.

Lee noted that Lewis Creek always sets a good standard for others to follow. He also pointed to the records of Willow Glen



Arden Loughmiller (left), vice president-Beaumont Division, and Norman Lee, vice chairman of the Board of Directors, hold the President's Safety Award won by Beaumont Division for the second year in a row.

Station, with over 1 million man-hours worked, and Sabine Station, with over 2 million man-hours worked without a disabling injury. He noted that Beaumont Division's record is hard for a division of its size to maintain and that he was "delighted" with what the employees had done. He added, "As long as GSU

workers return home safely, the safety program is successful."

Lee presented the award to Lewis Creek employees at a banquet at Del Lago on Lake Conroe on Feb. 14. He presented the award to Beaumont Division employees at a banquet at the Montagne Center in Beaumont on Feb. 28.



Lewis Creek employees proudly display their award for a perfect safety record at a power plant in 1985.

Photo by Debbie Gaiser.



# The Early Retirement Option — only



Under the option, there is no reduction in retirement benefits for employees between the ages of 60 and 62 and only a 3 percent per year reduction between the ages of 55 and 60. But under the Regular Retirement Plan, there is a 5 percent per year reduction between the ages of 55 and 62.

For employees who participate in the option, the GSU medical

## Comparison

Average  
Final Compensation

Reductions

Social Security Bridge

Medical Insurance

Life Insurance

by Betty Gavora

As April 15 draws near, the deadline approaches for a special group of employees to participate in a special program — the Early Retirement Option. The program, which is offered only to eligible employees, is a special provision to the Trusteed Retirement Plan which was approved by GSU's board of directors, subject to approval of the Internal Revenue Service.

To be eligible to participate, an employee must be at least 55 years of age and have 10 years of credited service in the Trusteed Retirement Plan before July 1, 1986. Credited service is the total of an employee's months and years of participation in the Retirement Plan.

The Early Retirement Option offers:

- An improved pension formula.
- Enhanced benefits for participants younger than 62.
- A \$500 per month Social Security bridge between the ages of 55 and 62.

Employees' "average final compensation" (the number which serves as a basis for benefit computations) will be higher under the Early Retirement Option because it is computed on a 36-month average of the highest compensation earned during the last 10 years of credited service instead of the 60-month average used under the Regular Retirement Plan.



# eligible employees may apply

plan will continue at the active employee cost and benefit levels until the age of 65. At the age of 65, the employee's cost will be reduced because of full Medicare coverage.

Group life insurance benefits will continue at a reduced amount into retirement at no cost for employees who choose the Early Retirement Option.

An election to retire under the

option will become irrevocable on April 15 and cannot be withdrawn. Employees taking the option will be retired on the first day of the month between May 1 and Oct. 1 agreed upon between them and their supervisor. To participate in the program, eligible employees must submit their retirement applications to Employee Benefits or Employee Relations as soon as possible, but no later than April 15, 1986.

## Between Plans

### Regular Retirement Plan

Computed using highest compensation received during consecutive 60-month period within last 10 years of credited service.

Retirement benefits reduced 5 percent per year for each year below the age of 62.

None

GSU Medical Plan continues at the active employee benefit and cost levels to age 65; at age 65, benefits and cost revert to those applicable to a retiree with full Medicare benefits.

GSU Life Insurance Plan continues at a reduced amount; retirement income from GSU Trusteed Retirement Plan (Life Annuity Selection) and actual or estimated Social Security benefits payable at age 62 (at retirement for participants over age 62) used to calculate the Life Insurance benefit.

### Early Retirement Option

Computed using highest compensation received during consecutive 36-month period within last 10 years of credited service.

No reductions between the ages of 62 and 60.

Retirement benefits reduced 3 percent per year for each year below the age of 60.

A \$500 per month Social Security bridge between the ages of 55 and 62.

Same as for regular retirement plan participants.

Same formula as for regular retirement plan participants, but using the enhanced early retirement option life annuity benefit. (The \$500 Social Security bridge will not be used to calculate the Life Insurance benefit.)

## Questions

Since employees have asked a number of questions about the Early Retirement Option, *Plain Talks* asked Jim Braswell, general manager-industrial relations services, to provide answers to some of the most frequently-asked questions.

### Q: Why is GSU offering the Early Retirement Option?

A: To reduce the workforce, thus streamlining the organizational structure of the company. To improve operating efficiency and to lower operating costs during this time of economic change.

### Q: How many employees are eligible to participate?

A: Some 487 employees.

### Q: If enough people don't take this Early Retirement Option, will there be a better plan with a lump sum bonus offered later?

A: No. This is the *only* early retirement option which will be offered for the foreseeable future. There are *absolutely no plans* for any other early retirement option. This is it.

### Q: If I take another job after I retire, will my GSU retirement benefit be affected?

A: No. Your retirement benefits under the Early Retirement Option will not be affected by your accepting other employment. But your Social Security benefits, once they become payable, may be affected by the wages you earn.

### Q: If I have already signed up to retire on Feb. 1, March 1 or April 1, may I change my contingent annuitant selection (benefit payment option) since I am now eligible to participate in the Early Retirement Option?

A: Yes. You will have the opportunity, before you retire, to change your option.

### Q: Are pension benefits subject to income taxes?

A: The only pension benefits not subject to income taxes are



# Questions about Early Retirement Option (continued)



your contributions. All company contributions and earnings on contributions by you and the company are subject to income tax. Within a few months after you retire, you will receive the complete return of your contributions in benefit payments.

**Q: Are pension benefits subject to social security taxes?**

A: No. These benefits are not considered wages and are not subject to Social Security taxes.

**Q: Is the \$500 Social Security bridge subject to income taxes or Social Security taxes?**

A: The Social Security bridge is subject to income taxes, but is not subject to Social Security taxes.

**Q: When did my credited service in the Trusteed Retirement Plan begin?**

A: All participants eligible for the Early Retirement Option began accruing credited service after reaching age 30 and completing one year of eligibility service.

**Q: Will overtime pay be used to determine my Average Final Compensation?**

A: No. Only base annual earnings, including any Thrift Plan 401(k) deposits, will be used. Overtime, bonuses or other compensation will be excluded.

**Q: Who will send my pension checks to me?**

A: Your monthly pension checks (including the Social Security bridge if applicable) will be mailed from Bankers Trust Company, New York, N.Y. Employees eligible for a retirement annuity from Equitable may receive these checks from The Equitable, New York, N.Y.

**Q: How long will it take to get my first retirement check?**

A: It usually takes about three months to process the necessary paperwork for retirement. Assuming all paperwork is completed within that time frame, you should receive your first retirement check from Bankers Trust on your day of retirement.

**Q: Can I have my checks sent to the bank for direct deposit?**

A: Yes. Upon request, the appropriate forms for direct deposit will be provided to you.

**Q: Will I be provided a statement on my retirement income for income tax withholding purposes?**

A: Yes. You will receive appropriate income tax information from Bankers Trust and The Equitable (if applicable).

**Q: What will be the amount of my life insurance during retirement?**

A: Generally, your life insurance coverage will remain at your active employee level for 90 days after retirement, at which time it will reduce to the retired life insurance amount. The particular formula used to determine your life insurance amount in retirement depends upon which life insurance plan you are insured under as an active employee.

**Q: Will I have to pay a premium for my retired life insurance?**

A: Currently your life insurance in retirement is paid in full by the company.

**Q: What if I want more retired life insurance than that provided by the company?**

A: You are guaranteed the right to convert the difference between your active and retired life insurance amount to a private policy with Provident, GSU's insurance carrier. You would pay the premium for the additional coverage yourself. You must make application to Provident within 30 days of the reduction of your coverage to guarantee your right to convert.

**Q: If I retire, what happens to my dental insurance coverage?**

A: Dental insurance ceases on the last day of the month prior to your retirement date.

**Q: Can I still participate in the Employee Merchandise Plan?**

A: At the present time, retirees may continue to participate.

**Q: How will my vacation be handled?**

A: To the extent possible, vacation will be scheduled prior to retirement under the Early Retirement Option. The exception will be when the company needs the employee to continue working. In such cases, individual arrangements will be made.

**Q: What publications will I receive as a retired GSU employee?**

A: You will receive publications such as *Plain Talks* and *Retirees' Newsbearer* and notices concerning your other benefits.



# Divisions implement Good Cents Program

by Mike Rodgers

**F**riendly Persuasion was the title of a popular Gary Cooper movie several decades ago. The title also sums up the efforts underway on behalf of the Good Cents program in all five GSU divisions. Some friendly persuasion, supported by solid facts and figures on the benefits of Good Cents homes, is bringing about a favorable reaction from the homebuilding industry.

A Good Cents home will have a lower monthly electric bill because of reduced heating, cooling and water heating expenses. Throughout the company, Marketing Department employees are meeting with builders, architects and contractors, either on a one-to-one or group basis, to advise them of the advantages of a Good Cents home. "A recent study in Beaumont Division revealed that it is best for Gulf States to approach the builder about the advantages of installing heat pumps and heat pump water heaters, in addition to approaching the home-buying public," notes Greg Shepard, supervisor-marketing and consumer information in Beaumont Division. He reports with some satisfaction that four builders in the division signed up to build homes meeting the Good Cents standard, with more likely to follow.

Interested builders are provided computer simulations of a house and its operating costs with the energy-saving devices installed. "Efficient equipment is a definite boon to a cost-conscious builder who wants to target a market and build a home he can sell," stresses Shepard. Beaumont Division's goal is to have Good Cents features incorporated in 33 percent of all new homes built in 1986.

The builders, however, aren't the only businesses who will be contacted about Good Cents incentives. Heating and air condi-

tioning contractors, real estate firms, banks and appraisers will be made aware of the program as well. "We're trying to inform our trade allies and let them know what we're doing," says Vic Norvell, marketing superintendent-Western Division.

Norvell estimates that they should have a good idea of their progress by the end of the first quarter. The Western Division is aiming to have 10 percent of all new homes built with Good Cents equipment.

Port Arthur Division wants 35 percent of new homes built there to include Good Cents features. Rufus Mier, marketing superintendent, sees builder enthusiasm in spite of local conditions: "This comes at a time when the economy is depressed and new home construction is down. Nonetheless, homebuilders are impressed."

Lake Charles Division employees are trying something extra in their Good Cents approach. "In addition to our goal of having 10 percent of new

homes meet Good Cents standards," says Becky Watson, supervisor consumer information services, "we hope to see that 70 percent of all new homes will be total-electric. So far, several builders have been enrolled."

A local electric co-op provided a big boost to the Good Cents efforts in Baton Rouge Division. The co-op, DEMCO, contracted to join in with GSU in cosponsoring Good Cents. According to Harriet Babin, supervisor-consumer information services, the joint participation made a difference: "Once our trade allies saw that both companies were part of this, they were impressed. This type of cooperation with a utility gave everything a big push." Instead of committing to a percentage of new homes with Good Cents features, Babin points out that Baton Rouge committed to a specific number. "By the end of 1986, we want 300 new homes meeting Good Cents standards. It's ambitious, but we're making a big push," she says.





# Working together for Gulf States



Photo by Delores West

*Virginia Collins, customer contact clerk, Silsbee*



Photo by Cheryl Crawford

*Joe Babineaux, master repairman, Nelson Coal*

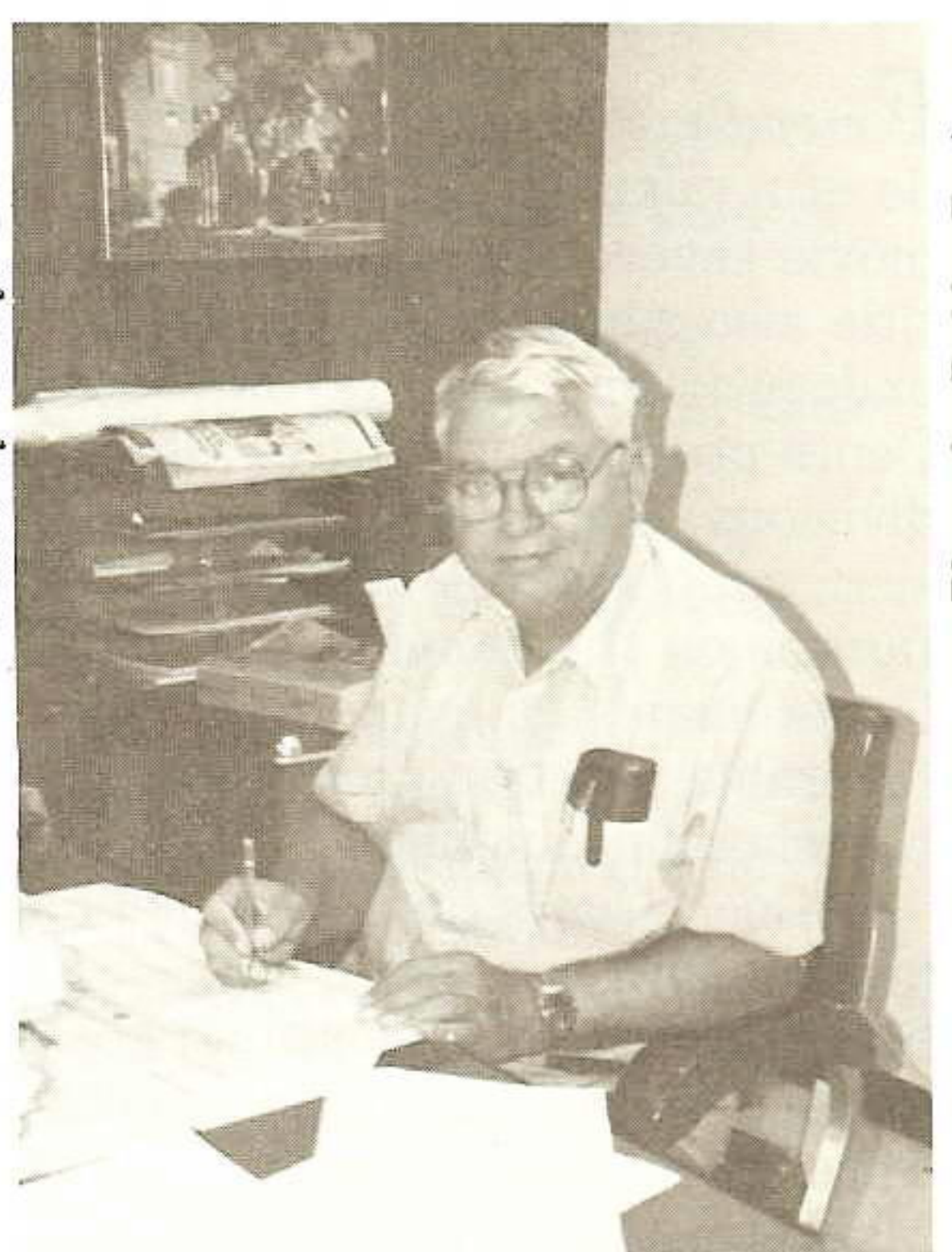


Photo by Robby Zeringue

*Dolph McKowen, senior district service representative, Zachary*

**G**SU is made up of a variety of jobs, personalities and locations, but every employee has one thing in common — a desire to make

Gulf States the best it can be. *Plain Talks* correspondents captured several on-the-job scenes on film.



Photo by Robby Zeringue

*Robert Hebert, storeroom assistant, Baton Rouge*



Photo by Delores West

*Harold Oates, lineman-1st class, Silsbee*





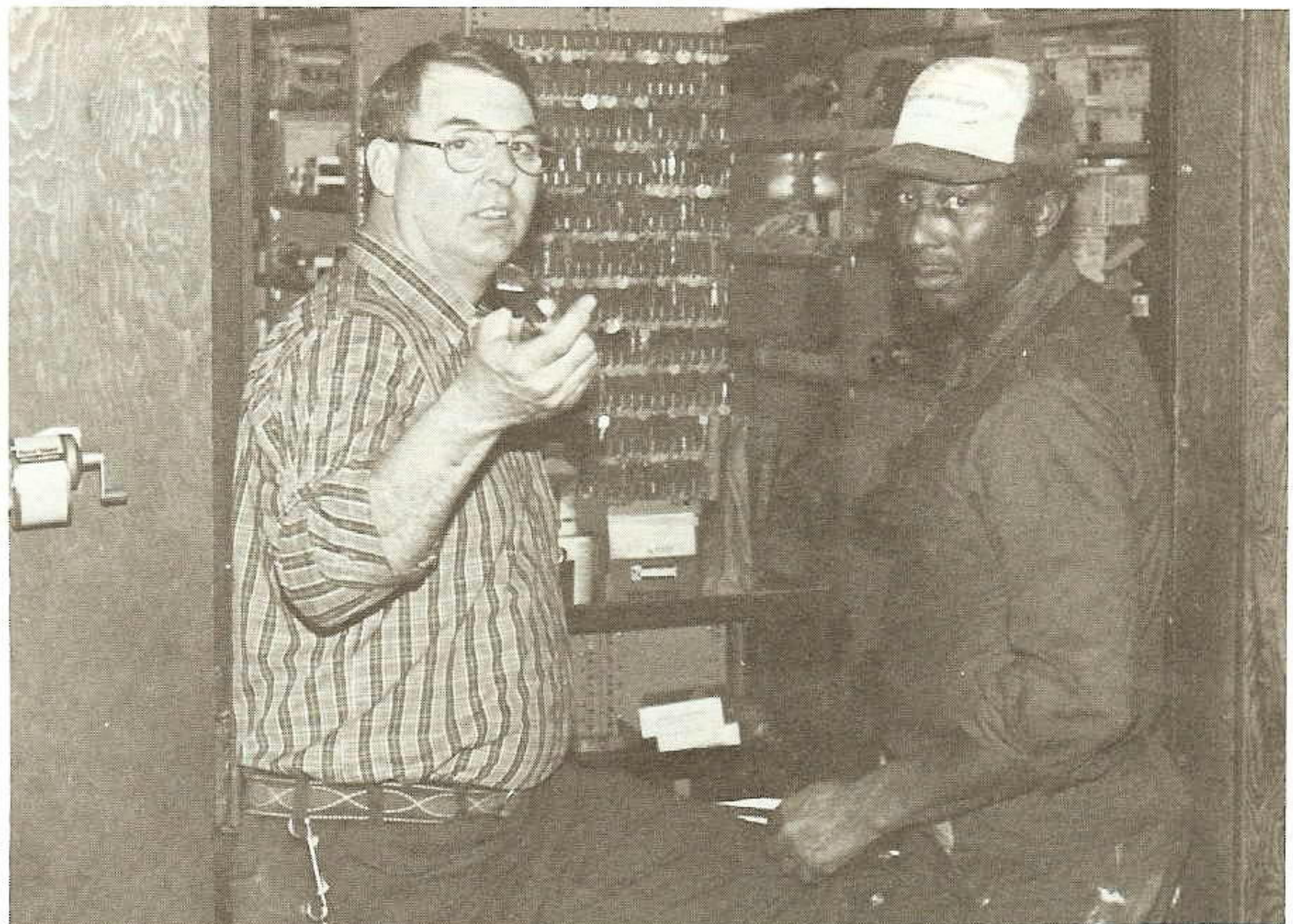
Photo by Carol Payne

*From left, Emmitt Williams, helper, Barner Hooks, lineman-1st class, and Donnie Thomas, lineman-3rd class, Huntsville.*



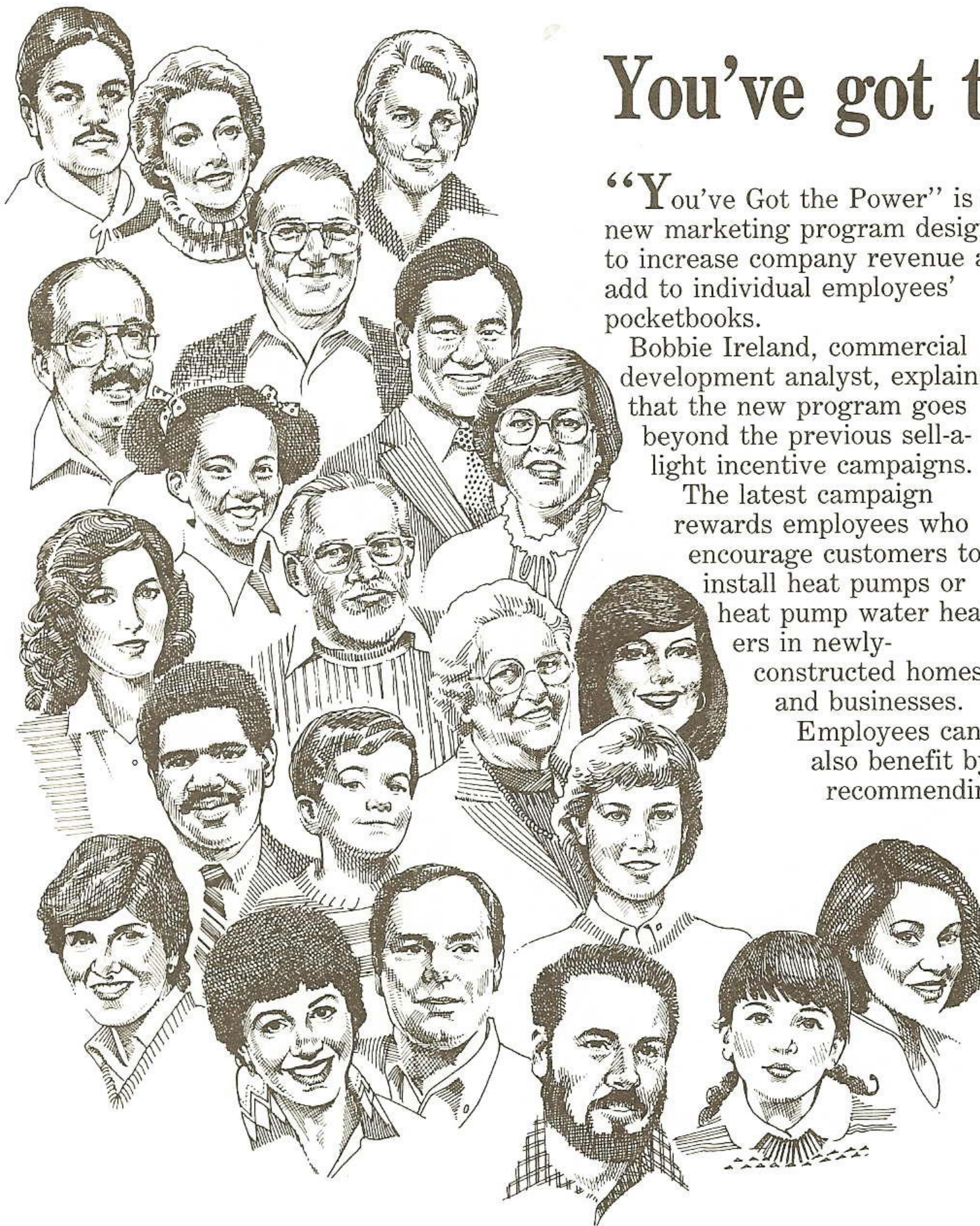
Photo by Myra Ponthier

*Jerry Smith, storekeeper, Zachary*



*Raymond Jarreau (left) and Johnny Turner, both mechanics-1st class, Baton Rouge.*





# You've got the power

**"You've Got the Power"** is a new marketing program designed to increase company revenue and add to individual employees' pocketbooks.

Bobbie Ireland, commercial development analyst, explains that the new program goes beyond the previous sell-a-light incentive campaigns.

The latest campaign rewards employees who encourage customers to install heat pumps or heat pump water heaters in newly-constructed homes and businesses.

Employees can also benefit by recommending

customers replace their existing gas equipment with electric heat pumps, heat pump water heaters or electric water heaters. GSU security and flood lights are included in this new program, too. The earlier program covered only area lights.

In a videotape announcing "You've Got the Power," Board Chairman Paul Murrill commented, "We don't want to encourage people to waste energy, but we do encourage them to use more electricity, if they want to improve the quality of their life."

Announcement meetings were held throughout GSU in January and February, and employees who signed commitment cards were given "You've Got the Power" kits, including a merchandise catalog. Under the new program, employees should submit referral cards of customers who need the qualifying equipment to their division Marketing Department. Referrals submitted before Nov. 15, 1986, which are converted to sales by Dec. 15, 1986, will earn the employee "power credits," which may be redeemed for merchandise or cashed in at GSU.

Area lights each earn 900 credits (equal to \$5), while heat pumps, heat pump water heaters and electric water heaters earn 1,800 credits (equal to \$10). Any sales closed before March 1986 earn double power credits.

As an extra incentive, notes Ireland, 1986 lighting certificates may be converted to power credits by March 31, 1986.

Ireland lauds "You've Got the Power" as an opportunity for entire GSU families to work together toward a common goal. For instance, merchandise ranges from clothing to sporting goods to furniture. Family members can select the item they want and all work to identify installations which would help them reach their objective.

## 1985 sales given

**D**arrell "Goody" Goodwin, senior district service representative, is a good salesman by anyone's standards.

The 26-year GSU veteran sold 232 lights to Jennings district customers in 1985 on his way to becoming the top salesman in the sell-a-light program.

Altogether, employees sold 5,892 lights in 1985 — sales that represented 134 percent of the 4,400-light goal for the year. The lights are expected to provide about \$690,558 in additional annual revenue, not counting the

\$190,375 earned from installation charges. Annual megawatt hours for that many lights total 5,751.

Other division sales leaders for 1985 were Sheldon Johnson, senior energy auditor in Baton Rouge, who sold 176 lights; Kathy Bourgeois, senior district service representative in Orange, who sold 100 lights; Tass Young, senior district service representative in Mid-County, who sold 61 lights; and Paul Mosley, marketing agent in Conroe, who sold 53 lights.



# A visit with Jean Hebert



*Jean Hebert (left) confers with Don Charles, storekeeper.*

by Susan Gilley

Jean Hebert didn't know a word of English until he started to school.

But the French-speaking youngster handled that challenge like any other he has ever faced — he simply learned English and went on with his life.

Today, at 55, Hebert is a storeroom supervisor at Nelson Gas and Oil. His 33-year GSU career has taken him from reading meters out of the downtown Lake Charles office to the storeroom at the Lake Charles Service Center to the Test Department at Nelson Gas and Oil and to the plant's storeroom. He also did some relief work in the Jennings district.

Looking back at his career, Hebert says he feels he learned valuable people skills with his previous jobs, especially as a meter reader. "You have to learn public relations in that job," he insists. Along the way, he says, he further developed his communications skills through in-

volvement as a leader in the Employee CONTACT Program.

In his present position, Hebert supervises four employees. The group works in an almost spotless warehouse setting — proof of what Hebert's supervisor, Myron Brown, calls his determination that a job should be done right. "He (Hebert) does not like a half-done job," Brown, supervisor-accounting and administration, asserts.

According to Brown, Hebert faces challenges in his job — getting people to accept changes in long-standing storeroom procedures, as well as gaining acceptance of storeroom computerization.

Such challenges call for Hebert's communications skills, but, as usual, he seems up to them. For example, Hebert appears to have an easy rapport with his co-workers both on and off the job. Once a year, he dons his chef's hat to debone a turkey, then cook the fowl with dressing and all the trimmings for his work group.

All that moving around on the job was to Hebert's liking. "It

has given me insight into what's happening in different parts of the company." Hebert and his wife Juanita are the parents of two grown children, Roger and Sharon. Now the grandfather of two little boys, Hebert recalls the advice he gave his son before he began his first job. "I told him, 'When you work, there'll be some jobs that aren't to your appetite. Sometimes you can't see the whole picture as to why the job may be necessary. Go ahead and do a good job and eventually something may come up that's better.' I've always believed in doing your best and not cutting corners," he reveals.

Hebert's ultimate advice to his son was "if you're not interested in the company, then for goodness sake, go find another job."

Now that his children have moved, cooking has become one of Hebert's favorite leisuretime activities. The Heberts, who recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary, also enjoy dancing to music from the 1950s and visiting friends and relatives throughout Louisiana.



# Good manners equal good business

by Susan Gilley

**E**tiquette books have dealt with good telephone manners. Parents have threatened teen-aged children about their telephone manners.

But at the corporate level, good telephone manners equal sound business practice.

Anyone at GSU who uses a telephone to do business with customers, shareholders, vendors and even in-house clients has an opportunity to spotlight his or her competence and courtesy — and that includes employees at all levels.

Four areas of the company which depend upon telephone contacts to a great extent are Customer Accounting, Shareholder Services, Public Affairs and Purchasing. *Plain Talks* asked someone from each group about the special challenges they face.

Nobie Alford, supervisor-customer accounts in Beaumont, says the 11 employees in her work group must handle an average of 450 to 600 calls daily, with peaks up to 800. "We deal with customers who have problems that we must help them

solve. Sometimes we have to deal with their emotions to get the job done. Good manners are very important because we want customers to know that we care."

Alford's advice for on-the-telephone success is, "Really listen to the customer. Sometimes a listener is all they need." She believes there are two payoffs for remaining calm and polite. "There's your personal satisfaction from having handled the call properly and there's an improved public image for GSU. Believe me, once people talk to somebody here, they'll talk to their friends and neighbors about how they were treated," Alford explains.

In addition to daily reminders on effective communication techniques, Alford says her work group participates in several special communication improvement programs. For instance, at various times, most have undergone an eight-hour in-house course entitled "Creating Satisfied Customers."

Ridge Sewell, director-shareholder services, says his

group's function is "to communicate with shareholders regarding stock ownership accounts and procedures, but we're often called for information about our company, too. We are GSU's voice to our shareholders."

Although the nine employees in his group generally handle from 250 to 350 calls per day, media coverage can cause those numbers to skyrocket. For example, following the January news stories dealing with GSU's financial situation, the group answered 2,000 calls over a two-day period.

Sewell says honesty is always the best policy. Even if a caller is hostile, he urges his employees to "keep your cool. If you're right, support your position in a pleasant way (about whatever matter the caller brings up). If they've got a legitimate gripe, admit it. Remember, they're not attacking you personally."

According to Sewell, "Good communications begins with a pleasant tone of voice when you answer the phone." As an informal way of recognizing good telephone manners, Sewell in-



*Byrda Weathersby, Lafayette*



*Marilyn Reynolds, Nelson Coal*



*Audrey McDonald, Orange*





stituted a "Mary Sunshine Award" for honoring the employee "who best lived up to their expectations over a two-week period."

He admits that spending hours on a telephone can be frustrating, especially when dealing with the same types of situations day-in and day-out. Even so, he points out, "You're talking to different people, so every call is unique. Besides, lots of congenial people call us, too."

Of course, in order to answer a shareholder's questions, all Shareholder Services employees must be up-to-date on company developments. Sewell and Nancy Woodrome, shareholder services representative, hold frequent briefings with their work group. Even then, says Sewell, it is sometimes necessary to call on others in the company for information.

In Public Affairs, Sharon Englade, senior communications representative, spends much of her time "on the telephone, providing information to the public, to the media, to shareholders and stockbrokers."

She describes the telephone as

a tremendous timesaver in her job, since it provides immediate access to data. And how important are good manners? "I think they are extremely important. To me, there's no excuse for rudeness on the telephone. There have been times when I've been hard-pressed to keep my temper when I'm talking to someone who's irascible and really just unloading rather than looking for information. I find that sometimes they just calm down because I'm listening to them."

In her telephone dealings, Englade says she's found proof of the old adage, "You catch a lot more flies with honey than with vinegar."

A slightly different challenge exists for Purchasing Department employees. After all, points out Rose Holstead, senior purchasing agent, "Many of the callers want to do business with us."

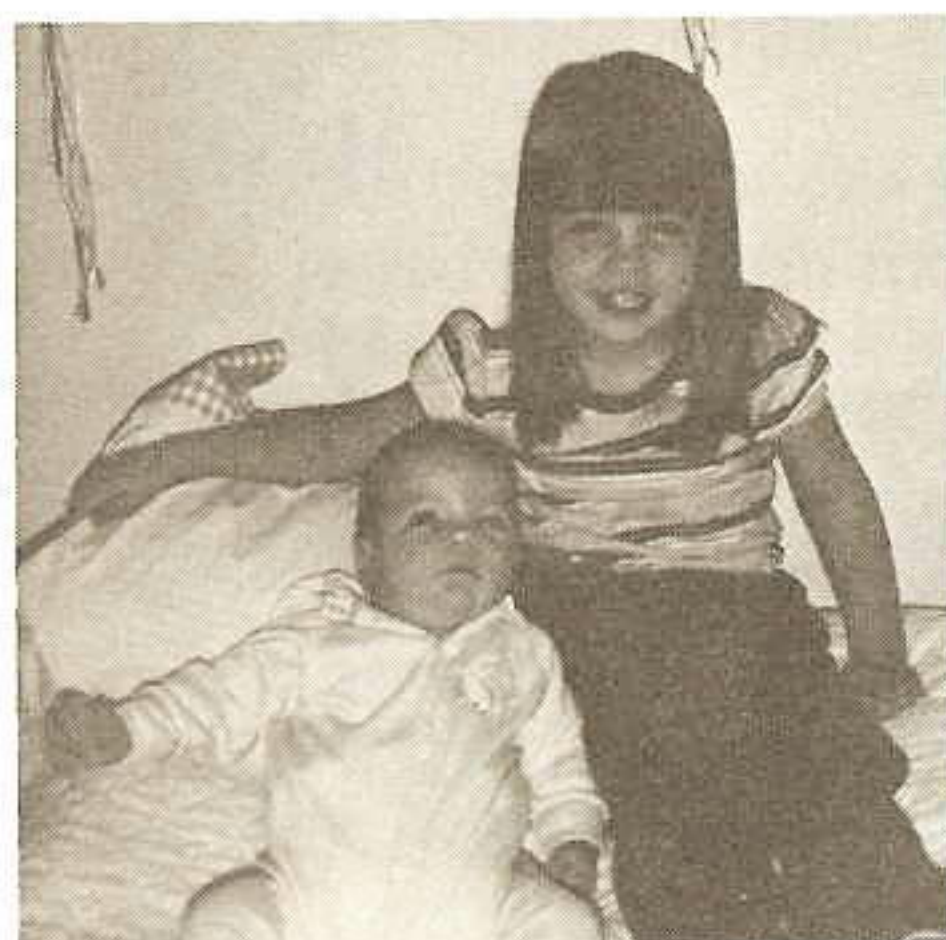
She estimates that about 75 percent of departmental business is handled over the telephone. "The primary challenge," she asserts, "is to communicate with the person on the other end of the line. We deal with specifica-

tions and technical data, so it's important to convey this correctly. Good manners are important because they help you communicate. If you're defensive, your communication process will break down rather quickly."

Sometimes Holstead gets a call that should have gone to another department. If the caller happens to be an unhappy customer or shareholder, she makes an extra-special effort to put them in touch with the right person. "I'll explain that I will try to transfer their call, but I'll give them my name so that they can call me back if that fails. Then, I'll see what else I can do to help."

Why are good manners crucial? Board Chairman Paul Murrill has commented, "We exist only with the permission of the people we serve." From that standpoint, customers, shareholders, vendors and even in-house clients who call us deserve the best attention we can give them.





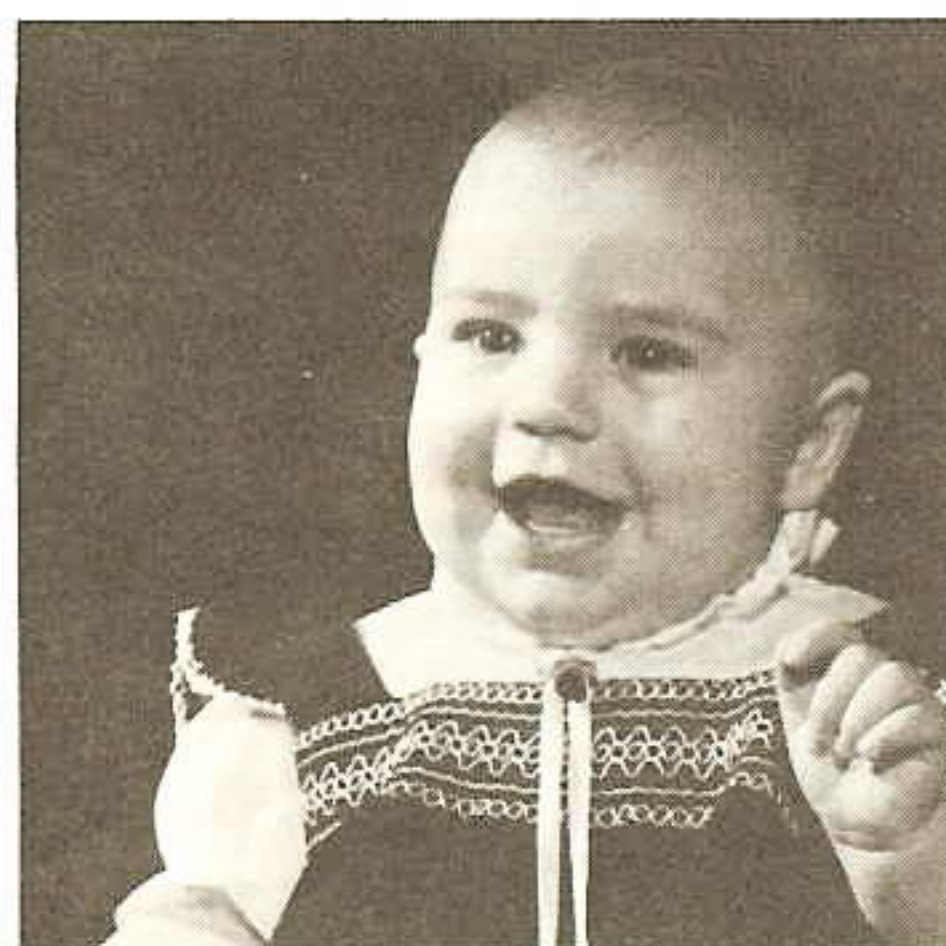
*Jason and Jennifer Brown*

## Sister gains baby brother

Jason Michael Brown was born Nov. 5, 1985, to the Jerry and Vicky Brown family of Port Neches.

The infant weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce and measured 19 inches at birth.

His mom, a personnel assistant in Edison Plaza, reports that Jason has a big sister, 3-year-old Jennifer Leigh.



*Amanda Leigh Jackson*

## Jacksons add second child

A second daughter joined the Ron and Paula Jackson family on July 16, 1985, with the birth of Amanda Leigh. Her dad is a pilot-mechanic with the GSU Aviation Department.

The infant weighed 7 pounds, 13 1/2 ounces and measured 20 inches.

She is now at home in Beaumont with her parents and her big sister, 13-year-old De-De.

## GSUers coach

Four GSU employees from Nelson Gas and Oil coached a winning Little League team last season, leading the youngsters to a 14-2 record.

The coaches were Kirk A. Leger, equipment operator; Charlie Elter, test technician-1st class; Van Bushnell, control operations foreman; and Mike Lavergne, repairman-1st class.



*Showing off their Little League trophies are coaches (from back left) Kirk Leger and son Cory, Charlie Elter, Van Bushnell and Mike Lavergne and players (from left) Chad Elter, Van Alan Bushnell and Mark and Mike Lavergne.*

## Couple reports birth of 1st child

Emily Meagan Wilson was born to David and Valerie Wilson of Ethel, La., on May 22, 1985. The little girl weighed 9 pounds, 8 1/2 ounces and measured 20 1/2 inches.

Her mother, a test technician-2nd class at Willow Glen, says the baby is the couple's first child.



*Emily Meagan Wilson*



*Robby Adams*

## Robby Adams makes appearance

With the Dec. 17, 1985, birth of Robert Anthony "Robby" Adams, the Robert and Lena Adams family grew to four members.

The little boy, whose father is an audiovisual support specialist in Edison Plaza, weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces and measured 18 1/2 inches.

He has one sister, 3-year-old Leslie. The family lives in Beaumont.



*Cleo Tranée Jennings*

## Family announces daughter's birth

Leonard and Brenda Jennings of Lake Charles announce the Dec. 5, 1985, birth of their first child, Cleo Tranée Jennings. The little girl weighed 8 pounds, 6 ounces and measured 21 inches at birth.

Her father is a serviceman-1st class in Lake Charles.

## Wilder takes risky vacation

Jim Wilder doesn't aim for peace and quiet on his vacations.

Instead, the Conroe division accounting superintendent spent last summer touring Rome, Athens, Cairo, The Holy Lands — prime targets for political kidnappings. In June, Wilder joined his nephew, a Methodist minister, and members of several Methodist churches on a 17-day vacation. The group arrived in Cairo the day after an airplane was hijacked. His adventures included touring Egypt, sailing the Nile, ferrying across the Suez Canal, wading in the River Jordan and swimming in the Dead Sea.

Just four months before the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*, Wilder and other members of his tour group rode the cruise ship.



*Jim Wilder poses near the ruins of the Colosseum in Rome.*

## Wishing Well benefits twins

Randy and Ricky Sonnier, 6-year-old sons of a Nelson Gas and Oil employee, recently made an all-expense-paid trip to Disney World and the Epcot Center.

The trip was provided by the Wishing Well Program, which benefits



children with life-threatening disorders.

David A. Sonnier, GSU equipment operator and the twins' father, reports that both boys suffer from all acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Ricky was first diagnosed with the disease in August 1983 and has completed his treatments. Randy was diagnosed with the disease in December 1984 and is undergoing treatment at both the Oschner Clinic in New Orleans and a Lake Charles hospital.



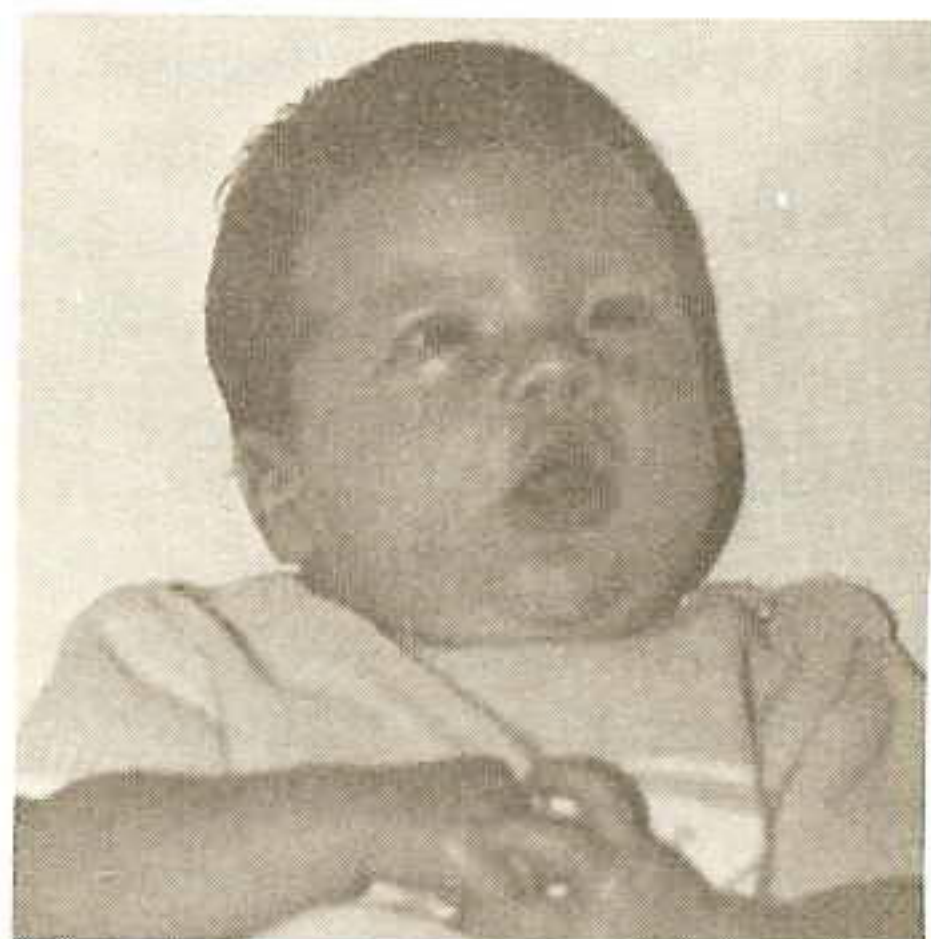
*Randy and Ricky Sonnier made a new friend during their trip to Disney World.*

## Couple announces infant son

Jeremy Ryan Kaulfus made his appearance Oct. 9, 1985, report proud parents Mark and Jane Kaulfus of Nederland.

The infant, the couple's first, weighed 9 pounds and measured 21 inches.

His mother is a senior stenographer based in Edison Plaza.



*Jeremy Ryan Kaulfus*



*Cody Ray*

## Fourth child joins Ray family

And baby made six for the Michael and Susan Ray family of Groves, as new son Cody Miles joined two big sisters and one big brother.

The youngster, born July 15, 1985, weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce and measured 20 inches.

His mom is a departmental clerk, Engineering Services, in Edison Plaza.

The older siblings are 10-year-old Nicole, who shares Cody's birthday; Danielle, 6; and Michael, 3.



*Matthew Joseph Ducote*

## Port Allen couple reports birth

Matthew Joseph Ducote was born Nov. 11, 1985, to Mark and Cheri Ducote of Port Allen.

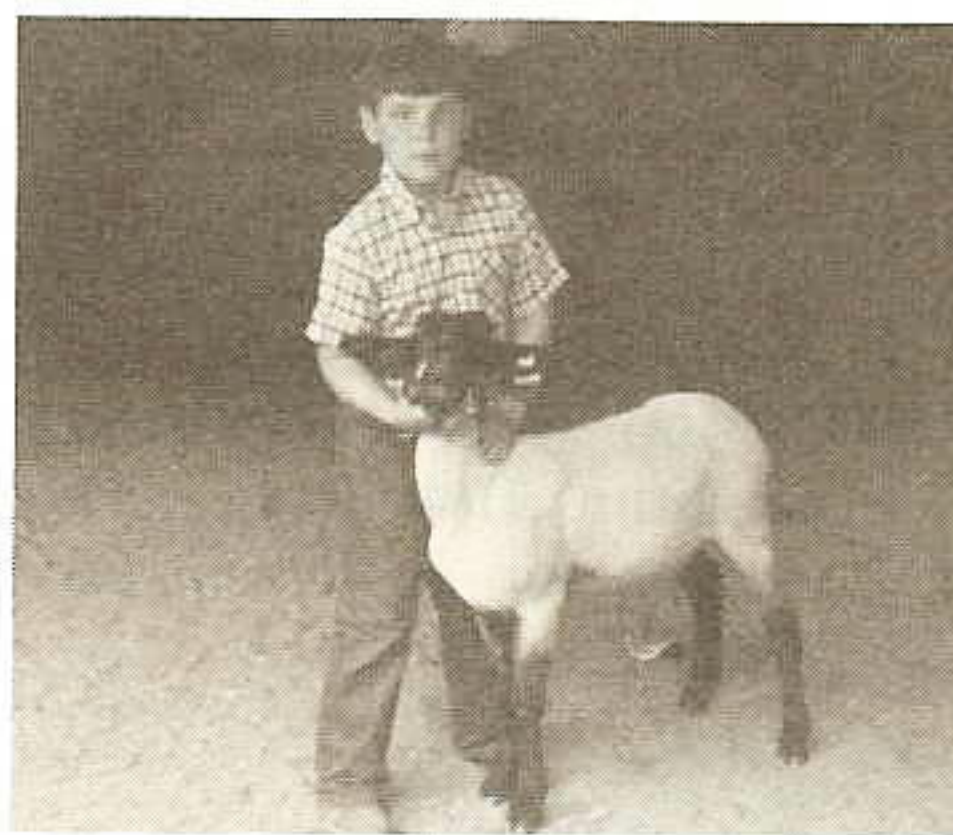
The infant, the couple's first child, weighed 6 pounds, 12 3/4 ounces and measured 19 inches.

His mother is a clerk at the North Boulevard office in Baton Rouge.

## Cropper's lamb places at fair

Joseph Cropper of Vidor took his first lamb, Charlotte, to the Southeast Texas State Fair last fall, and placed 8th in the lightweight lambs category.

Rooting for young Cropper were his mother, Deborah; his dad, Steven Cropper, test technician-1st class at Sabine Station; and his little sister, Jewelann.



*Joseph Cropper and Charlotte*

## Fontenots report baby girl

Morgan Brittany Fontenot is the newest addition to the Gary and Andrea Fontenot family of Lake Charles.

The infant was born May 18, 1985, reports her father, a senior engineering assistant at Nelson Gas and Oil.

She has one sister, 11-year-old Tamma.



*Tamma and Morgan Brittany Fontenot*



*James Scott Herford*

## Scott Herford joins family

James Scott Herford was born July 10, 1985, to Guy and Connie Herford of Sulphur. Little Scott weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce and measured 20 3/4 inches at birth.

The proud mom, a departmental clerk at Nelson Gas and Oil, reports that co-worker Martha Caldwell, a secretary at the power plant, serves as one of little Scott's godmothers.



*Lawrence and Lora Davis*

## Couple adopts baby boy

A GSU couple — Lawrence and Lora Davis — were given a baby shower recently by their Conroe co-workers in honor of their newly-adopted son, Steven.

The 17-month-old little boy has one sister, 11-year-old Stephanie.

Both of the proud parents work in the Western Division, where Lawrence is supervisor-division engineering and Lora is meter reader supervisor.



## A

**Allen, Linda G.**, Baton Rouge, to senior coordinator-office systems, Electric T&D.

## B

**Backen, Roger J.**, River Bend Station, to senior quality assurance engineer, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Bailey, Mark A.**, Baton Rouge, to substation mechanic-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Bankston, Kahnne L.**, River Bend Station, to quality control inspector II, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Brannan, Richard P.**, Beaumont, to EDP shift supervisor, Computer Applications.

**Bravata, Ricky J.**, Baton Rouge, to communications serviceman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Burd, Stephen D.**, River Bend Station, to master instrument control technician-nuclear, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Burnett, Troy D.**, River Bend Station, to plant chemist, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Burwick, Edgar L.**, Lewis Creek Station, to control operations foreman, Plant Production.

**Byrd, Dee H.**, River Bend Station, to radiation protection technician-2nd class, River Bend Nuclear Group.

## C

**Clayton, Margie W.**, Beaumont, to computer control operator, Computer Applications.

**Colleps, Dale F. Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to helper, Gas Department.

**Curtis, David W.**, Dayton, to serviceman-1st class, Electric T&D.

## D

**Daigle, Fabien J.**, Baton Rouge, to substation foreman, Electric T&D.

**Daniels, Ricky E.**, Port Arthur, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Darensbourg, Jeffrey G.**, Willow Glen Station, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

**Dautel, Pamela J.**, Beaumont, to licensing analyst, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Davis, Sarah C.**, Beaumont, to planning analyst, Corporate Planning.

**Deloach, Iva D.**, Beaumont, to computer operator, Computer Applications.

**Didier, Merri L.**, Baton Rouge, to senior energy auditor, Division Marketing & Consumer Services.

**Dunkelberg, John R.**, formerly of Cherry Hill, N.J., to supervisor-task contracting, River Bend Nuclear Group, River Bend Station.

**Dunn, Dennis C.**, Winnie, to lineman-3rd class, Electric T&D.

## F

**Farque, Rickie L.**, Nelson Station, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

**Frohnafel, Robert L.**, Willow Glen Station, to electrician-2nd class, Plant Production.

## G

**Gaspard, Sandra K.**, Beaumont, to senior energy auditor, Division Marketing & Consumer Services.

**Gibbins, Carl D. Jr.**, Beaumont, to substation mechanic-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Gonzales, Ricky**, Orange, to lineman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Griggs, Paul E.**, Willow Glen Station, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

**Guilbeau, David W.**, Port Arthur, to substation mechanic-3rd class, Electric T&D.

**Hardy, Wayne C.**, River Bend Station, to radiological engineering supervisor, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Henry, Gregory K.**, River Bend Station, to supervisor-electrical engineering, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Hubbard, Teresa E.**, Conroe, to shop and field tester, Electric T&D.

**Hunt, Thomas L.**, River Bend Station, to senior quality assurance engineer, River Bend Nuclear Group.

## J

**Jarreau, Roland J.**, Baton Rouge, to inspector-contract crews, Electric T&D.

**Jennings, Mark O.**, Orange, to lineman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Jones, Paul L.**, formerly of System Production, to director-operator development, Human Resources, Beaumont.

## K

**Kressman, Fred E.**, Sabine Station, to training coordinator, Human Resources.

**Kunkel, Chris A.**, Beaumont, to substation mechanic-1st class, Electric T&D.

## L

**Laborde, John M.**, Beaumont, to senior engineering assistant, Engineering Design.

**LeBaron, Frank**, Lake Charles, to shop foreman, Electric T&D.

**Lipham, Gary D.**, River Bend Station, to chemical foreman, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Lovett, Michael W.**, Neches Station, to electrician-3rd class, Plant Production.

**Lytle, Dennis A.**, Baton Rouge, to coordinator-gas, Gas Department.

## M

**Macha, Sandra J.**, Beaumont, to computer control operator, Computer Applications.

**McClain, Mark F.**, Sabine Station, to test technician-3rd class, Plant Production.

**Moran, Ramona P.**, Baton Rouge, to customer contact clerk, Division Accounting.

## N

**Niquiporo, Albert P.**, St. Francisville, to communications serviceman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

## O

**Oaks, Lewis M. III**, Dayton, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Olinger, Wayne J.**, Baton Rouge, to communications foreman, Electric T&D.

## P

**Parsons, Eldon G.**, Beaumont, to senior engineering assistant, Electric T&D.

**Paul, Robert M. Jr.**, Lafayette, to lineman-4th class, Electric T&D.

**Phillips, Paula S.**, Baton Rouge, to stenographer-senior, Electric T&D.

**Powell, Gary D.**, Conroe, to serviceman-1st class, Electric T&D.

## R

**Ray, Thomas J.**, Beaumont, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Rhodus, Jerry L.**, Willow Glen Station, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

## S

**Smith, Richard C.**, Conroe, to meterman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Sonnier, Matthew L.**, Nelson Coal, to electrician-1st class, Plant Production.

**Sprinkle, Nathan C.**, Beaumont, to lead electrical designer, Engineering.



**Stafford, Robert B.**, River Bend Station, to director-quality operations, River Bend Nuclear Group.

## T

**Taylor, Joseph III**, The Woodlands, to lineman-4th class, Electric T&D.

**Thomas, Linda R.**, Beaumont, to senior engineering assistant, Production.

**Tomlinson, Phillip F.**, River Bend Station, to director-quality services, River Bend Station.

## V

**Votaw, Richard W.**, Dayton, to lineman-4th class, Electric T&D.

## W

**Waldrep, Darrel E.**, Woodville, to lineman-3rd class, Electric T&D.

**Walhood, Ben P. Jr.**, Sabine Station, to electrician-1st class, Plant Production.

**Weir, Donald L.**, Baton Rouge, to substation mechanic-3rd class, Electric T&D.

**Wiley, Nina F.**, Conroe, to energy auditor, Division Marketing & Consumer Services.

**Williams, Michael C.**, River Bend Station, to helper-nuclear, River Bend Nuclear Group.

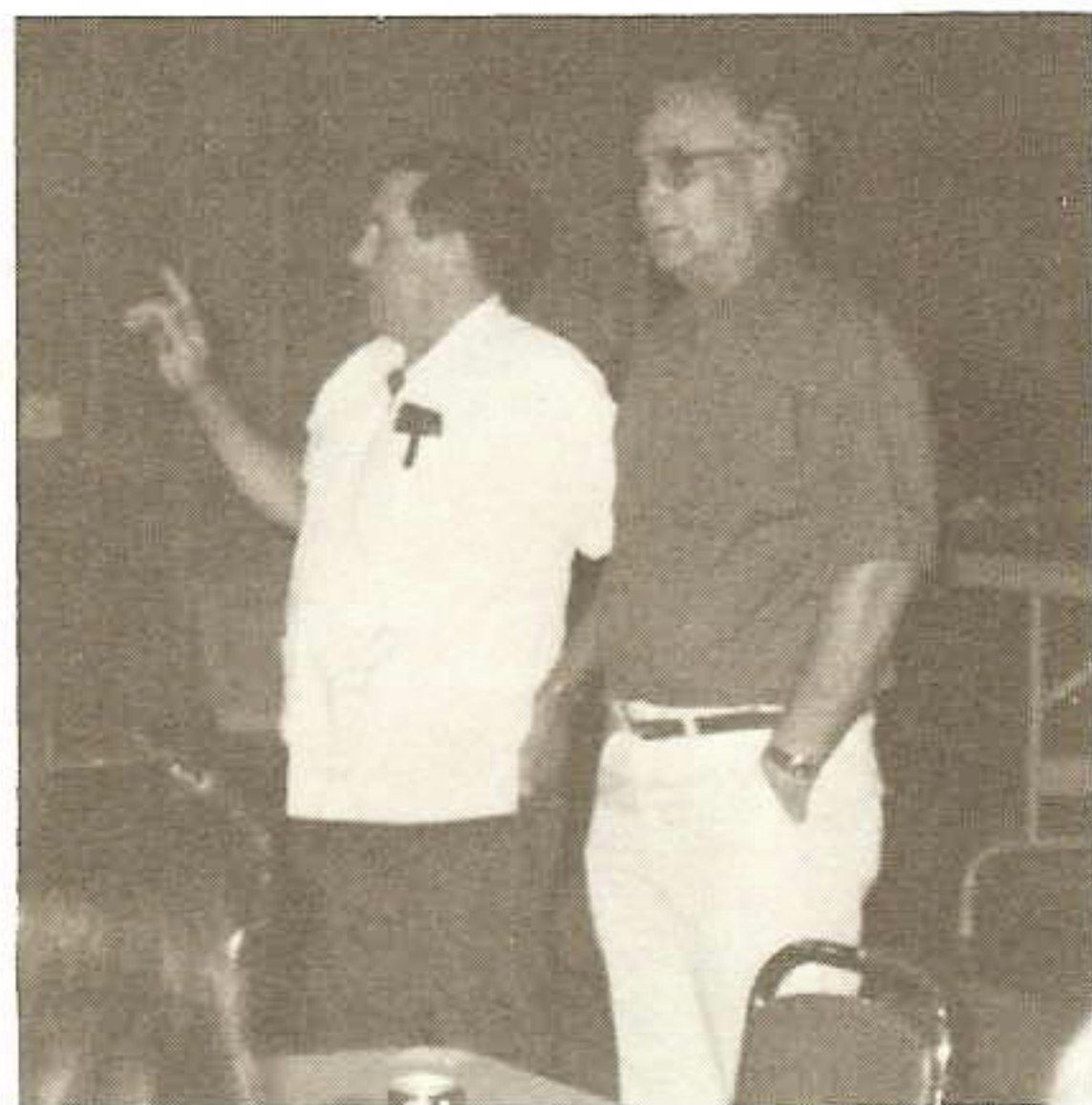
**Williams, Timothy R.**, River Bend Station, to planning and scheduling analyst, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Woods, Morris J.**, Lake Charles, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

## Z

**Zimmerman, Harry R.**, Willow Glen Station, to test technician-2nd class, Plant Production.

# RETIREE UPDATE



*Dudley Clarke (left) addresses the guests at Rolland Broussard's retirement party.*

## Broussard retires in Lake Charles

Co-workers honored Rolland J. Broussard with a party prior to his July 1 retirement. Broussard was a heavy equipment operator in the Lake Charles Line Department.

According to *Plain Talks* correspondent Edith Patterson, Broussard completed 36 years at GSU.

## Queen plans retirement travel

J.C. Queen, meterman-1st class, was given a retirement party Nov. 7 in Port Arthur. Safety and Health Representative R.L. Grubbs presented Queen with a plaque for completing his 39 years at GSU without a single lost-time injury. Also, co-workers presented Queen with a suitcase full of \$1 bills.

According to *Plain Talks* correspondent Barbara Broussard, Queen and his wife, Faye, plan to travel during retirement.



*J.C. Queen (left) receives a safety plaque from R.L. Grubbs.*



*Silas Smith (left) and Albert Weimar celebrate at their retirement supper.*

## Co-workers fete Smith and Weimar

There were two retirements celebrated at a supper held last October in Baton Rouge. Silas Smith, helper, and Albert Weimar, meterman-1st class, retired last Nov. 1.

Both men worked in the meter shop of the Gas Department.



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