

the Western

OMAHA WORKS February 20, 1976



During the recent Northwestern Bell visit (see story on page 2), the General Manager, right, discusses one of the LTA products with Lynn Wenstrand, department chief, 473, left; F. W. Upchurch, engineering supervisor — outside plant, Northwestern Bell; and Tom Bowman, department chief, 401.

A Talk with the General Manager Forecast '76: Optimistic

The United States of America has experienced some remarkable advances in its 200-year history, none more remarkable than the development of a sophisticated telephone network.

But our country and companies like Western Electric can progress only to the extent they are capable of meeting the challenges that parallel progress.

As we all know, our Company has faced some severe problems in the past two years. The Omaha Works has itself felt the impact of the economic downturn, having reduced its work force by some 2300 people during 1974-75.

A recent *Westerner* interview with Works General Manager Frank Lefebvre spotlighted some of the challenges Western Electric and the Omaha Works have faced in the past few years and will continue to face in 1976.

In Mr. Lefebvre's opinion, the biggest challenge facing the Omaha Works in 1976 will be our ability to maintain a somewhat stable level of employment.

"We've taken a bloodbath in the

past two years," he said candidly, "and I cannot imagine any challenge or goal being more important to us than stabilizing our work force."

According to Mr. Lefebvre, this is an attainable goal "if we are successful in attracting new products to offset the phasing out of electro-mechanical switching equipment which is fast becoming outmoded.

"As we know, there is less demand for crossbar switching equipment due to the recently-depressed economy coupled with the rapid technological advances being made in the area of electronic switching systems."

He pointed out that the introduction of products in the Loop Transmission Apparatus line will help the Omaha Works offset the downturn in crossbar production.

"New Omaha products such as the B-wire and 88 type connectors and the FDI cabinet as well as the consolidation of terminal strip manufacture at Omaha are tangible evidence of the changes we're undergoing.

"Omaha isn't the only location that has had to resize to accommodate the economic downturn concurrent with

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For Your Information ...

... effective January 1, 1976, the taxable wage base for Social Security was raised from \$14,100 to \$15,300. The rate for both employee and employer remains at 5.85%. What this means is that the first \$15,300 of an employee's salary or wages will be taxed. Persons earning \$15,300 or more in 1976 will pay \$70.20 more due to the fact that the tax will be levied on an added \$1,200 of earnings. Since there is no change in the tax rate, persons earning less than \$14,100 are not affected by the change ...

... if the above information makes you curious as to the status of your Social Security earnings, there is a way to obtain that information. Social Security "Requests for Statement of Earnings" forms are available in the Works Financial Section. The cards can be mailed to the Social Security Administration for updated information on your account. The service is free of charge ...

... on January 1, 1976, the federal excise tax on telephone service dropped from 7% to 6%, a decrease reflected on all customer bills on or after January 1. This is the fourth annual reduction scheduled under the Excise, Estate and Gift Tax Adjustment Act of 1970 which provides for a 10-year reduction schedule of the tax on communications service. Similar rate reductions will occur each year until January 1, 1982, when the tax will have been phased out completely ...

... the following dates will be observed under the 1976 Omaha Works Holiday/Vacation schedule: April 16 (Good Friday); June 28-July 9 (Standard Vacation); September 6 (Labor Day); November 25-26 (Thanksgiving); December 24-January 3 (Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, redesignated Memorial and Independence Day Holidays, Floating Holiday and New Year's Day Holiday ...

Etc.

1. On January 20, the Omaha Works sponsored its annual Junior Achievement Charter Day banquet. This year's dinner, held in the Works Auditorium, was attended by achievers and advisors from the three Company-sponsored J.A. firms. Following the dinner, Works Director Wayne Hunt presented charters to each of the J.A. companies. Pictured are a group of achievers and their advisors on tour of the Plant prior to the banquet.

2. A \$265 suggestion award has been presented to Tom Johnson, Dept. 244, for his proposal that a strip of double surface tape be placed at each connector cable assembly position for the purpose of disposing of the black tracer thread. Tom's idea not only saves operator time but also improves housecleaning. He's pictured at right with his section chief, Erv Tvrdik.

3. Students at the Bellevue, Nebr., CHAP (Children Have A Potential) School for trainable mentally retarded children welcomed a couple of permanent residents in early January. Courtesy of Omaha Works Pioneers, the two new additions are Big Tex, a giant lavender dog that can "speak" to the children via a transmitter and receiver, and Casper, a brown and yellow bear whose eyes light up when someone speaks to him or touches his nose. As Pioneer Don Hanrahan, right background, introduces some of the children to Casper, youngsters in the foreground get acquainted with Big Tex. Casper was purchased by Works Pioneers from Pioneers at Northwestern Bell. Big Tex was a gift to the Omaha Works Pioneers from Pioneers at the Dallas Plant.

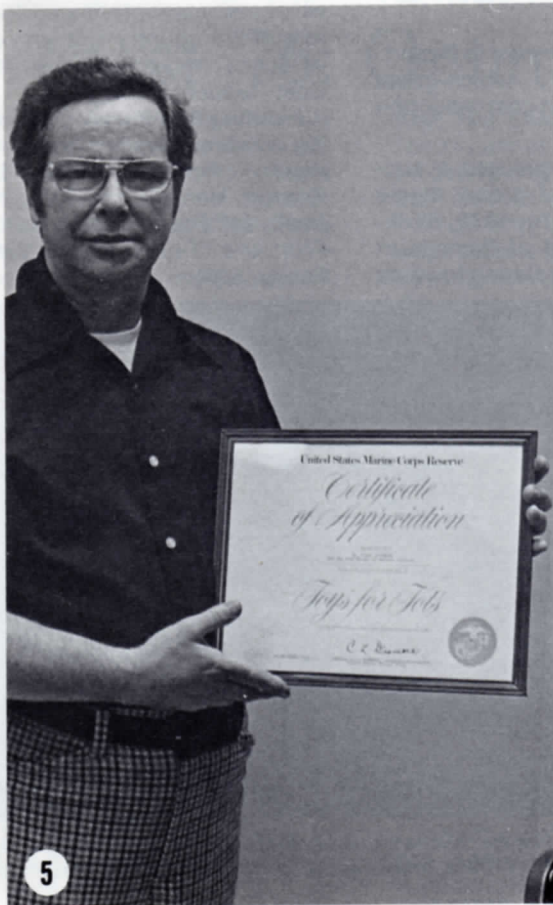
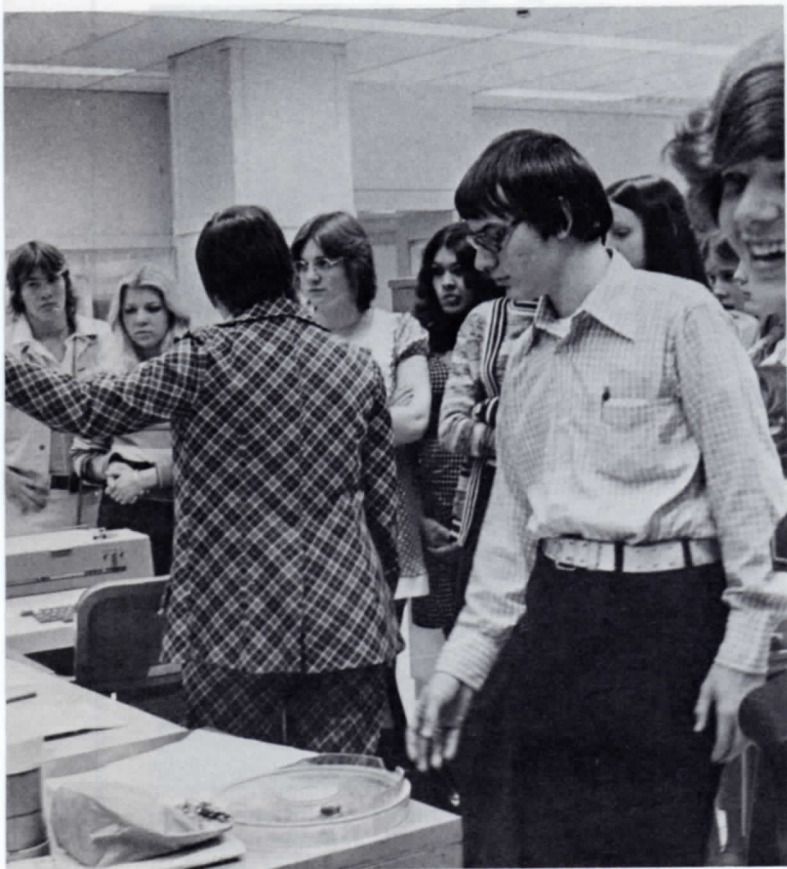
4. Finalizing plans for the in-Plant observance of 1976 Engineers Week, February 23-27, are E-Week Committee members Jim Kresl, chairman, seated at left, Bob Urban, Al Dusek and standing from left, Ray Dusatko, Howard Eliuk, Bob Douglas, Jim Isley and Tom Adamson. This year's activities include talks by Colonel Gerald L. Prather, Director, Communications-Electronics, Deputy Chief of Staff,

Operations, Strategic Air Command, and Dr. Ronald W. Roskens, Chancellor, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

5. The Omaha Works has received a "Certificate of Appreciation" from the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve for the Works' "outstanding support" of the Marine's annual Toys for Tots campaign. This past December Works employees purchased nearly 2,500 new toys for the annual drive to provide Christmas gifts to needy Omaha-area children. Pictured with the certificate is Ken Wadum, Dept. 241, the coordinator of the in-Plant campaign.

6. On January 27, the Omaha Works hosted Northwestern Bell's Five-State Outside Plant Conference. A special product display room was set up adjoining the Works Auditorium where the 20 visitors had the opportunity to view the growing line of Loop Transmission Apparatus products being manufactured at the Omaha Works. A number of Works engineers were on hand in the display center to discuss the LTA line. Pictured demonstrating the hydraulic cutter-presser tool for the 710 connector is Engineering Associate Dean Davis.





Forecast '76: Optimistic

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the introduction of new technology," the General Manager explained. "It is our hope that we can temper the effect by smoothing the transition so that it will have less of an impact on the work force."

Mr. Lefebvre noted that one of the best ways to counter the downward trend is to continue to attract new products. And the best way to attract new products is to "continue to be competitive, to maintain our fine reputation in the areas of cost, quality and service."

He stressed, "Not only do we compete with other manufacturers, but we are also in competition with other plants within Western Electric's manufacturing divisions."

What demonstrates the Omaha Works' competitive position?

According to the General Manager, it's such things as being allocated manufacturing control of the Small Switch and MC Relay.

"In order to be competitive," he explained, "Omaha must continue to do the good things our record shows we are capable of doing while at the same time improving our safety and attendance records."

"There's something inconsistent in the fact that while we have the best quality in the Switching Division, we have the poorest average attendance. When our people are on the job, the work is tremendous. But it's impossible to do our best job when we are faced with such chronic absenteeism. In my opinion, we could be an even more efficient and competitive organization if we could find a way to improve our attendance record."

"I can tell you that one of our primary goals in 1976 will be to seek alternate ways to encourage our employees to share this very important concern."



Western Electric

Vol. 20 **Frank J. Lefebvre** No. 1
General Manager

Nancy Emshwiler
Editor



Participants in the "Spirit of Savings In '76" kick off were George Rosness, left, George Henderson, Wayne Hunt, General Manager Frank Lefebvre, Dick Iaffaldano and Mark Foster.

Seven Million In '76 Is Cost Reduction Aim

Last year Omaha Works engineers bettered by \$342,811 their Engineering Cost Reduction goal of \$6 million.

The 1975 campaign, based on a space shot theme of "6N75," had its wrap up during a brief gathering in mid-December. At that time Director Wayne Hunt took the opportunity to compliment members of the technical-professional work force for their outstanding contributions to the 1975 campaign.

Special recognition went to Departments 171 and 273 which both exceeded \$1 million in cost reduction savings for the year.

Now that "6N75" has had a successful "splashdown," a new theme has been announced for 1976. Working towards a "Spirit of Savings in '76," engineers will be aiming towards

a cost reduction savings of \$7 million, a goal which was announced on January 12 during special ceremonies in the Works Auditorium.

Outfitted as Father Time, Wayne Hunt announced the campaign theme and the \$7 million goal. The highlight of the kickoff activities was the appearance on stage of the four Engineering Organization assistant managers, costumed as Americans who positively influenced the progress of our country and who will now influence the progress of the 1976 Cost Reduction Program.

Heading the efforts of the engineering sub-branches are George "Washington" Rosness (230); "Buffalo" George Henderson (270); "Honest Abe" Iaffaldano (Dick Iaffaldano, 470); and "Teddy" Foster-Velt (Mark Foster, 520).



Before officially retiring from the Omaha Works, Assistant Manager Lou Wengel, right, accepted a trophy honoring his 170 sub-branch as the "6N75" winners. The presentation was made by Wayne Hunt.