

# Engineering Extension Service trains convicts as electric linemen

Convict rehabilitation takes many forms, yet few programs match the training conducted by A&M's Engineering Extension Service for the Texas Department of Corrections.

Extension Service instructors have trained 60 heavy equipment operators during three summers and 23 water utility personnel last summer, both receiving high

praise from TDC Vocational Education Director Robert Gilliam.

Now a new one-year program has started to train electric linemen for mobile maintenance crews.

Instructor Donald R. Blankenship of the Electric Lineman and Telephone Technician Training Division of EES pointed out the lineman course packs three years

of on-the-job training into a six-month period. Two TDC guards and 26 inmates will be trained in two six-month courses, he said.

The guards, David Goodbread of Angleton and William A. Urban of West Columbia, will complete the course twice for assignments as TDC instructors. Both are on leave from the Clemens Unit near Brazoria.

All the inmates are state approved trustees from units throughout the system. More than 500 inmates were screened for the 26-man class, Officer

Goodbread said.

Inmate skills range from no experience to a journeyman electrician. Each was tested and screened for attitudes, Goodbread said, and individual records weighed heavily in the selection process.

Approximately two-thirds of the instruction will be held at the A&M Research Annex, the former Bryan Air Force Base 12 miles from the main campus. Inmates are bused to the school each morning and return to Huntsville each evening.

One-third of the program is on-the-job training building power line systems at the Ellis Unit near Huntsville.

Blankenship said TDC purchases power from public utilities. The prison system owns all the materials on its property.

Students completing the lineman course will be responsible for construction and maintenance of the TDC lines.

Blankenship, who has 24 years experience in the field, reported commercial electric power com-

panies have a demand for skilled linemen. Since most of the inmate class has two years remaining before release, Blankenship stressed "the men will have a marketable skill when they return to the free world."

The course includes both classroom and practical experience.

When completed, the men will be trained in stringing wire, transfer connections and over-current and over-voltage protection techniques, Blankenship said.

Cost of the program is \$750 per student, plus books, tools and transportation costs absorbed by TDC.

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## Jury set in John Dowdy trial

BALTIMORE (AP)—Jury selection was completed Tuesday in the bribery trial of Rep. John Dowdy, D-Tex., after a government prosecutor charged the 59-year-old congressman with violating a court order against pre-trial publicity.

Stephen H. Sachs, former U.S. attorney prosecuting the case, termed Dowdy's out of court statements at Monday's opening

session "the most flagrant violation of a rule set by Roszel C. Thomason, the U.S. District Court judge hearing the case."

Dowdy, who is charged with accepting \$25,000 to influence a Justice Department's probe of a now defunct Washington, D.C., area home repair firm, told a television reporter he was framed by the government.

The 59-year-old veteran of almost 20 years in the House said he knew "the things charged didn't happen" and that he could prove that in court.

who contended it was "terribly important" to determine whether prospective jurors had seen press accounts of Dowdy's charges, Judge Thomason summoned all prospective jurors and told them that anything they may have seen in the headlines or heard elsewhere was not evidence.

"Not only is it not evidence," the judge told them, "it is not argument you are justified in hearing."

Jury selection was then completed with a panel of nine women and three men being chosen to decide on the conspiracy, bribery, and perjury charges against Dowdy.

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