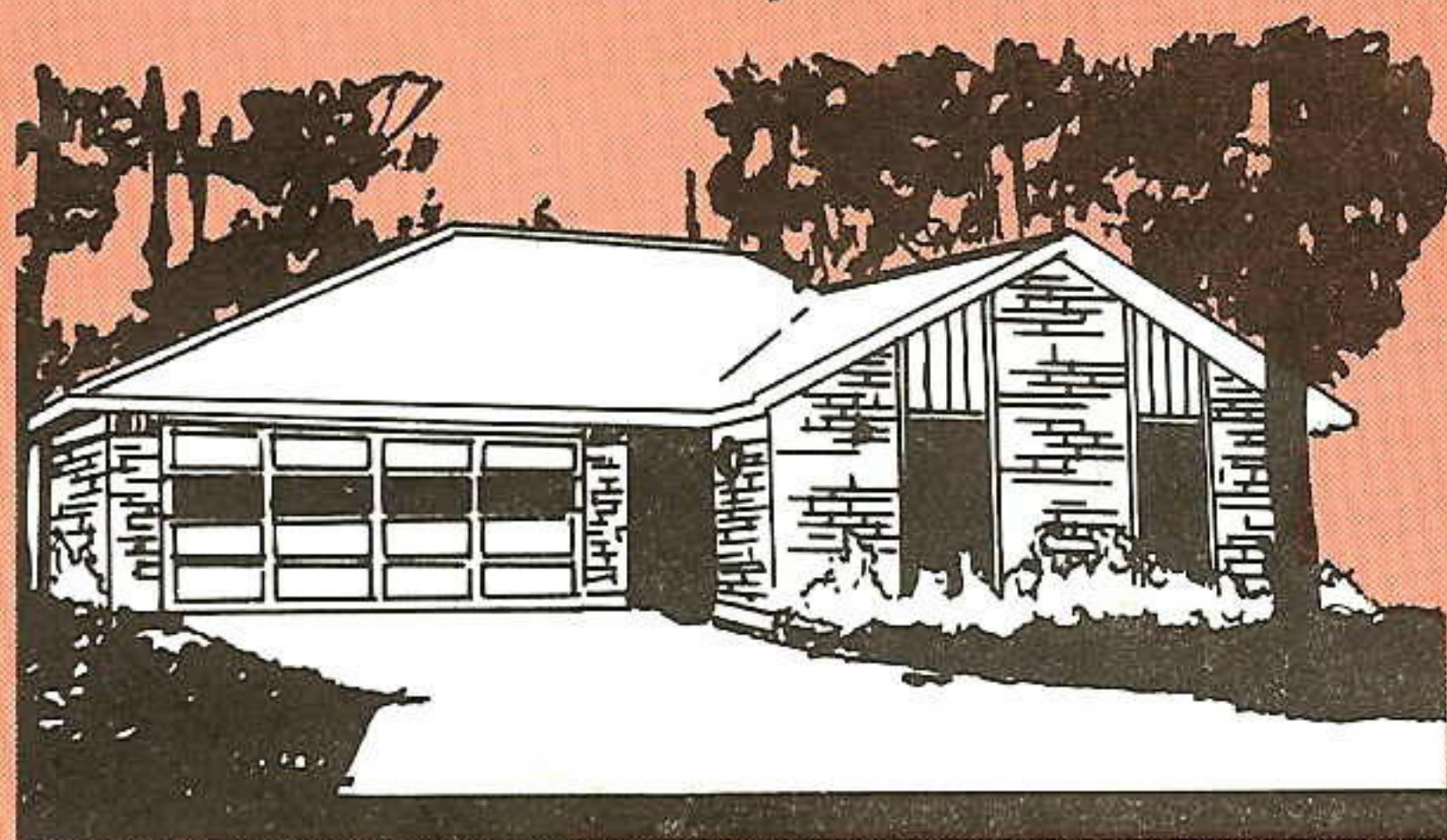
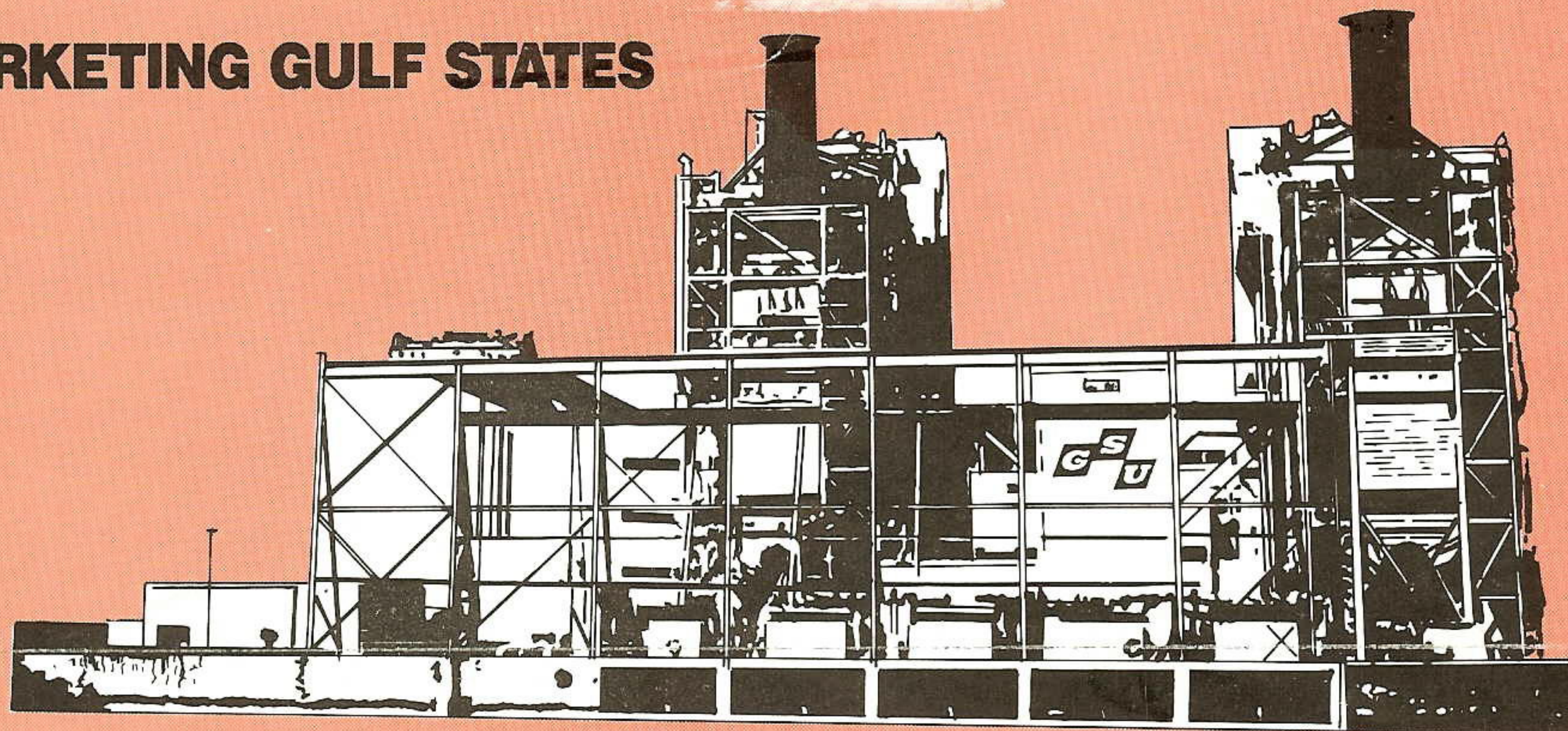


# PLAIN TALKS

October 1987

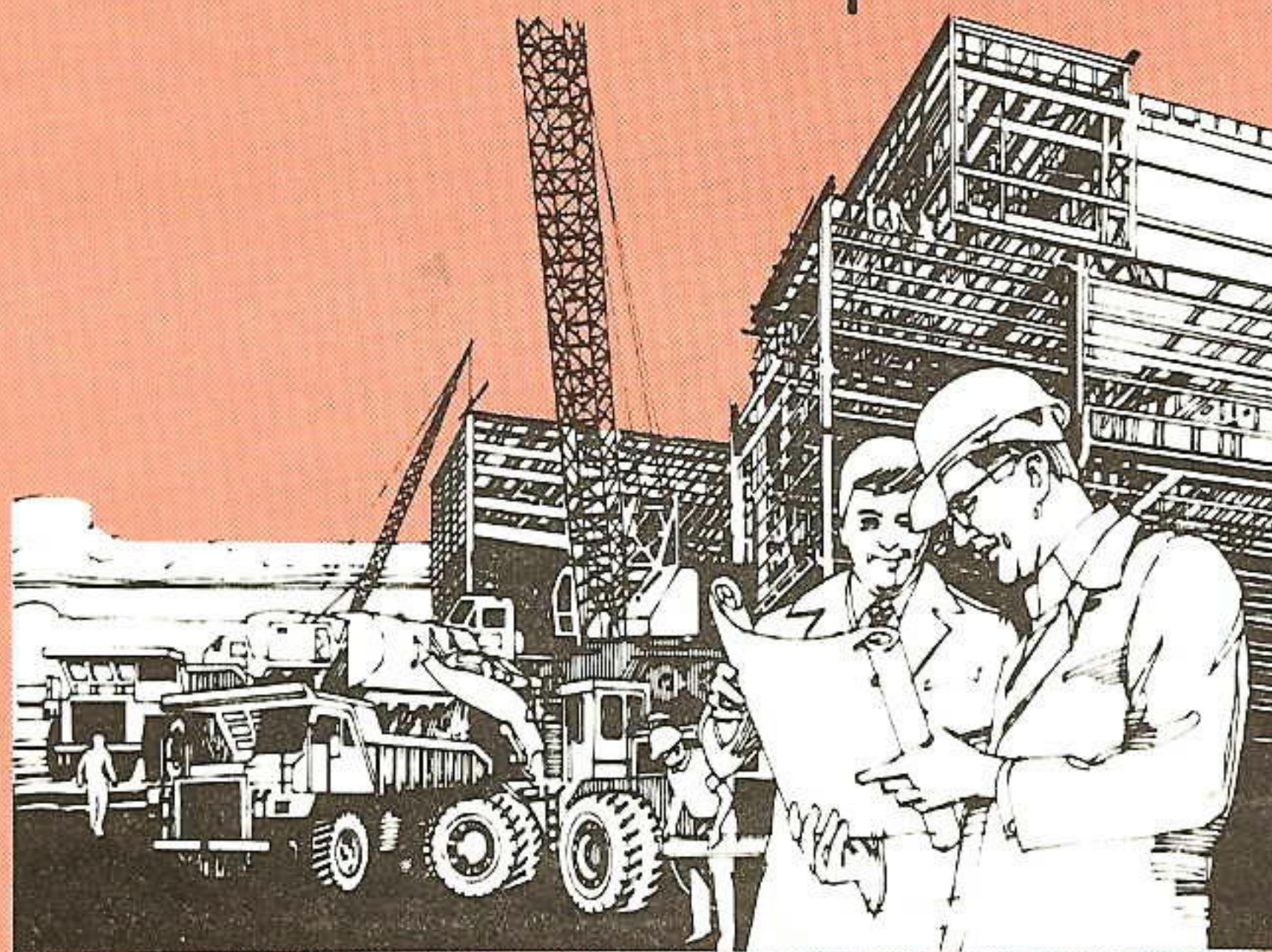
## MARKETING GULF STATES



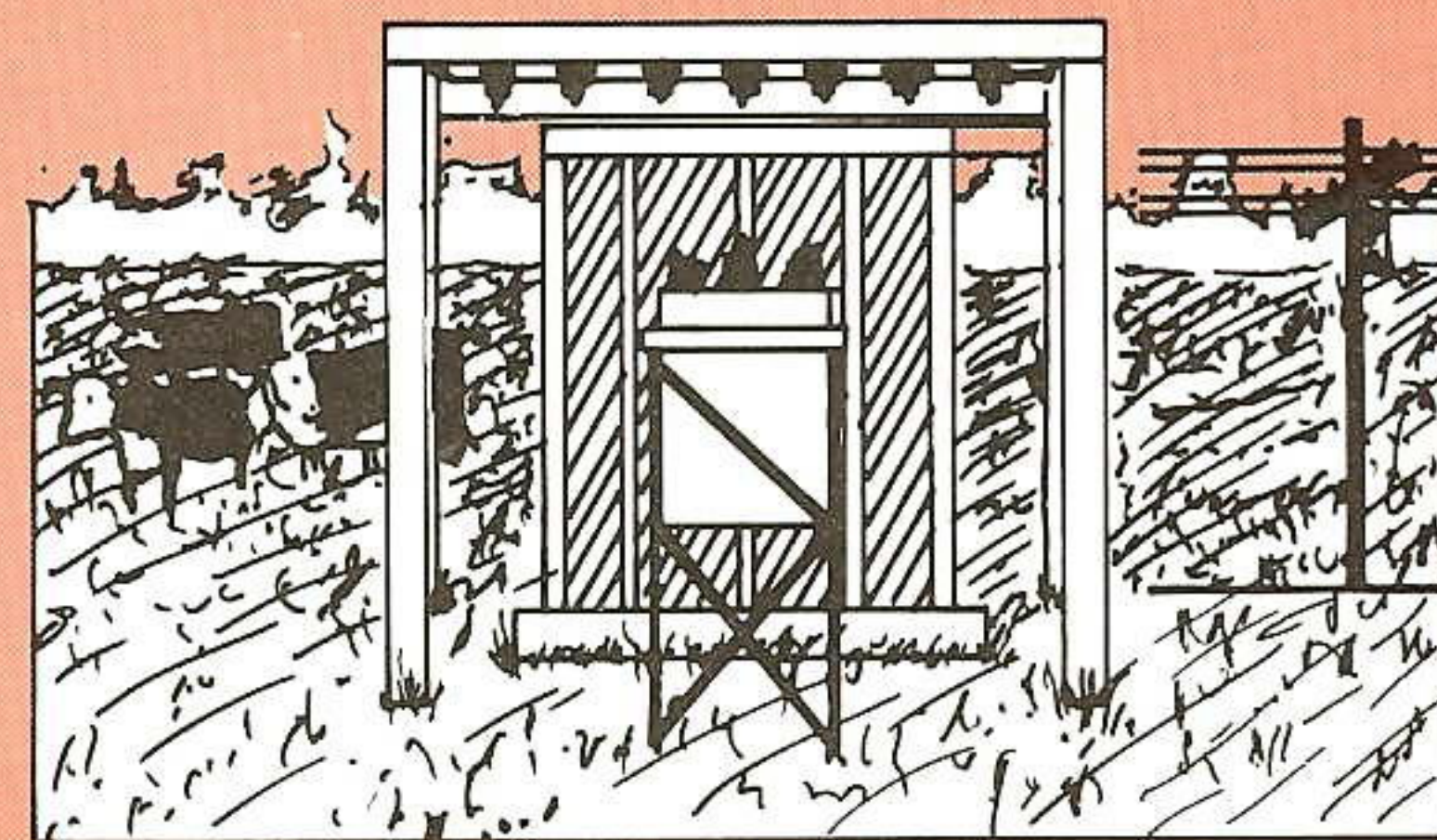
**Residential**



**Small Business/Commercial**



**Industrial**



**Wholesale**



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## THE COVER

Changes in the utility industry and increased competition make marketing GSU's power more important than ever. The illustration shows Gulf States supplying power to its four classes of customers: industrial, commercial, residential and wholesalers.

To read about GSU's marketing challenges, see the story on page 8.

## PLAIN TALKS

October 1987

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Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-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.



## *Security lights*

# Incentive program returns

by Mike Rodgers

The young mother tenderly cares for her baby in an upstairs bedroom, while outside in the dark a masked figure pries open a window on a lower floor of the house. Suddenly, a security light comes on and the prowler freezes in fear, then leaves. This scenario isn't an episode of "Miami Vice" or "Spenser for Hire," it's one of the new commercials GSU is running in its security lighting campaign.

"This is one of the best times of the year to market leased security lights," says Bobbie Ireland, commercial development analyst, "and employees will play a key role in our efforts." In addition to the power credits normally awarded for referrals, an employee who sells ten lights by Nov. 16 wins a Thanksgiving turkey. Beaumont Division originated the idea successfully last year, so it was decided to make it a systemwide incentive for the new campaign. The leased light promotion, which will be supplemented by ads on commercial and residential bill stuffers, runs from Oct. 1 to Nov. 30.

Ireland says that when daylight savings time ends and days get shorter, people start to think more about leasing lights from GSU to illuminate dark areas around their homes. "The lights also provide Gulf States with a consistent off-peak load," she notes. Last year's sales of 5,240 lights brought in \$573,000 of additional revenue and 4,770 additional megawatthours. Over the years, GSU has placed about 53,000 leased lights, which the company owns and maintains for customers.

Gulf States is also offering incentives to homeowners who decide they would rather own their own security lights than

**Without GSU  
security lighting...**



**you don't know what  
you're missing.**

**GULF STATES UTILITIES CO.**

*Call about security lighting options for homes and businesses. Low-cost, maintenance-free lights available from post lamps to floodlights.*

lease them from GSU. Running simultaneously with the leased light promotion, GSU is offering a \$5 rebate off lights purchased at any participating retailer. The rebate will be applied to the customer's electric bill. Customers have until the end of December to mail in the cash register receipt and proof-of-purchase code. In Port Arthur Division only, retailers will offer

the \$5 off the purchase price over the counter at the time of purchase. "Port Arthur Division tried this last year," says Ireland, "and retailers there almost tripled sales over 1985."





E. Kelly Merritt

## First refueling outage underway at River Bend

*Ken Suhrke and Pete Freehill at River Bend.*

by E. Kelly Merritt

**T**his is an optimistic, aggressive schedule," says Ken Suhrke on River Bend Station's planned two-month refueling outage currently underway.

The outage is the first refueling since the nuclear plant began producing electricity in December of 1985. It began on Sept. 15 and engineers plan to have the plant back on line by Nov. 13.

"As this is River Bend's first refueling outage, there is a potential for some problems which can make it last longer, but we have scheduled the job to be completed in 60 days," says Suhrke, manager of project management.

Although the outage and related maintenance is routine (refueling outages are planned to occur after every 16 months of operation), it is by no means a small task. Outage manager Pete Freehill began detailed planning last December. The plans call for approximately 5,000 individual work activities, each following a certain sequence. During the \$23 million project, River Bend will bring in employees from other GSU locations and also call on the expertise of nuclear specialists from around the nation.

Freehill is no stranger to

outages. As start-up and test program superintendent, he planned five previous outages at River Bend unrelated to refueling. With his experience has come recognition. The Institute for Nuclear Operations has recommended that other utilities read Freehill's outage plans before conducting outages at their own nuclear plants.

The outage will consist of four major events, explains Suhrke.

The first, the "critical path," is expected to be the most time consuming and may determine the length of the outage. Technicians will leak-test 172 valves and check other equipment to ensure proper functioning of the safety equipment. These tests and inspections can only be conducted during a shutdown.

The actual refueling is the second critical event. Of the 624 fuel bundles in the reactor, 164 will be replaced. The remaining bundles will be repositioned in order to "rotate the stock."

Third will be the turbine generator inspection. Freehill says this inspection is similar to routine turbine inspections at fossil fuel-powered plants except for the special precautions due to

nuclear contamination.

During the fourth event, engineers will make modifications to the plant as required by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The modifications were stipulated in the plant's original operating license. Other modifications to improve the plant's reliability will also be made.

How will this outage affect other Gulf States operations? Freehill says the 940 megawatts of power unavailable during the River Bend outage will come from other GSU power plants. Some system services, such as computer services, will experience extra demand and other groups may be called on for special assistance as well.

And, if problems develop, Freehill is prepared. He has developed detailed plans for unexpected contingencies.

"We've learned enough from our experiences with previous outages to be able to work together as a strong team," he says. And with their 50 combined years of experience with nuclear reactors, Freehill and Suhrke seem to be quite adept at leading the team.





Lydia Jones

by E. Kelly Merritt

The scene is one of which utility companies are quite familiar. A panel of three commissioners listens intently as witnesses and intervenors explain their side of the company's proposed rate increase. Company representatives take notes of the testimony and prepare to cross-examine the intervenors. Yet there is one distinct difference in this case. The commissioners and all the parties are high-school students.

This scenario is likely to occur in schools throughout Gulf States' service area. The students are participating in a game called *The Balancing Act*, where they play the roles of individuals involved in the rate-setting process and decide a mock rate case. The game is taught and distributed to social studies teachers under the guidance of Lydia Jones, Baton Rouge Division consumer information coordinator.

"*The Balancing Act* will teach students the process of utility rate making," says Jones. "It will teach them critical thinking and explain to them the concept of regulated monopolies."

Jones, a former schoolteacher, presented the program to teachers in the Baton Rouge area and to

"Most enlightening workshop"

## Teacher workshops further educational goals, explain utility business

other Gulf States consumer information coordinators during the summer. The coordinators plan to present the game to teachers in their divisions.

This summer's training was one of many workshops Jones has led for schoolteachers during her eight years at Gulf States. As part of Louisiana's Professional Improvement Program (PIP), teachers attending her workshops at Willow Glen and River Bend stations earn points toward merit pay increases. She estimates that Gulf States workshops have touched 4,000 teachers in the Baton Rouge and Lake Charles divisions since the PIP began in 1980.

Jones' workshops cover the scientific and social studies aspects of electricity, including energy production, management, conservation and cogeneration.

Her workshops are well liked and well attended. "Some teachers continue to come to the workshops even after they've received all their PIP credits," she adds.

Gulf States' commitment to education is evidenced by the fact that GSU was the first industry to participate in PIP, she says. Such programs benefit GSU as well as the public.

"There is a gap between business and industry and the community. Workshops like these help bridge that gap. And teachers and students learn about the utility industry and its issues."

Teachers give *The Balancing Act* workshop high marks. "It was the most enlightening workshop I went to all summer," says James Smith, teacher at St. Amant High School in Ascension Parish. "Before the workshop, I didn't realize Gulf States had to justify its reasons for a price increase."



Lake Charles consumer information coordinator Margaret Harris (standing) makes a point during *The Balancing Act* program conducted at the Liberty-Pearl building. Harris represented a consumer federation during a mock rate hearing. With her is Sue Simon (left), Port Arthur energy auditor, and Georgia Harris, Western Division energy auditor.



## *Project Save Cash*

# Creative employees put the squeeze on costs

by E. Kelly Merritt

Since Project Save Cash began in 1985, Gulf States employees have pitched in to save millions of dollars—an estimated \$70.4 million in 1986 alone. Savings have ranged from a few dollars on miscellaneous office supplies to hundreds of thousands of dollars on repaired circuit breakers and other large equipment. Below are four examples of Gulf Staters making an extra effort to save the company cash.

### Quiet savings

Willow Glen superintendent Joe Zammit says that lead chemist Mitch Hollier “looks out” for the interests of the company during his daily activities. Hollier, he says, is a “solid citizen who does his work to a high degree of accuracy and quality—without making a lot of noise in the process.”

So Zammit wasn't surprised last year when Hollier quietly came upon an idea. Instead of paying \$50,000 for a truck to bring a load of brine solution to the plant where it was stored in an underground pit, why not buy a tank and make the solution at the plant. “The cost of the transportation was more than the actual cost of the solution,” Hollier says. So in 1986, he arranged to buy a fiberglass tank and some rock salt, installing the tank for the same cost as one load of solution.

“It paid for itself the first year,” says Hollier.

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*Hollier does his work with a high degree of accuracy and quality.*

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E. Kelly Merritt



Tim Morris and Rhonda Walker, secretary, with some of the 96 volumes of minutes which were manually searched before a computer storage system simplified the process.

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*The project involved two and one-half years of keying minutes into the word processor.*

---

### Intake lines stay clean and clear

The 12 intake pumps at Sabine Station take in about 875,000 gallons of water per minute. This water must be chlorinated to reduce marine growth that can clog the intake lines and condenser tubes. When the lines become clogged, the intake must be shut off and work crews, using shovels and wheelbarrows, go in and remove the foreign material. Due to environmental regulations, the plant can only chlorinate two hours per 24-hour period.

Based on an operational study completed in December of 1986 which indicated the optimum water conditions for marine growth, chemist Joe Hantz set up a chlorination schedule. Now, the chlorine is added for an hour at a time when it will do the most good. His system has worked so well that none of the four units served by the pumps has been shut down for cleaning since. Hantz also developed a more efficient way to determine chlorine usage, resulting in better inventory control.



## Spending hours searching the minutes

Corporate Services, the group that oversees GSU's corporate records, frequently fills requests for information on decisions of the board of directors. This information is recorded in the minutes of the board's meetings.

Before revising its information retrieval system, the Corporate Services staff had to refer to a handwritten index and manually search the minutes of the board.

Searching the minutes is no easy task. The 643 sets, dating back to 1925, are stored in 96 bound volumes. At times, the search required thumbing through hundreds of pages to find references to certain decisions.

The solution to this cumbersome problem was found in a computer software program called Storage and Information Retrieval System (STAIRS). The project consisted of about two and a half years of manually keying minutes into the word processor, proof-reading them for errors, and then electronically merging them to the STAIRS data base, says Tim Morris, assistant corporate secretary.

Fortunately for Corporate Services, the new system was in operation just before a deluge of requests when the emergency rate cases began in December of 1986.

"The system allowed us to complete in two or three days what would have taken weeks before," Morris says.

Although input into the system started before Project Save Cash officially began, Morris says it has "proved invaluable and has saved time and money researching corporate information."

## One million saved

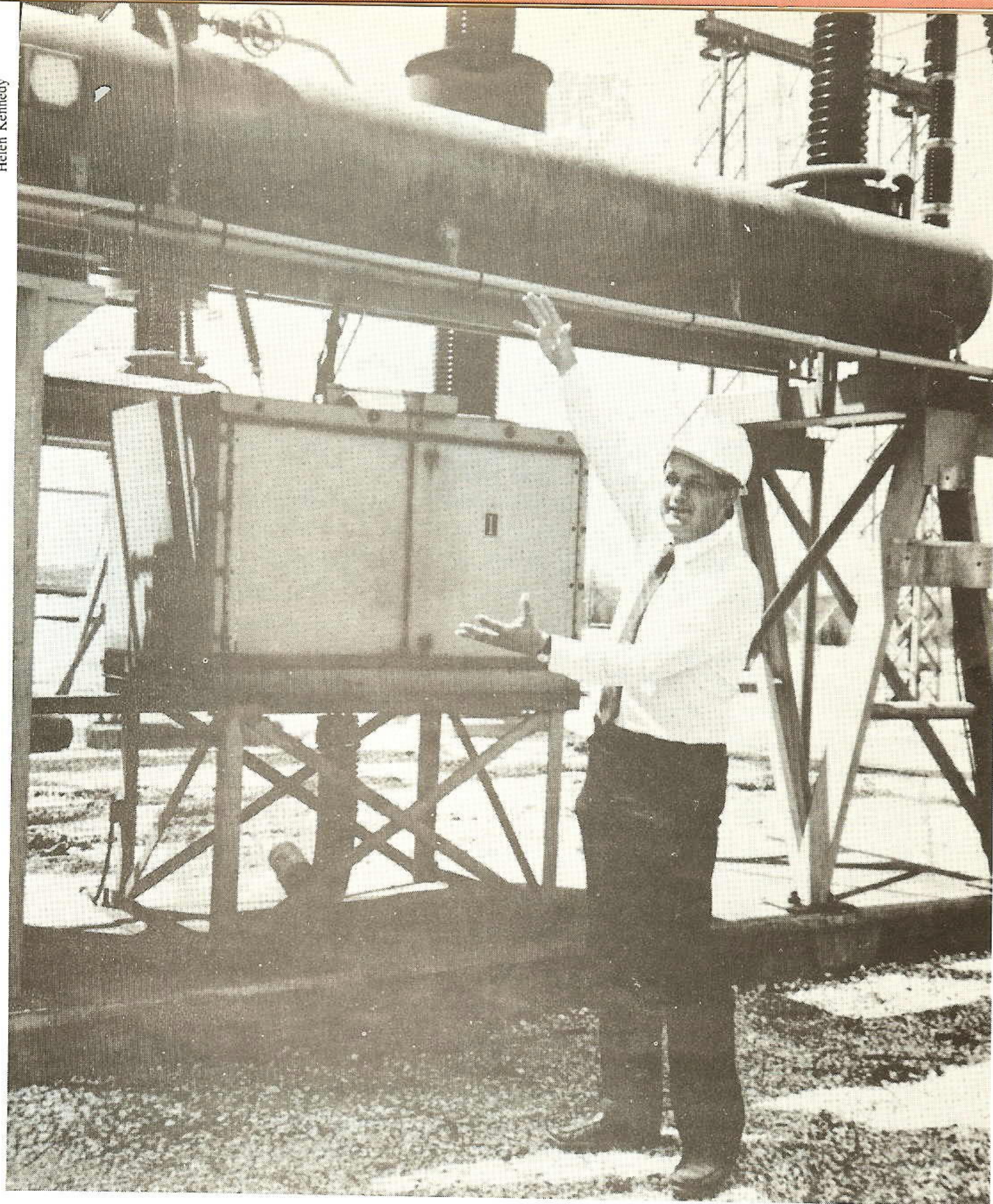
In 1969 Gulf States bought three huge 500 KV air blast circuit breakers from Allis Chalmers Co. Over the years, according to Lewis Guthrie, general manager-engineering, continuous problems developed, threatening the reliability of the critical 500 KV system. Because of extensive troubles, one circuit breaker was replaced in 1985. At the time, plans were also made for the other two to be replaced at a cost of more than \$500,000 each.

Instead, Guthrie struck a deal with Brown Boveri Inc., the designer of the breakers, to pro-

vide repair parts and the services of a field engineer. The overhaul was done by substation mechanics, under the direction of substation relay and communication supervisors Terry Huval in Lafayette and David Wade in Lake Charles. Since the repairs were completed in the spring of 1987, the circuit breakers have worked with no problems.

"The operating people feel pretty comfortable with them right now," says Guthrie. "Their service has been very good."

Guthrie says the repairs saved Gulf States approximately \$1 million.

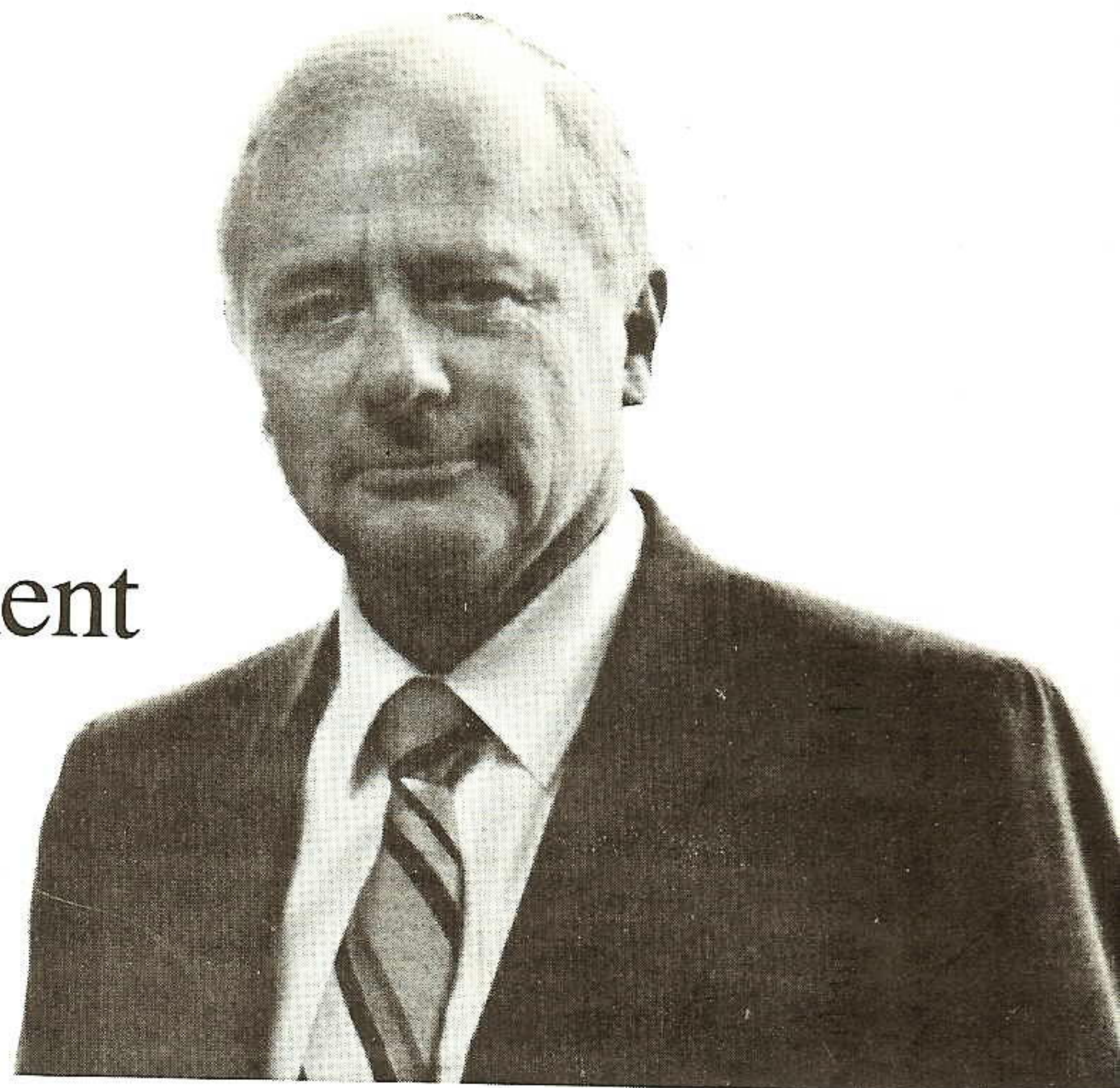


*Terry Huval displays one of the circuit breakers that was repaired, saving about \$500,000.*



*Marketing GSU*

## Success depends on united effort, employee commitment



*Jim Moss*

by Betty Gavora

*Far-reaching, major changes are taking place in the utility business. Some of these changes have already affected Gulf States and others will affect the company in the future. Besides holding the line on costs and getting a fair price for service to our customers, we must sell more of our product—electricity (and gas in the Baton Rouge area). To learn about the company's marketing plans and how employees can help, Plain Talks interviewed Jim Moss, vice president-marketing.*

**PLAIN TALKS:** What changes are affecting the way GSU does business?

**MOSS:** Under the old social contract we had with our service area, we were the single supplier of electricity, always there, ready to meet all needs. In return, we were allowed through efficient operation to recover our costs and make a reasonable profit.

Over the past few years, we haven't always been able to achieve rate increases to cover our costs. We have gone through a turbulent 15-year period in the price of energy with real and perceived shortages, then abun-

dance, of oil and gas. Federal, state and local legislation has often adversely affected our business. We've faced increased competition. This has produced a roller-coaster, fluctuating, competitive energy marketplace.

**PLAIN TALKS:** What kind of competition do we face and what are we doing about it?

**MOSS:** First, we are competing head-to-head with cogeneration. Our large industrial customers, who've been the base of our energy sales for 30 years or more, have a choice. They can buy electricity from us or install cogeneration. Just six years ago this was not a problem because cogeneration competition was based on coal-fired steam generation and the economics were in our favor. But today, with the unexpected oversupply of natural gas at extremely low prices, cogeneration fueled by natural gas is the competition . . . and it is tough, tough competition. We've had to move fast, but I believe we're beginning to turn the tide.

One of our top priorities is to keep our existing industrial customers. Our new competitive rates, along with excellent service, have helped to keep some

from going to cogeneration. But, when the economics of steam supply result in cogeneration pricing below our ability to compete, we're marketing our skills to become a partner in the cogeneration project. Two examples are the modernization of Louisiana Station to supply energy to the Exxon complex in Baton Rouge and the joint venture with Citgo, Conoco and Vista in Lake Charles. Our GSU people are solid performers in the engineering, construction and operation of cogeneration plants.

The dramatic drop in gas prices has resulted in a loss of some of our large industrial customers. During the 1983-85 period when the United States dollar was valued high against world currencies, it was difficult for the petrochemical businesses in our service area to compete globally because of their higher prices. Cogeneration projects that would reduce production costs became more attractive to these customers.

The situation is different now. The American dollar is valued much lower, so our petrochemical customers are competing successfully in world markets again.



Some are already operating at full capacity and considering plant expansions. Other petrochemical or petrochemical-related businesses are considering Louisiana and Texas for new plant sites. We are competing with utilities in other parts of the country for the location of these new plants. Once a new plant decides to locate in our service area, we will then be competing with cogeneration.

We also have intense competition in the wholesale marketing area--sales to municipal systems and rural electric cooperatives--and it has been that way for several years. We can keep these customers and increase our sales only as long as we provide top-notch service and keep our prices competitive. That's why it's urgent for each of us to continue to provide quality service and hold the line on costs.

In the commercial sector we face growing competition from gas distribution systems and cogeneration, where applicable. For the past few years we have had tough competition from the gas companies for commercial heating and cooking.

Finally, we must compete for the residential sector. With the low cost of gas, we're in direct and serious competition with gas distribution systems for home heating and cooling, cooking and water heating.

Since growth in our economy has leveled, a major way to increase sales is to market conversion from gas to electric energy.

The situation changes fast and often and we must be very responsive to these changes to compete successfully. If we're sluggish and slow, we lose sales and customers.

**PLAIN TALKS:** Has this brought about changes in the Marketing Department?

**MOSS:** Yes, we've reorganized our marketing activities to achieve a more responsive and coordinated effort. Our marketing people now report at a high level in our company with the authority to make decisions and take the

required actions to respond thoughtfully, but promptly to our customers. The rate, legal, public affairs, governmental affairs and marketing efforts are grouped under one senior vice president, Calvin Hebert, to assure an effective and successful marketing program and a return to profitability.

**PLAIN TALKS:** What else are you doing to anticipate and prepare for change?

**MOSS:** Our governmental affairs people are working very closely with us to be a positive influence on legislation and regulation that protect our existing markets and to open new

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*"I want all GSU people to know how important they are to our ability to compete successfully."*

---

markets to us. Business success requires spirited involvement in federal, state and local government.

We're using marketing research, a formal way to gather information from our customers, to improve our service and identify future sales opportunities so we can concentrate our efforts in areas which will be most valuable to Gulf States.

**PLAIN TALKS:** Can we really compete with other parts of the country in economic development?

**MOSS:** You bet. The price of our electricity is competitive and our service is excellent--and I know our GSU folks will keep it that way.

The people in our service area can construct and operate manufacturing facilities of the highest technology. We have craftsmen who have built nuclear plants, as well as petrochemical and refining plants of top quality. We can do the job. This people asset isn't available in all parts of the country.

We have abundant natural resources--oil, gas and water--and we have major ports, water-

ways and highways. These are all positive points in our favor.

The citizens of Texas and Louisiana have achieved a harmonious and safe coexistence with petrochemical plants, refineries and coal and nuclear power plants.

We have developed a high level of cooperation among key community groups so there will be a healthy climate for business.

There aren't many places in the world where industries can locate and find the political and social support they receive in the Southeast Texas and South Louisiana areas.

Our economic development work continues to be a high priority. GSU's economic development professionals are working with local communities and business people in regional and state economic development initiatives. We offer them such resources as assistance in training their own local economic development team and use of our system-wide data base on available buildings and land. Our division vice presidents and district superintendents provide key leadership in the economic development of their local communities. These efforts are paying off with new business and business expansion for our service area.

**PLAIN TALKS:** How are GSU employees involved in the marketing effort?

**MOSS:** I want all GSU people to know how important they are to our ability to compete successfully. A sense of commitment to our customers is essential, whether serving them face to face, or providing support service such as repair of a vehicle or working with computers. With commitment we can be more reliable and cost effective than our competition.

I am hopeful we will receive the necessary rate increases to survive, but it is through effective marketing that we will again become a healthy corporation to the benefit of customers, investors and employees.



# Does protective equipment prevent accidents?

by E. Kelly Merritt

**I**f you're driving down the road and an oncoming car swerves into your lane, your seat belt won't prevent the accident," explains Mike Durham, manager of occupational health and safety. "But it might protect you from the ensuing injury."

Durham warns against the common misconception that protective clothing and equipment prevents accidents.

"There is a difference between accidents and injuries," he says. "We first try to prevent accidents. We then try to prevent injuries by using protective equipment in case of accidents."

Protective equipment protects against two types of injuries, immediate and long term. Hardhats, rubber gloves, safety glasses and the like protect against obvious dangers to the head, hands, eyes and limbs. Respirators and full-body suits protect against injuries that otherwise might not show up for 15 years or so. The long-term risks make safety awareness even more important.

"This is why we want to be sure that employees recognize the necessity of protecting against illnesses way down the road," he says.

Safety needs and regulations are always changing. To keep up with those changes, system level task groups are created. One such group, the chemical control advisory group, helped draft procedures to ensure that all

employees are informed of hazardous substances they may encounter during work.

How well prepared one is for a job determines the likelihood of equipment being used, Durham says. "Employees who have protective equipment handy will usually wear it. If they have to go back to the shop or walk some distance for it, they are not as likely to use it. So, safety planning before each job is very important."

At times, Durham says, injuries occur when an employee is too confident. "Sometimes employees feel that the protective equipment is an unnecessary burden. They feel competent enough to perform the task without the protective equipment. In too many cases, an accident occurs when the employee thinks it won't."

What can individuals do to protect themselves from injury?

Durham offers five suggestions:

- Study and understand company safety requirements. These are explained in the Accident Control Manual issued to each employee.
- When unsure, always ask your supervisor or safety and health representative. There is a safety and health representative assigned to each location.
- Don't undertake a task for which you don't fully understand the hazards or for which you haven't taken proper safety precautions.
- Understand that protective equipment is for your personal protection—not a burden placed on you without good reason.
- If you have suggestions about changes or new approaches in safety, discuss them with your supervisor and local safety and health representative and/or submit them through the employee suggestion program.

*Mike Durham displays a lineman's rubber glove that was damaged by a solvent. The gloves are made of non-conductive natural rubber, allowing linemen to handle high voltage power lines. They are checked daily for small holes and are safety tested in the laboratory every three months. The interior of the glove is bright yellow to help the wearer see any punctures.*

E. Kelly Merritt







Robert Adams

*An employee dons an air supply hood as he prepares for sandblasting. The hood connects the worker with a source of fresh, breathable air while protecting the eyes, face, ears, lungs and chest.*



Robert Adams

*An employee wears a safety hat, earplugs, safety glasses and respirator as he fills a sandblasting hopper with black grit. Black grit is used in sandblasting instead of sand to reduce the risk of silicosis, a disease caused by sand crystals in the lungs.*



# Fifth annual Sideliners meeting draws a crowd



*Port Arthur Division Sideliners*

Nearly 300 Gulf States retirees and their spouses gathered recently in Lake Arthur, La., for the fifth annual Sideliners Club meeting.

The Sideliners enjoyed a full day of activities, including guest speakers, lunch, bingo, a buffet dinner and dancing. The meeting is the only systemwide meeting of all the division Sideliners Clubs.

E. Kelly Merritt photos



*The Baton Rouge Division Sideliners Club sent the largest delegation.*



*Lake Charles Division Sideliners*



*Beaumont Division Sideliners*



## GSU announces Gatekeeper Program

"In the course of our daily work, we sometimes meet elderly persons who have needs that go beyond our ability to help them," Calvin Hebert, senior vice president-external affairs, told reporters as he officially announced Gulf States' role in the Gatekeeper Program. "The Gatekeeper Program offers us a chance to match a person who might need help with the agency that can find the proper help."

### Attwood is a GSU first

E. Kelly Merritt



John Attwood

**John Attwood**, corporate supervisor of materials planning, has been certified as Production and Inventory Manager (CPIM). Attwood is the first Gulf States employee to earn the distinction, awarded by the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS). APICS certification is awarded only after completion of a series of formal tests in material requirements planning, master planning, capacity management, inventory management and production activity control. The certification caps six years of study for Attwood.

Gulf States is the first utility company in Texas to participate in the program, designed to "open the gates" between isolated elderly people and agencies that can help. Meter readers, servicemen and other employees who come into contact with the elderly have been trained to identify potential needs, then refer those needing assistance to a local social service agency.

## Taylor receives President's award

Gerald Nelson



Horace Taylor (left), receives the President's Lifesaving Award from GSU Chairman and President Linn Draper.

**Horace Taylor**, operations supervisor-Sabine Station, received the President's Lifesaving Award for saving the life of his wife, Beth, in February.

Gulf States President and Chairman Linn Draper presented the honor. The award is the highest honor GSU's president can bestow upon an employee.

Taylor was eating dinner with his wife when she got up from the table, unable to breathe. Taylor applied the Heimlich maneuver, dislodging the food on which she was choking.

"You join an elite group of employees within GSU that have been faced with these situations and have acted without delay to place into practice the lessons learned from your first-aid training at GSU," Dr. Draper said.

## Sandidge earns economic development honor

E. Kelly Merritt



Louis Sandidge

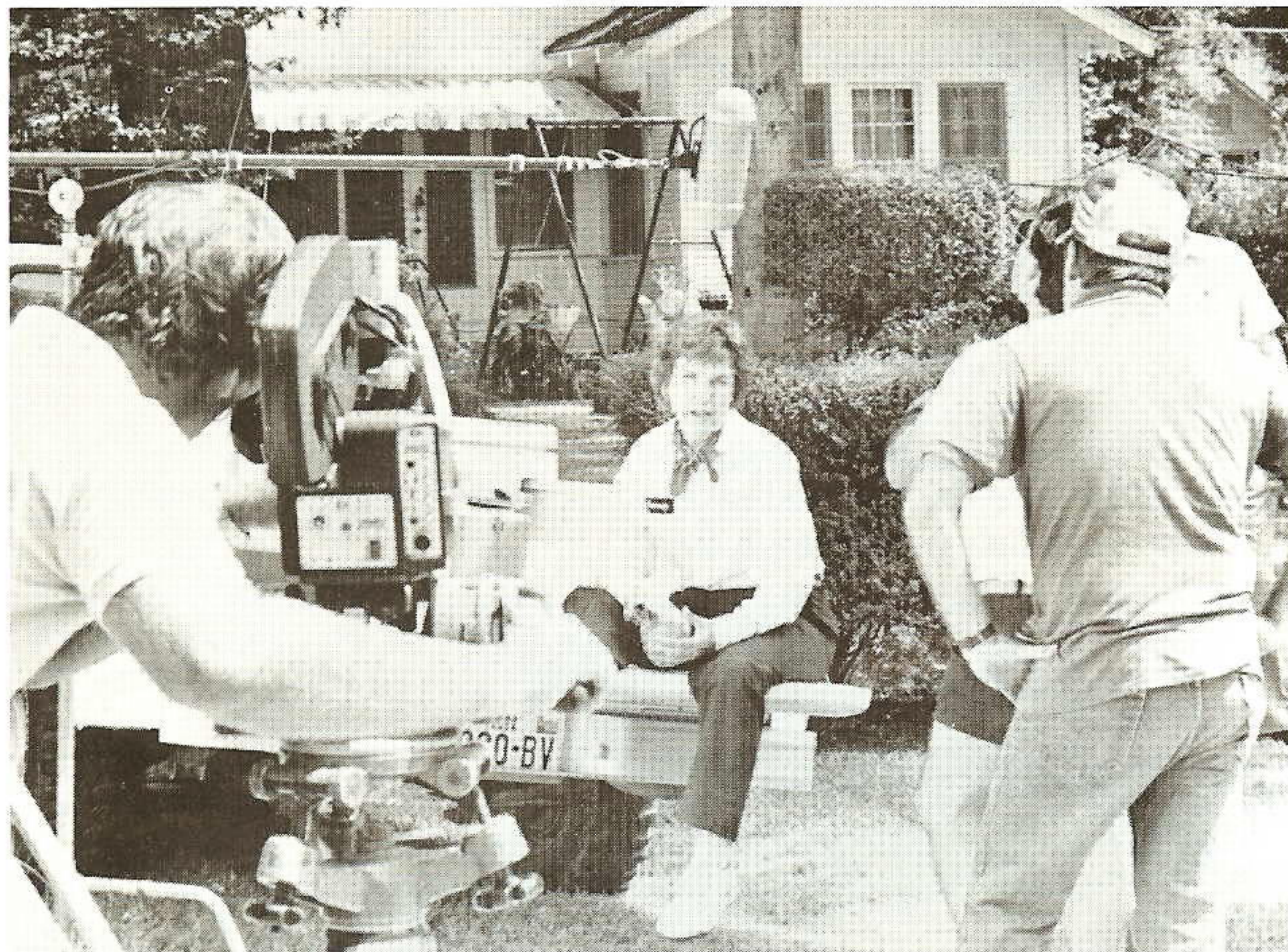
The 1987 GSU Economic Developer of the Year award goes to **Louis Sandidge**, Navasota District superintendent. The award is given each year to recognize the most outstanding district superintendent in terms of economic development. Sandidge was picked by a panel of Chamber of Commerce executives representing each of GSU's five divisions.

Sandidge's efforts as president of the Grimes County Industrial Foundation and as member of the Grimes County Chamber of Commerce helped revitalize a Navasota furniture manufacturer. Under his leadership, the industrial foundation holds bi-annual industry appreciation gatherings where business leaders are encouraged to talk about their concerns. Sandidge has headed the Navasota District since 1980.



# TV ads plug customer assistance programs

E. Kelly Merritt



*Beverly Williamson, meter reader-Beaumont Division, films a television commercial about the Gatekeeper Program.*

A new series of Gulf States television advertisements features employees as the talent, says Henry Joyner, administrator-advertising and communications planning.

The first four of the series, all highlighting GSU's customer assistance programs, were filmed in August. The commercials are scheduled to begin running on television stations in GSU's service area in the fall. Joyner says the commercials tell customers about the third-party notification program, the Gatekeeper Program, the equal payment plan and the convenient payment plan.

"As other customer assistance programs are developed, they can be plugged into this kind of format," he says. Joyner is developing a talent pool of employees for future advertisements.

## Employee aids family after dog attack

Fortunately for Jane Baker and her children, Chip Pierson was in the right place at the right time. Pierson aided the family after a pit bull dog attacked Mrs. Baker while her children watched helplessly.

Baker had gone to pick up her daughter from a friend's house in Norwood, La. She left her two younger children in the family van and knocked on the front door. When her 15-year-old daughter opened the door, the dog, which was inside with the daughter, jumped through the upper part of the screen door and attached itself to Baker's arm. In the intervening seconds, the daughter ran and shut herself in the van and Baker made her way into the house. The dog stayed outside, preventing Baker from joining her children in the van.

At about this time, Pierson, T&D helper-Zachary, who was

temporarily working as a meter reader, drove up. As he walked toward the house to read the meter, Baker's daughter yelled from the van window, "That dog just tore off a piece of my mother's arm." Pierson returned to his truck, drove off to call the police, and returned. It was then that he realized that Baker was trapped inside the house.

"They thought their mother was dying in there," Pierson says of the hysterical children in the van. He drove closer to the house and honked to get the woman's attention. She appeared at a window, revealing an injured arm. As they waited for the police, the owner of the dog arrived and detained the animal until Baker could get into



*Chip Pierson*

the van.

Pierson then helped to calm the children and drove the family to the hospital. He stayed with the children until their grandfather arrived, even helping the older daughter after she had hyperventilated in the hospital parking lot.

His heroic efforts brought attention from the local media and Baker's family. "Without consideration for his own safety, he gave assistance to Jane Baker," said Charles Baker, the woman's father-in-law, in a letter to GSU Chairman and President Linn Draper. "Jane's parents . . . join the entire Baker family in expressing our sincere appreciation for Mr. Pierson's kindness and attention to our loved ones in a time of their urgent need for assistance," Mr. Baker wrote.

But Pierson simply says, "The dog attacked, they needed help. I did what I could."



# MAILBOX



## Took time to care

The Green Acres Parkdale Living Center thanks public affairs manager **Kim McMurray** for allowing the center to use a GSU parking lot while on a community function. "You took the time to care and made an effort to provide for our elderly to attend a community function. We appreciate all of your efforts and again say thank you," writes administrator Karen P. Burkett.

## Career help



*Sue Williams*

The staff of the Organization of Christians Assisting People (OCAP), thanks **Sue Williams**, supervisor-consumer information services-Port Arthur, for her help with the organization's career education program. Williams "added much to the overall objectives" of the program, writes OCAP's Billy Orrison.

## True gem McGrew

GSU has a "true gem in **Curtis McGrew**," writes Baton Rouge customer E. Graham Thompson. Thompson's family was left in the dark after rain storms. "When the repairman came, we could not have been more pleased with his attitude and spirit of customer service. Curtis performed the work at our home based on a customer needing service, rather than someone interrupting his evening hours with his family," he writes. McGrew is a serviceman-1st class.

## Opening gates for the aged

"Your Gatekeepers Program can truly open the gate to a better life for older Texans," says Bob Bobbitt, executive director of the Texas Department on Aging to **Sam Bethea**, consumer affairs specialist. Bobbitt helped Gulf States announce the Gatekeeper Program in Texas.

## Help arrives soon

"Thank you very much for seeing that our electricity got turned back on the other night," writes a customer to **Mary Nell Davis**, Dayton collector. "I'm sorry I called you so late . . . but it was not long until you had someone out here and he fixed it in just a few minutes," the customer writes.

## Multiplier effect



*Carol Morris*

"Thanks for arranging the recent tour of the Lewis Creek electrical generating facility and talking to our science workshop participants," writes Sam Houston State University professor Joel Bass to consumer information coordinator **Carol Morris**. Bass was especially pleased with the way GSU employees stimulated interest and fielded questions from the teachers. "I am sure the tour will have a great multiplier effect when the teachers return to their classrooms this fall," he writes.



# PLAIN TALKS

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## *Beautifying Beaumont*

Mike Rodgers



*Dr. Linn Draper, GSU chairman and president, pushes a lawnmower along a busy Beaumont street. Draper joined a team of GSU employees mowing, clipping, trimming and sweeping a one-block area as part of "Operation Clean Street." The program invites area businesses to help spruce up parts of the city and make it more attractive.*