

# PLAIN TALKS

November 1986

**GSU  
Gives  
Thanks**



# CONTENTS

Volume 65

Number 9

Mail-order prescriptions expand benefits package	4
Optical scanner saves time, errors	5
This man looks for trouble	6
A safe investment	7
A day in the life of a marketing agent	8
State grant saves jobs, retains GSU load	10
Four employees cited for lifesaving efforts	12
Help is only a phone call away	13
Retiree update	16
Inside GSU	18
Commentary	19

## PLAIN TALKS

November 1986

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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.



## Energy checkup

Gulf States Utilities  
Port Arthur, Texas

To whomever it may concern:

I'm writing to express my gratitude to your company's Marketing and Consumer Services Department.

I recently requested a home energy check. Sue Simon arrived promptly at the designated time and proceeded with a very efficient, comprehensive evaluation of home and appliances, following which she outlined some conservation methods and ideas.

I found the energy check and information provided by Ms. Simon interesting and informative. I will comply with recommendations in the very near future.

Thanks for this very valuable service rendered by a friendly, informed consultant.

Sincerely,  
Ruth E. Davis

**Editor's note:** Sue Simon is an energy auditor in Port Arthur.

## Radio watch

Arden Loughmiller  
Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas

Dear Mr. Loughmiller:

The completion of the first year of our joint effort to serve our community with the Neighborhood Radio Watch Program causes me to reflect upon the great job that you and your employees have done in keeping us advised of situations requiring police service.

Even though the program was begun here as an untried concept, it is now my feeling that other areas could derive tremendous benefit by implementing their own Neighborhood Radio Watch programs, and I would

encourage them to participate.

Thank you very much for your continued interest and assistance.

Sincerely,  
John K. Swan  
Chief of Police

## Map maker

Robby Zeringue  
Gulf States Utilities  
Baton Rouge, La.

Dear Robby:

Thank you for doing such an excellent job redrawing the maps for the Chamber's Transportation Profile. The maps were clear and concise, and your efforts produce a well-explained and professional publication about our area. Enclosed are a few extra copies for your files.

Your time and expertise are appreciated. It is always a pleasure working with GSU and your efforts are indicative of the support and the expertise we have come to expect from your company.

We are looking forward to more of your fine work on our manufacturing map.

Sincerely,  
D. Weston Stucky  
Vice President-Eco. & Ind. Dev.  
Greater Baton Rouge Chamber  
of Commerce

**Editor's note:** Zeringue is a senior engineering assistant at Choctaw Service Center. He has 13 years of GSU service.

## Super science

Sue Williams  
Gulf States Utilities  
Port Arthur, Texas

Dear Sue:

You were right! The Texas Energy Science Symposium was excellent. The lectures were outstanding, the workshops great. The tours, while exhausting,

were outstanding. The university campus offered many special events — Perot's copy of the Magna Carta, a copy of the Gutenberg Bible, the university's summer band in an evening concert, good food and a comfortable room.

The students we took were really a great bunch of kids. They gave us no trouble and were most interested in attending everything offered and taking extra trips like walking to the Capitol about 9:30 p.m. The other teachers were so easy to get along with — we really enjoyed being together. We packed so much in the three days we were on campus.

I am at a loss as to how I can properly thank you and Gulf States Utilities for making these last four days so unforgettable. I will endeavor to share my experiences with my future students and fellow teachers. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Yvonne Grimes

P.S.: Please thank Jane Dufrene for all the time and trouble she took to make our stay so pleasant. Also, if there is anyone else I should write to thank, please let me know.

**Editor's note:** Williams is supervisor-consumer information services in Port Arthur, while Dufrene is coordinator-educational services in Edison Plaza.

## THE COVER

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect upon the important things in life.

Board Chairman Paul Murrill does just that from the company's point of view in the Commentary column on page 19.

While times are bad for GSU, Dr. Murrill says there are still circumstances and events that we can count as blessings.



# Mail-order prescriptions expand benefits

by Susan Gilley

**G**ulf States' employee benefits package will be improved Jan. 1 with the addition of an optional mail-order prescription drug program.

It will be available for use by all employees and their eligible dependents who are covered under the GSU Group Medical Plan with Provident Life and Accident Insurance Company.

According to Jommy Holder, GSU coordinator-employee benefits, coverage for the prescription service will be through America's Pharmacy, a Caremark company headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa.

"The biggest benefit to the average employee," reveals Holder, "is that prescription medicines will be provided at no cost. Not only will the plan cover eligible drugs 100 percent, the employee will not have to pay up front and wait to be reimbursed."

Under the regular medical plan, covered drugs are generally reimbursed at 80 percent of the cost to the patient. Although all prescription medicines now covered through the regular plan will also be covered through the new plan, Holder emphasizes that the mail-order service is most useful for those maintenance drugs that must be taken over a long period of time, such as those for asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis and other conditions requiring long-term drug treatment.

Antibiotics needed for only a few days probably should be bought locally since, in most cases, it could take up to 10 days from the date a prescription is mailed to America's Pharmacy for it to arrive at your home by way of the U.S. Postal Service or United Parcel Service. However, America's Pharmacy also provides a toll-free number for physicians to call in prescriptions or for the patient to call in refills. The company also provides pre-addressed envelopes for mailing in prescriptions.

According to Holder, America's Pharmacy will fill the order within 24 to 48 hours of receipt and ship it to the patient's home. Ordinarily, the only delay would occur when an order does not contain enough information and America's Pharmacy must contact the physician.

"This new benefit program has lots of pluses for the employee and the company," says Holder. "GSU will save money because America's Pharmacy agrees to sell the drugs at below-wholesale costs, and employees will benefit from no out-of-pocket expenses. Not only that, employees can order and receive their prescriptions without leaving their homes."

Many of the advantages of the new mail-order prescription drug plan are not so apparent. For instance, America's Pharmacy uses a computer program to monitor a patient's medical profile to detect possible drug interactions, either on a drug-to-drug basis or on a drug-to-allergy basis. The computer also identifies potential abuse, signaled by frequent reorders, duplication of medication from different physicians and/or excessive dosage.

As a further check, all prescriptions are filled only by registered licensed professional pharmacists, and each order is eventually handled by at least three different pharmacists at various stages of the filling, quality control and mailing process.

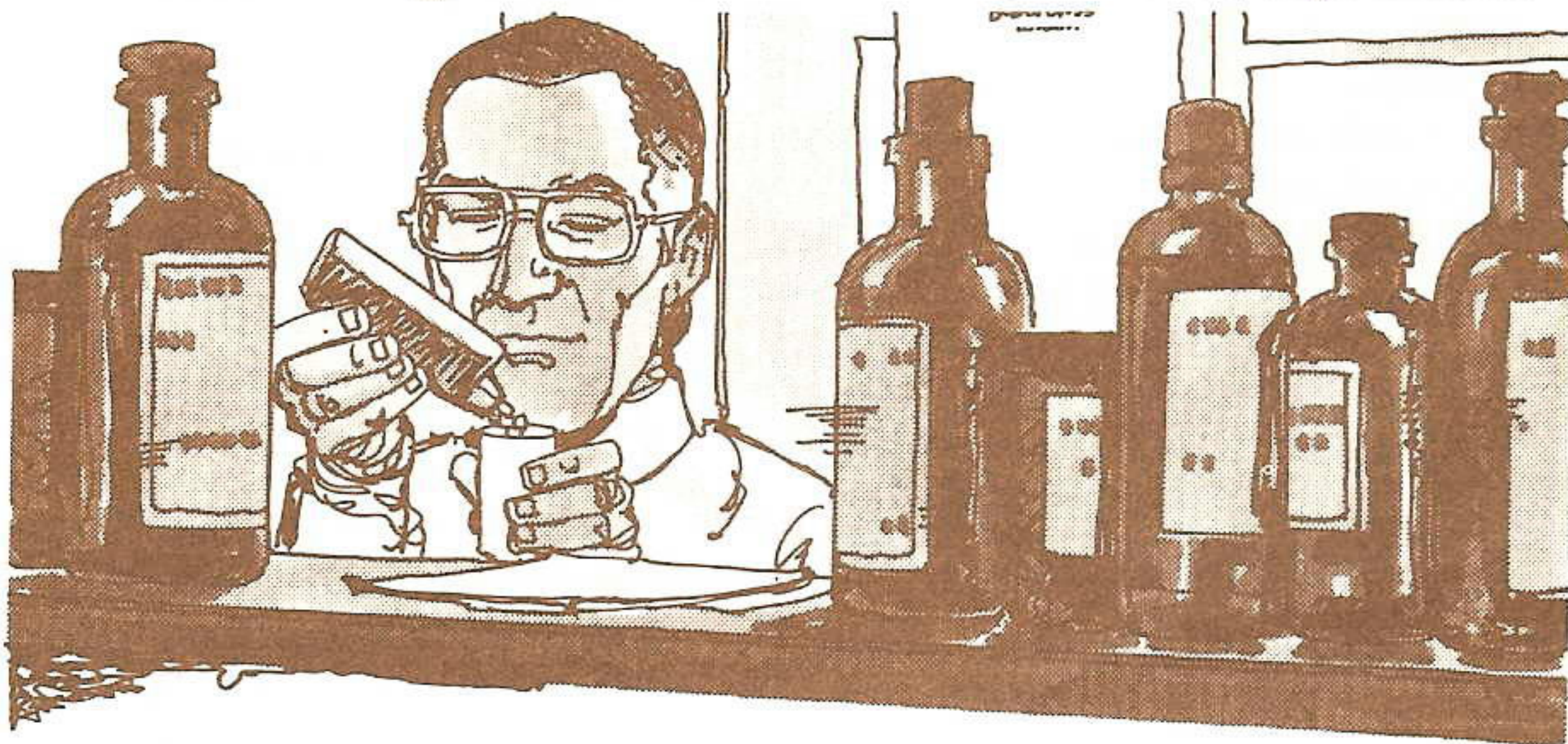
Another advantage of the new

benefit is that it can identify equivalent generic drugs (drugs that are chemically equal to the brand-name drugs, but considerably less expensive) as substitutes for more expensive, better-known drugs. However, substitution is not automatic. Under Texas law, physicians write prescriptions on forms that provide two places for their signature — one specifies that the prescription must be dispensed as written, while the other one permits substitutions. In Louisiana, a physician must write below the line on that state's prescription form to require a pharmacy to dispense as written. To reduce the cost of our prescription drugs without sacrificing quality, America's Pharmacy will use generic drugs whenever possible.

By using America's Pharmacy, eligible employees and dependents may obtain a three- to six-month supply of necessary medication — more than is normally provided through local pharmacies. When a prescription has been filled for the last time, a computer-generated letter is sent to the physician requesting new refill instructions.

Before a patient may use America's Pharmacy, he or she must fill out a patient profile card, providing vital statistics and a medical history. Similar information must be provided for all eligible dependents.

Employees will receive more details about the new plan in introductory packets that will be sent to their homes, says Holder.

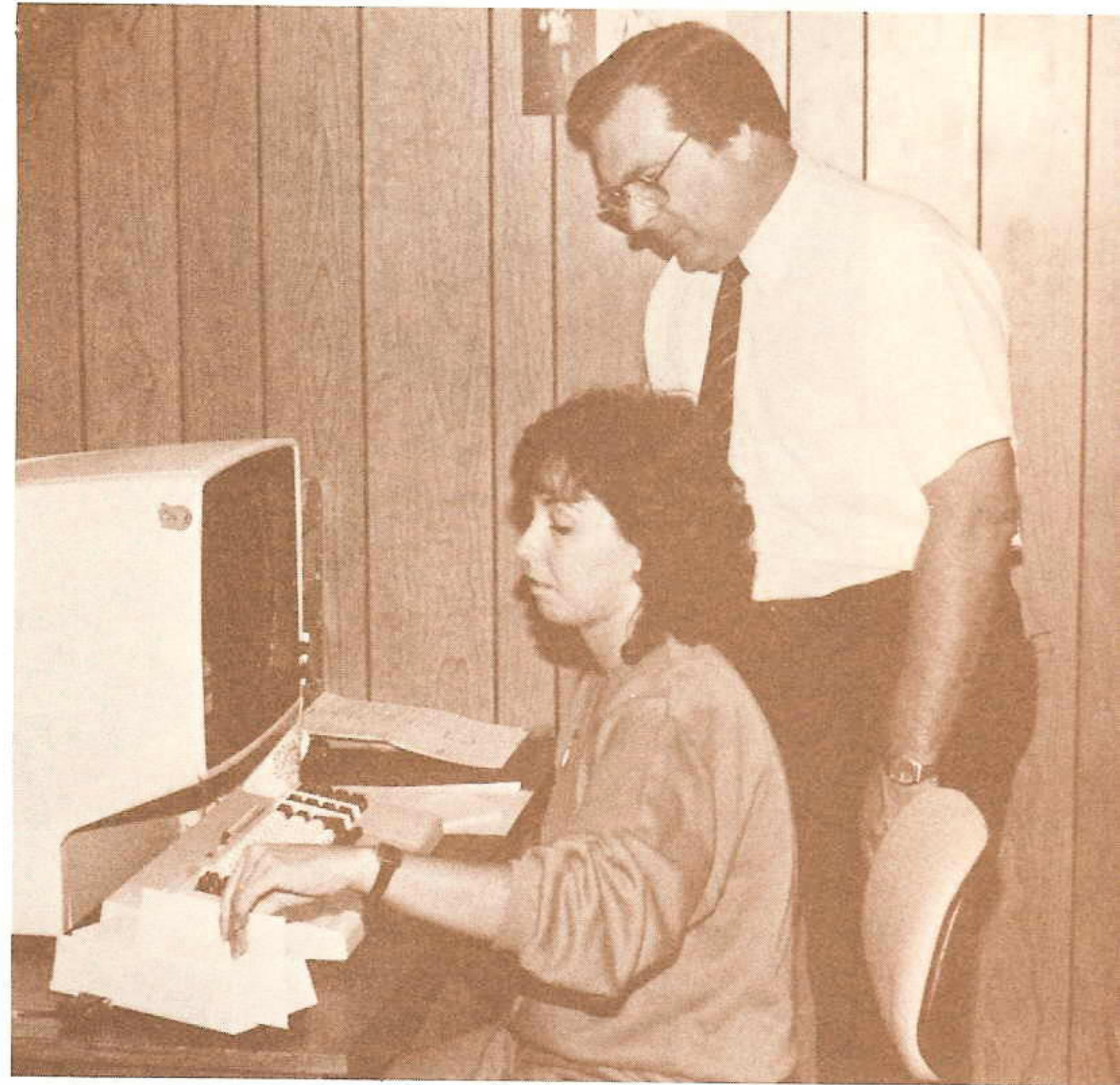




*Karen Durmon, customer contact clerk, Vidor, uses the optical scanner while Gene Koci, supervisor-customer credit and collections, observes.*

**Optical scanner:**

## **Saving time, cutting errors**



by Mike Rodgers

"I love it. It gets the payments posted faster and keeps our customers from receiving a disconnect notice when they don't deserve it," says Karen Durmon, customer contact clerk, Vidor. Durmon was reacting to the new Optical Scan Reader (OSR) she uses daily to update information on customer bills.

For Gene Koci, supervisor-customer credit and collections in Beaumont, the OSRs answer a need. "When you cut someone off in error, that's serious," he notes. "It angers the customer and upsets us, as well." Both Durmon and Koci believe the scanners, which read the information on a bill automatically, will help reduce such cutoffs significantly.

GSU customers have approximately 20 days to pay their utility bills. If Gulf States does not receive payment within that time, customers receive a notice informing them that their power will be disconnected in 10 days. Sometimes a customer will make that delinquent payment on the ninth day. Under the old system of posting bills manually for accounts which are to appear on collection in two days, a significant number of payments were

sent to Beaumont for posting, thus increasing the chance for an error. Those payments sent to Beaumont would post to that customer's account the next day. "What that meant," says Koci, "is that although a customer had in fact paid a bill on or before the 10th day, if the personnel in that office inadvertently did not locally post that payment, the delay in getting that information to Beaumont would cause the account to come up for collection and the customer could be cut off for non-payment. That becomes a turnoff in error." Under that method, when the customer brought a receipt to a GSU office, power was restored.

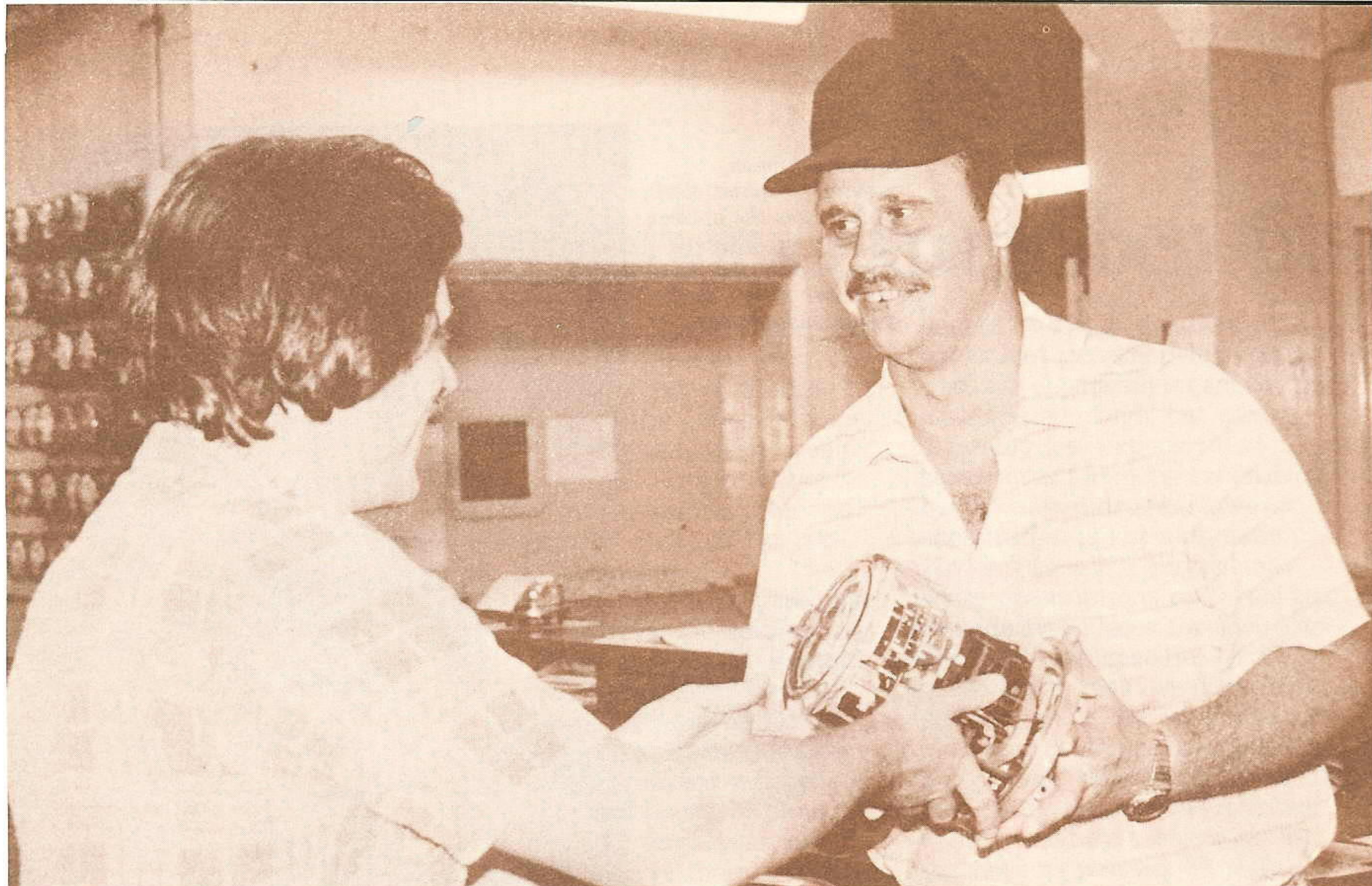
A clerk working manually can process about 100 payment stubs in 45 minutes, while the OSR can read about 1,100 in an hour. Koci emphasizes that the increased speed means that each day's receipts can be posted by the end of the working day, eliminating the need to send them to Beaumont overnight. The scanner, which resembles one of those used at grocery store checkout counters to read bar codes, also cuts down on human error.

The scanner system was tested for nine months before it was put in production in 30 GSU locations with the heaviest bill-paying traffic. One more scanner remained

to be installed as *Plain Talks* went to press. "There were bugs in the computer to be worked out," acknowledges Koci, adding, "We got all but a few of them during that time." In the fall, GSU installed a fail-safe system called a Check Digit Routine, as a second check on the accuracy of the scanners. On each customer bill is a line of numbers which triggers a computer to perform a set of mathematical functions such as add, subtract and multiply. The answer to that function is the last number on the line. If the answer found by the Check Digit Routine doesn't match the answer on the bill, then the scanner has made an error and the payment will not print out.

Gulf States ordered the OSRs well before the Public Utility Commission of Texas ordered GSU to undergo a management audit in 1985. When the auditors took note of the purchase, they commended the company for moving in this direction. "What this all means is speed," says Koci. "We can post bills much quicker than before, reducing cutoffs in error and giving our clerks more time to help customers. We see this as another innovation that allows customer accounting to improve service and productivity."





*Van Addison (right) asks David Jacobsen, meterman-1st class, to check out an electric meter.*

## This man looks for trouble

by Robert Adams

Working alone at two or three o'clock in the morning sometimes makes the job of a troubleshooter lonely. But it has its plus side, too, according to Van Addison, serviceman-1st class, Baton Rouge Division.

"Troubleshooting is different than the day-in, day-out," he says. "There's a challenge to it, it's not the same routine." Giving him the opportunity to help people makes the job satisfying, adds Addison. Usually, customers are experiencing trouble when he gets the call.

Addison is one of about nine shift servicemen in the Baton Rouge district. Normally, he leaves the Government Street office with no specific work orders and works on the trouble calls that come in.

He grew up in Holden, La., east of Baton Rouge. A graduate of Holden High School, his 6'4" height made him a natural for the basketball

team, which won two district championships. He still lives there on 55 acres with his wife, Debbie, who was his high school sweetheart, and their two children.

He came to GSU in 1973 after encouragement from his father, who was the elected clerk-of-court for Livingston Parish for 20 years. Dick Smith, a family friend and then district superintendent of Denham Springs, suggested that he try for a position as engineering assistant. So Addison took the employment test on a Monday and was hired by the company the following Thursday.

Since there were no openings for engineering assistant, he began working as a helper in T&D. He spent his first week on the job numbering transformers at the Choctaw Service Center.

In 1978, Addison asked to fill an opening in the service department. He says he wanted the job because, "I was able to deal more directly with the public." He got the job and has been in the service department ever since.

There are times when Addison must find special solutions to problems when on duty. Once, a woman insisted that he carry away the body of a squirrel that had been electrocuted on some GSU wires. Addison tried to explain the difficulty to the woman because the squirrel had been there for several days and was quite smelly. They compromised and he buried the carcass in the woman's back yard.

Addison says safety is a priority in his job. Since he works alone, he must watch out for himself. He tries to think of every job beforehand and to keep out of a situation where he might get hurt.

Addison's supervisor, Z. B. Jackson, service foreman, says, "Addison has the confidence of his supervisors and fellow workers."

"I try to do the job as best I can," says Addison. "I just try to help the customers." When asked about going into politics like his father, however, Addison responds, "Not me."



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# A day in the life

by Robert Adams

Take a generous portion of salesmanship. Add one portion each of technical savvy and innovation. Mix it with civic responsibility, ability to relate to others and customer service. Cover with a smooth layer of public relations and you could have the recipe for a successful marketing agent.

"We are trying to sell the concept of using electrical equipment," says Dewitt Hollingsworth, marketing agent in Beaumont.

"We are trying to get the customers to use electricity efficiently to get the service and comfort level they need at an economical cost." He adds that this technology is new and persistence is a necessary ingredient to selling it.

Bob Mayo, marketing agent in Lake Charles, says, "We are trying to hold the business that we have and secure new business, primarily in the commercial and small industrial markets."

Mayo says that the position of marketing agent requires some innovation. This results from trying to sell electricity in non-

traditional areas. These include putting heat pump water heaters in direct competition with gas water heaters.

At least three restaurants in the Lake Charles area have installed heat pump water heaters and a laundromat plans to install one to replace two 100-gallon gas water heaters. Hollingsworth adds that at least seven commercial installations are operational in Beaumont, including restaurants, a laundromat, a cafeteria and a barber shop.

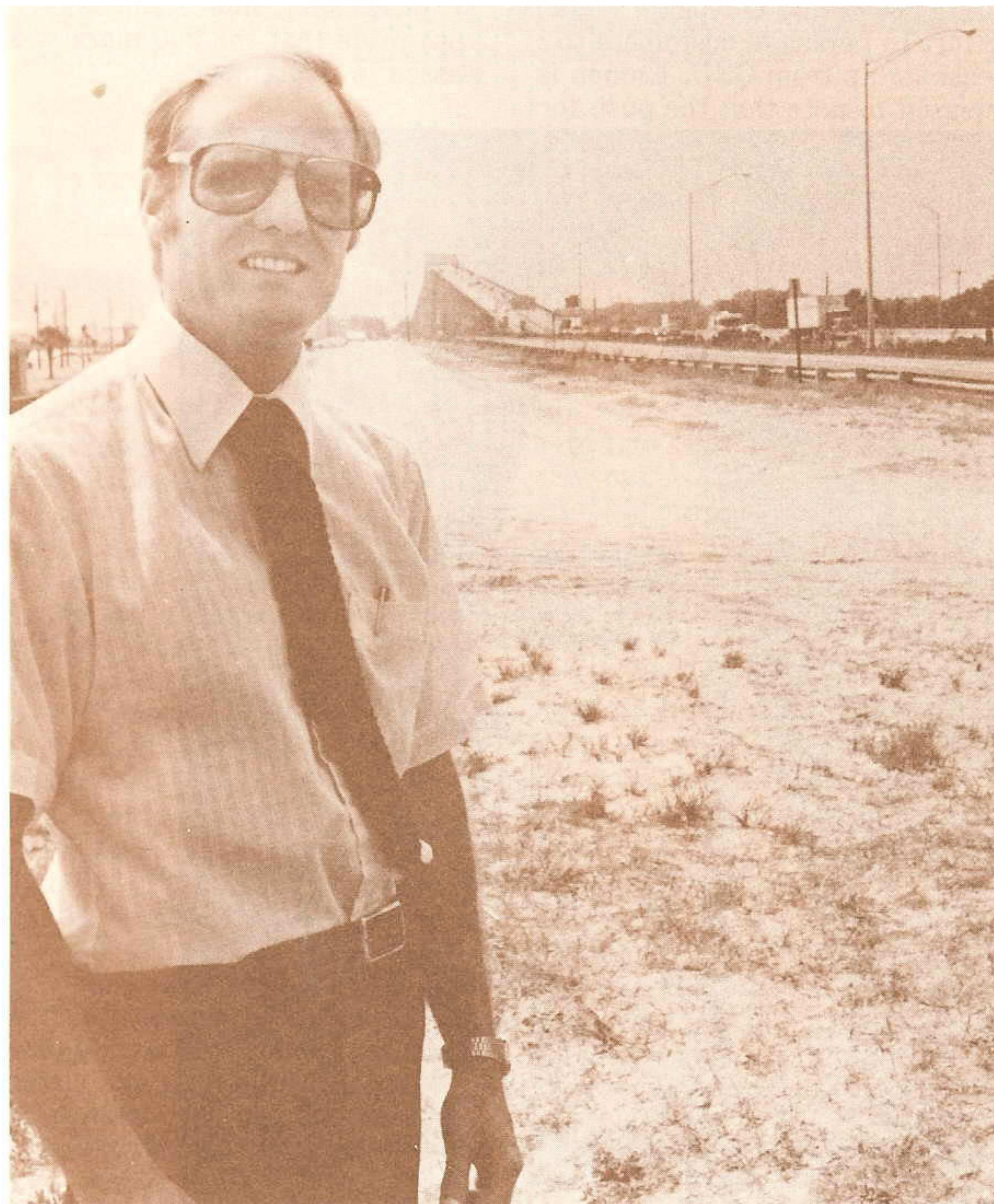
Mayo points out that a commercial customer who uses a heat pump water heater gets an added benefit. "Not only does it heat the water, it cools the air wherever it's located," he says.

So in a typical day, how does a marketing agent go about selling more kilowatthours? It could start with a meeting with architects, engineers and contractors to discuss heat pump technology.

Hollingsworth says that GSU hosted one such meeting last May where about 50 people met to learn about earth-coupled heat pumps. One architect in Beaumont was so impressed with the technology that he replaced a gas air conditioning system with 12 tons of water source heat pumps at his own office.

Hollingsworth says that he tries to develop the relationship among GSU, the architect and the contractors. This way, he says, an architect may incorporate heat pump design in planning, a local contractor may install the equipment, GSU gets the revenue from electric usage and the customer gets service and comfort at an economical cost.

In Lake Charles, the typical day may include a meeting with local government officials to discuss lighting maintenance contracts. Mayo says that in the Lake Charles Division, GSU is contracted to maintain 653 lights on Interstate 10 from Jennings



*Bob Mayo's territory is in the Lake Charles Division.*



# of a marketing agent

to Vinton, with the exception of Welsh. This is a new source of revenue for GSU.

He adds that GSU has lighting maintenance contracts with commercial customers and the company has several contracts to maintain parking lot lighting.

Sometimes, GSU even designs lighting systems for commercial customers. When an underground lighting system was accidentally ruined by some digging equipment in Lake Charles, GSU designed a cost-effective alternative which the customer accepted. As a result, GSU received another maintenance

contract for lighting.

The typical day also might include a meeting with the local Kiwanis Club or Junior Achievement, says Hollingsworth. "We present programs to any sector of the public," he adds. The public relations aspect could come into play at any time. For example, a customer customer recently had a continuing problem with an air-conditioning compressor. Hollingsworth talked with several contractors to try to work out a solution for the customer.

Mayo frequently meets with land developers to try to get new

projects all-electric. "In some areas," he says, "GSU is in direct competition not only from gas utilities but other electric utilities as well. We try to design and present to developers a competitive electric package."

Mayo indicates that customers are satisfied with GSU handling their maintenance. "They trust us to get the work done and it's right," he says.

Mayo says that marketing agents must go out and hustle. That hustle pays off for GSU by increasing revenue.



*Dewitt Hollingsworth (right) confers with Ronnie Richardson of Richco Drilling Co., who is installing a water source heat pump.*





*A new cutting table helps this Sorrell employee produce upholstery pieces from bolts of fabric.*



*Bonnie McMillan has been finishing wood at*

## State grant saves jobs, retains

by Susan Gilley

**A**t first glance, Sorrell of Texas seems like a modest little operation.

Once you step into the production line, however, and watch fine furniture taking shape — an average of 30 pieces a day — Sorrell of Texas seems much more ambitious.

Perhaps that is what attracted two Beaumont men — Tom Combs and Ben Walker — to the Navasota plant. Wanting to get into manufacturing, they began investigating several furniture factories and decided the Grimes County business was small enough so that it “wasn’t completely out

of our league,” explains Walker, the half-owner who runs the operations end of the business. Combs, the other half-owner, oversees the marketing and sales aspect of the business.

At one time, Sorrell brought in \$4 million a year and provided jobs for 130 people. A fire that destroyed one 26,000-square-foot building a couple of years ago drastically reduced the company’s operations.

But now, under new ownership and with a sizeable financial boost resulting from a \$290,000 grant given to the city of Navasota and then loaned to the firm, Sorrell of Texas is staging a comeback.

Gulf States played a role in the economic revitalization of Sorrell of Texas, reveals Louis Sandidge, GSU’s district superintendent in Navasota. Sandidge also serves on the Grimes County Chamber of Commerce industrial development committee, as well as on the Navasota Industrial Foundation. Both agencies were active in seeking funding from the Texas Department of Community Affairs.

Once the city obtained the money, it was loaned to Sorrell with a deferred payback period and a low rate of interest. Over the next year, the plant will expand from 35 to 85 employees. Some of the grant money has





rell of Texas for 16 years.



Ben Walker (right) tells GSUer Louis Sandidge about some of the features of the furniture factory's finished products.

## GSU load

already been used to clean up the existing plant, make a few modifications in layout and add more efficient, safer equipment for the manufacturing process.

"Getting the grant for the city and then loaning it to Sorrell has been great for everybody involved — there will be new jobs for Navasota residents, Sorrell will certainly benefit and GSU is retaining industrial load and can look forward to increased load," Sandidge exults. The grant represents true seed money since, after Sorrell of Texas repays the loan, it can be reinvested into another local project.

Walker and Combs had

originally planned to relocate the plant to Beaumont, but decided that the existing trained work force would make it worthwhile to stay. The city-financed loan, of course, cinched the siting decision.

Although the plant has just recently gotten back on a 40-hour-a-week production schedule, area residents have already commented about the noticeably neater appearance of the plant.

The firm uses only hardwood to manufacture its furniture — "something unusual in our price range," comments Walker. One business decision involves narrowing their line from 30 furniture styles, including traditional, con-

temporary and early American, to about 10. The plant also specializes in natural finishes, with no plastics, adds Walker.

At the end of the production line, attractive sofa, loveseat and armchair sets await delivery to gleaming Houston furniture showrooms and other retail customers.

Although the big city is only 70 miles away, it is symbolically far removed from the unimposing Navasota structure, where furniture begins as planks of wood and bolts of fabric.

And Walker credits the success of the odyssey to good design, trained employees and a sound customer base.



# Four employees cited for lifesaving efforts

Four GSU employees were recognized in September as recipients of the President's Life Saving Award.

Jerry Skiles, Sidney Williams and Walter Roberts, all of the Vidor office, and John Yarbrough of Baton Rouge were presented the award by GSU President E. Linn Draper.

On Sept. 9, Dr. Draper made the Vidor presentations, commenting, "It is our opinion that without your quick and courageous action, the injuries that Robert Bruner sustained could very well have been fatal. Of all the awards and recognitions I have the privilege of presenting, I treasure this one the most."

The three linemen were working in Vidor along with Robert Bruner on May 28. Bruner was at the top of a pole making a connection to a transformer when his shoulder came in contact with a live wire. He was critically injured and unable to descend the pole.

Using pole-top techniques, Skiles, Williams and Roberts got Bruner safely to the ground where they administered emergency first aid until medical assistance arrived.

Bruner and his wife also attended the brief presentation ceremony. Mrs. Bruner expressed appreciation to the three men and to all GSU employees who rallied to the couple's side following the mishap.

In Baton Rouge on Sept. 10, Draper presented the award to Yarbrough.

Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) was performed by John and his wife, Debbie, an East Baton Rouge Parish sheriff's deputy, June 15 at a local establishment in Baton Rouge. An area

businessman at the function had no pulse, was not breathing and was turning blue. After being administered CPR, he regained consciousness and was breathing on his own when medics arrived.

In presenting the award, Draper said, "This award is reserved for those who heroically and selflessly act to successfully save the life of

another. It recognizes individual courage and ultimate concern for another's life, and is the highest award I can bestow on an individual at Gulf States."

Yarbrough was trained in CPR during company safety training programs, while his wife received her training through the sheriff's department.



Accident victim Robert Bruner (second from right) congratulates his co-workers (from left) Sidney Williams, Jerry Skiles and Walter Roberts upon receiving the President's Lifesaving Award.



John Yarbrough received his award for helping to save the life of a non-GSUser.



**EAS:**

# Help is only a phone call away

by Betty Gavora

Quietly and without fanfare, a program has been in place at Gulf States for the past two years which has made a difference.

The program — the Employee Advisory Service (EAS) — is a company-sponsored program to assist employees and dependents who have problems with alcohol or drugs.

The EAS program offers three basic services:

- Education of employees, to increase their awareness of how drug and alcohol problems can affect work performance and how to deal with such problems.

- Advice and counseling for employees with problems, followed by referral to an appropriate treatment source.

- Follow-up support for employees returning to work after completion of formal treatment experiences.

Since the program is strictly voluntary and completely confidential, there are no exact numbers of how many people have been helped. Dr. Bob Gay, the program consultant, says, "We're not interested in names; we're interested in helping. And, believe me, people have been helped." Gay and a network of EAS advisors (employees throughout the company) are available to refer employees and their dependents to the right expert or facility for the help needed.

Dr. Gay can be reached through the EAS number at GSU by dialing 733-3044 or at his private office telephone (409/835-3484). Also, employees or their family members may contact any of the EAS advisors for assistance. Their locations and telephone numbers follow.





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**EDISON PLAZA**

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**Core, Donnie**  
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Bldg. Services-EP (10)  
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**Haas, Terry K., CHAIRMAN**  
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Power Plant Engr. & Design-EP (3)  
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**Perry, Roger**  
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Analysis, Fin. Svs.-EP (16)  
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# advisors

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**Stelly, Joseph**  
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**Sartin, Steve**  
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**Smalley, Bob**  
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**Moulder, Davis**  
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**Pool, Wayne**  
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**Williams, Hubert**  
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\*AC-504





Mr. and Mrs. Stanley LeBouef

## Retiree receives money tree

When friends hosted a retirement party for Stanley J. LeBouef at the Old Timers Pavilion in Orange on Aug. 1, a "money tree" was the centerpiece at the fish fry. The tree was a gift to LaBouef, who hired on as an engineering helper in July 1946.

At the time of his retirement, LeBouef was a supervisor-T&D in the Orange District.



Lee and Bean Gautreaux

## Local newspaper features Gautreaux

When Corbin "Bean" Gautreaux ended his 37-year GSU career recently, the local newspaper featured an article and photo on the longtime employee.

Gautreaux began his career as a helper in the T&D Department in 1949, although his career was

interrupted for two years during the Korean War.

According to the newspaper article, Gautreaux revealed plans to spend more time with his wife, Lee; his son, Corbin Jr.; and his granddaughter, Jackie.



Well-wishers at Bean's retirement party included Joe Donnelly (left), senior executive vice president and chief financial officer, and Jack Schenck, vice president and treasurer.

## Bean ends 34-year career

A videocassette recorder was among the gifts friends and co-workers gave to Edaleen Bean as she retired Oct. 1.

Bean, who was cash management assistant at the time of her retirement, joined the company on Sept. 8, 1952.



Gene and Ruth Kriner

## Party salutes 34 perfect years

Gene Kriner's retirement party at Nelson Coal May 2 signaled the end of more than just a 34-year career with Gulf States. It also marked 34 perfect years without a lost-time accident. To

honor the achievement, friends presented him with a plaque and an enlarged photo taken of Kriner the day he hired on with GSU.

Kriner, a former operation shift supervisor, also received an envelope of cash and an old radio he built 20 years ago while he was at Sabine Station.



Jim and Neva Lee Braswell

## Retirement ends 48-year career

Jim Braswell started with Gulf States on Sept. 1, 1938, as a customer clerk. Forty-eight years and one month later, his GSU career ended with his Oct. 1 retirement.

Friends from throughout GSU gathered in Edison Plaza Sept. 25 to honor Braswell at a retirement party. At his side was his wife, Neva Lee.

Gifts presented to Braswell included a scrapbook of memories and a recliner. At the time of his retirement, Braswell was general manager-industrial relations services.

## Employees choose early retirement

Seven employees of Beaumont Service Center took advantage of early retirement and were the honored guests at parties given by co-workers. Four employees retired April 1 with a combined total of 150 years of service.



They were Orin M. Dixon, assistant general substation supervisor; Austin A. Townsend, division substation operator; Jesse L. Childress, serviceman-1st class, and Alfred Boswell, substation mechanic.

Three Beaumont Service Center employees retired May 1 with best wishes from fellow workers. Ken C. Gerstenberg, right-of-way representative; Alva C. Smythe Jr., right-of-way representative, and M.D. "Dru" Stephenson, meter department supervisor, concluded their careers with Gulf States.



Left to right, Ken C. Gerstenberg, Alva C. Smythe Jr. and M.D. Stephenson.

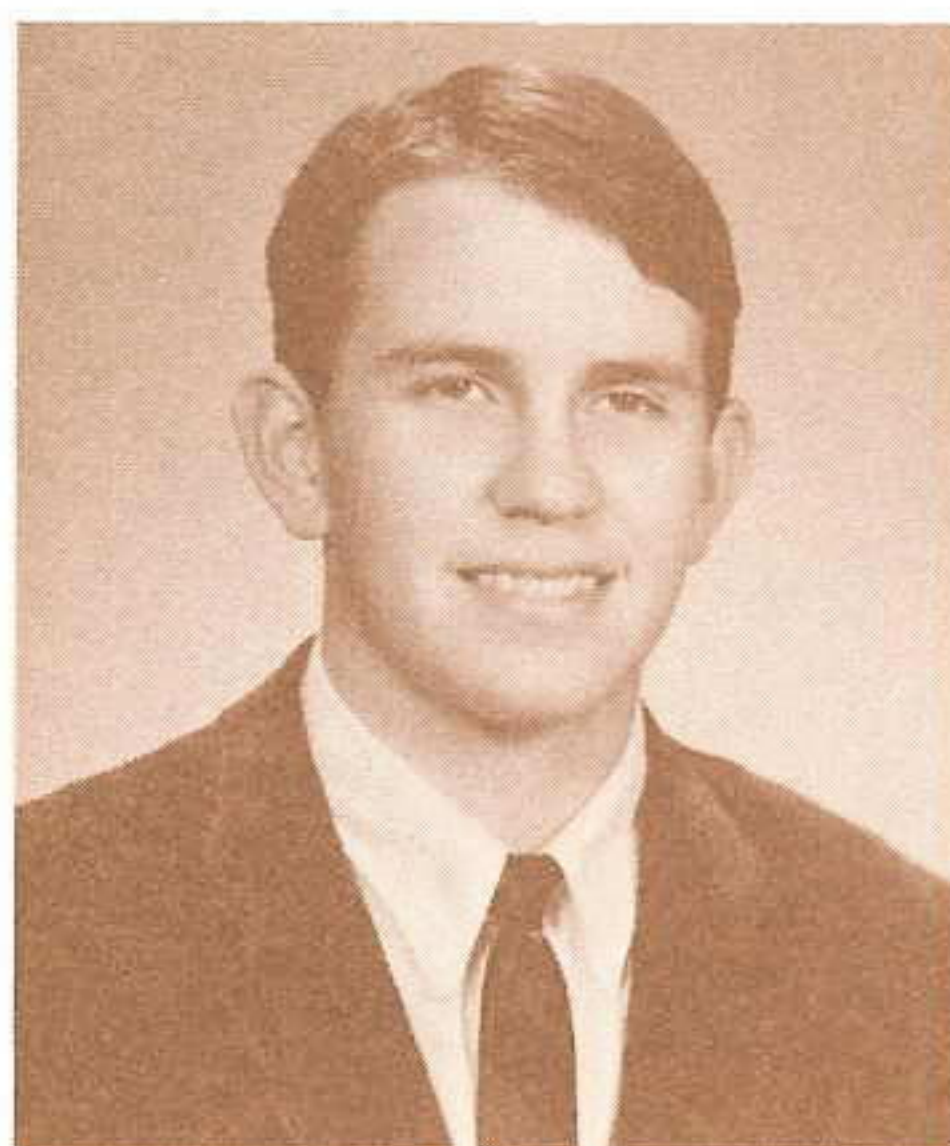


Left to right, Orin M. Dixon, Austin A. Townsend, Jessie Childress and Alfred Boswell.

## Doiron recommends rare procedure

Because a GSU retiree's son recommended a relatively rare form of surgery for an ailing woman, the woman has gained a new lease on life, reported the *Louisville Journal*.

The story was relayed to *Plain Talks* by proud father Jack



Dr. Clint Doiron

Doiron about his son, Dr. Clint Doiron.

Reportedly, 33-year-old Diana Schulte had suffered from several heart defects since birth. About four years ago, she received a pacemaker. But a few months ago, doctors in Lexington, Ky., noticed that one of the wires to the pacemaker wasn't working, but were not able to remove it. The disconnected wire was left screwed into the heart and a third was added to the upper chamber.

A month later, the new upper lead dropped into her heart's lower chamber, disturbing the heart's rhythm. The disconnected lead also became infected.

Dr. Doiron, a cardiologist called to the case, felt that she faced death unless the pacemaker was removed, but he also considered opening her heart too risky. He had heard of a procedure developed by Dr. Charles Byrd of Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami that involved removing pacemakers without opening the heart.

As a result, Schulte underwent surgery requiring two laser incisions made just under her collarbone to allow a stainless steel tube to break up scar tissue. Dr. Byrd detached the wires with a silicon plastic tube threaded into the heart. Two days later, she received a permanent pacemaker.

As a result of his involvement in the experience, Dr. Doiron

says he hopes he can someday save a patient's life by performing the same procedure.



Among Beaumont Sideliners touring Butchart Gardens and other Canadian landmarks were (from left) Cleo Stiteler, Katherine Wells and Katherine Davis.

## Sideliners visit Expo '86 in Canada

Gulf States was well-represented at Expo '86 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Sept. 1-6, reports Mrs. Henry G. Zahn Jr., *Plain Talks*' correspondent for the Beaumont Sideliners Club. Thirty-seven Sideliners' members and guests spent those six days at the world's fair.

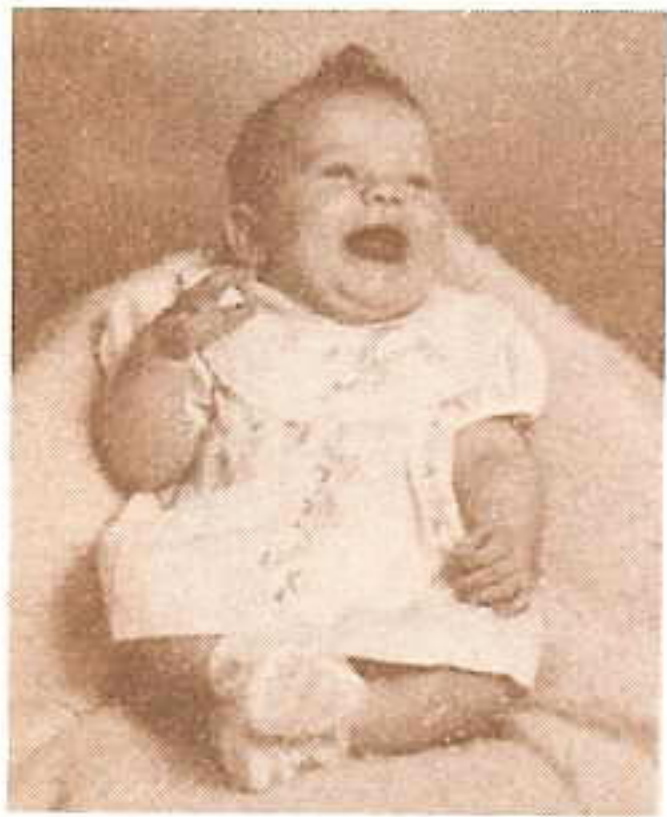
The itinerary included a grand city tour that Tuesday, which culminated with a medieval dinner at the Brothers Restaurant, where waiters were dressed as monks. The Texas travelers spent all day Wednesday at the fair. On Thursday, the group boarded the Royal Hudson steam train for a trip alongside the coastal mountains and fjord-like inlets of British Columbia. They returned in an excursion vessel by way of Lion's Gate Bridge, English Bay and Howe Sound.

Highlights of Friday included a Royal Victorian tour of Victoria, British Columbia. The Sideliners headed home Saturday.

Zahn reports that on the final day of their trip, an airline stewardess requested a GSU Sideliners' cap and wore it as she served the evening meal.



## New arrivals



**Name:** Rebekah Mariette O'Quinn

**Born:** March 27

**Parents:** Bruce and Vivian (test foreman, Nelson Coal) O'Quinn



**Name:** Carol Elaine Powell

**Born:** March 11

**Parents:** Oddie (planning coordinator, Nelson Coal) and Renza Powell



**Name:** Ryan Samuel Fancher

**Born:** July 8

**Parents:** Jim and Donna (secretary, River Bend Station) Fancher



**Name:** Dane Aloysius Trahan

**Born:** July 20

**Parents:** Howard (staff accountant II, Beaumont) and Loyce Trahan



**Name:** Darren Keith Stewart

**Born:** Aug. 13

**Parents:** Keith (employee benefits representative, Beaumont) and Linda Stewart



**Name:** Lauren Michelle Louviere

**Born:** March 26

**Parents:** Richard C. (equipment operator, Nelson Gas & Oil) and Terri Louviere



**Mike Meche**

## Meche reports big fish

Mike Meche, a staff accountant I at Willow Glen Station, caught a 44 pound, 5-ounce drum fish while deep sea fishing off the coast of Louisiana near Cameron. Meche's fishing partner on the expedition was Mark Wilson, staff accountant I at Neches Station.



**Evelyn Lawrence**

## Co-workers mark service anniversary

Co-workers at River Bend surprised Evelyn Lawrence with a celebration on Aug. 1, her 20th anniversary with Gulf States.

Lawrence, an employee relations administrator, began working for the company in 1966 as a clerk in Division Accounting in Port Arthur. She also worked in Beaumont before transferring to River Bend three years ago.



**Tressa Mitchell**

## Mitchell leads homecoming court

Tressa Mitchell has been named Homecoming Queen for 1986-87 at Lake Charles-Boston High School.

Tressa, who is also head majorette for the school, is the daughter of Larry and Theresa Mitchell. Her mom is an electrician-2nd class at Nelson Coal.



*Kilowatt Club officers are (seated, from left) Crawford and Owens, and (standing, from left) Peterson, Pickle and Browning.*

## Club elects new officers

Members of the Kilowatt Club at Nelson Station and Nelson Coal recently elected new officers for the 1986-87 year.

The five leaders will serve through May 1, 1986.

They are Keith Browning of Nelson Coal, president; Terry Pickle of Nelson Gas & Oil, vice president; Tyler Peterson of Nelson Gas & Oil, correspondence secretary; Cheryl Crawford of Nelson Coal, recording secretary; and Shelly Owens of Nelson Coal, treasurer.

## Girl excels in sports

Lori LaLonde, daughter of Port Arthur employee Phil LaLonde, recently won first place in a two-mile run and finished second in the mile run in a district meet. She is also a member of the Groves softball team, which recently ended its season by placing eighth in the state.

Lori, a senior at Port Neches-Groves High School, also lettered in basketball. Her dad is a division substation operator.



by Dr. Paul Murrill  
Chairman of the Board

In some of my more reflective moods, I'm tempted to consider Thanksgiving a holiday of clichés.

After all, from early childhood on, Americans are coached in the story of the Pilgrims crossing the Atlantic to found a haven of religious and political freedom in the New World. We know all about the hardships they endured at first, and we are just as aware of the first Thanksgiving meal they shared with the native Americans.

And, I'm afraid, my excitement about that once-moving story began to abate at about the same time as I doffed a cardboard Pilgrim's hat for a final elementary-school reenactment.

Of course, I go through all the motions of participating in Thanksgiving — joining my family for a huge feast and attending worship services devoted to counting our blessings. At the same time, it's easy to view Thanksgiving more as the beginning of the Christmas rush than as a holiday in itself.

But this year, more than any other, I'm beginning to recapture the ability to feel grateful for what is important. Perhaps that is because it is human nature to take the smooth times for granted — and the past year has been anything but that.

I took a few moments to compile a checklist of things I can be grateful for, aside from my obvious personal choices (family, good friends, etc.):

— I'm grateful for the way GSU employees have rallied together. Tough times have a way of either uniting or alienating people, but, luckily, we've stood up for our company and for each other.

— I'm grateful that 1986 signaled the official end of construction for River Bend Station, because we completed that plant



far faster than anybody dreamed possible, setting a new standard for the industry.

— I'm grateful for the loyal service of our employees. For instance, of the 318 employees who took early retirement this year, 180 had worked for GSU 30 years or more and 98 had at least 40 years of service. Those numbers tell me that those employees believed in GSU enough to stick with it through good times and bad.

— I'm grateful for the ways employees have found to save money and make do with what we have on hand. Along those lines, our Production Department has exhibited true innovation in creating repair shops at Willow Glen and Neches Station that have the potential for developing into commercial operations.

— I'm grateful that we are beginning to see measurable results from our economic

development activities, such as the location of Boeing in Lake Charles, and the expansion of a manufacturing plant in Navasota.

— I'm grateful that GSUers continue to wear smiles on their faces, rather than giving in to the troubling thoughts that we surely all share.

But most of all — and surprisingly much like the early Pilgrims — I'm grateful that I live in America, where individuals and companies are free, within reasonable limits, to make choices.

Those choices may be as simple as deciding where to live or where to get my hair cut. They may be as complicated as when to retire and whether to build a nuclear power plant.

Either way, that freedom fills me with a feeling of thanksgiving.

Happy Thanksgiving!



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## The Energy People



Photo by Mike Rodgers

*Susan Gilley, senior employee communications representative, talks with David Whit, administrator-Texas communications, about working with the new media.*

### Fall edition stories:

- Hurricane Bonnie cleanup
- Telling GSU's story
- Saving \$\$ at Willow Glen
- Playing Energy Bingo
- Why I like working at GSU