

Oil boom in Kurten seems welcome

By ANN RICHMOND
Kurten is the kind of town a person can drive through without even knowing he has been in a town. Kurten has a grocery store-gas station, a post office, a couple of houses, and a population of about 150. It doesn't look like this town has much to offer anyone.

But, take another look. Beneath those green pastures and lazy cows is oil — lots of oil. Kurten is the center of one of the biggest oil booms South Texas has seen, and the oil companies have moved in.

Amalgamated Bonanza Petroleum, Ltd. is the largest oil company in the area in terms of the number of wells and the number of areas leased. It has 64 percent interest in petroleum and natural gas rights on 160,000 acres in the northern part of Brazos County, says Chester Quick, field superintendent for Bonanza.

The company came to Brazos County early in 1976 and drilled its first well, Bonanza No. 1 Shramm, Quick says. The well struck oil, but it only produced five barrels a day. Bonanza drilled

about five more wells in the area and found a well that produced 150 barrels of oil a day.

Today, the company has 40 completed wells and has not hit a dry well yet, Quick says. Three sites are now being drilled and seven are ready to be drilled.

One of the wells now being drilled is located off Democrat Road. The rig stands alone in an open field. Planks cover the ground around the rig to help support heavy equipment and cars. Off to one side is a house trailer where the supervisor lives. The four or five men who operate the drilling rig live in surrounding communities.

The sound of engines and pumps is constant. At first the sound is nerve-racking, then it becomes monotonous, then forgotten. It's just a part of the work, as is the sweat and grime that covers the men.

There's nothing exciting about working on an oil rig. The work is hard and routine. Pumps and engines have to be fixed when malfunctions occur, and they occur often.

The mud in the hole must be kept at a certain thickness and weight, and the pH maintained at a certain level so the mud can be easily pumped out of the hole.

Most importantly, the drill has to be kept going 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The men who keep it going work smoothly. They know what has to be done and they do it. Cigarettes dangle from their mouths as they work and their eyes squint in the bright sunlight. There's not much talk. The only way to be heard above the din of the machinery is to yell. That gets tiring in a hurry. Often, hand signals are used instead of words to convey messages.

It takes about 15 days to complete the drilling on an oil well. The wells in this area have to be drilled down to eight or nine thousand feet to the Woodbine sandstone level. Quick says that this is a fairly shallow well.

In the process of drilling, the bit has to be changed six or seven times. Each bit lasts 40 to 50 hours, Quick says. The only way to change the bit is to remove all of the pipe, one piece at a time, from the hole. The entire process takes about three to four hours.

The well will become either a pumping well, a down-hole well or a flowing well. The pumping well is the most visible kind of well. It looks like a giant black insect that is slowly devouring the land, its head moving tediously up and down. The down-hole well is also a pumping well, but the pump is located beneath the surface of the ground. The flowing well has no pump. As the name implies, the



The maintenance of the engines and pumps on drilling rigs is a continual job that requires a great deal of time. It is glamorous, but it is necessary in order to keep the drill going 24 hours a day.

Battalion photo by Ann Richmond

oil flows by itself out of the well. From the well, the oil will be piped to a "heater-treater" a short distance away. This will heat the oil so it will be easier to move it through the pipes into storage tanks called "tank batteries." These large silver tanks are easily and quickly pinpointed to the location of the road to the final destination. This oil field is worth about \$1 million a day, says Quick. But the company is behind start making money in the area, Quick says.

Other oil companies are also drilling in Kurten area, though on a smaller scale.

Ashland has four to six wells of Kurten Lane, Butterfield, Kurten and Cayuga has one. Other companies are working in Brazos County but no one is exactly how many. Different companies may share lease on same land and consulting firms represent as many as five companies. As Maudie Orner Kurten resident, puts it, "One of a crazy situation down the road. Before an oil company can lease a well, it must lease a 160-acre head of land. Quick says. This requires by the Railroad Commission. Only one well can be drilled within this block. The owner must secure a lease from the land owner within the block. If the land owner refuses to lease the land the company must go elsewhere. It costs the land owner \$100,000 to have an oil well drilled. Quick says. And he says, "I don't see any royalties from the oil on his land or in the block. Tony I is contained in."

Few people object to the companies leasing their land and cause they know that they'll get money out of it," Quick says. "There is no way they'll refuse. They may want to, but they won't."

Few residents in Kurten object, says Margaret Jopp, a postmistress in Kurten. Now about the residents are pleased with the way things are going. Brocksmith's grocery store is doing a landslide business. Clean than he can handle," Jopp says. When Brocksmith is asked about the business he is doing, he shrugs and smiles.

When Bonanza came to Brazos County, no one cared about it, Quick says. But as new oil companies were moving into the area, oil companies had been leasing land for years and nothing had ever happened. When Bonanza came years ago, Jopp says, no one paid any attention to it.

WHO IS HOUSE OF TIRES?

The smallest tire store with the largest selection and the lowest overhead so you get the lowest prices!

Tire sale now in progress. Corner of Coulter and Texas. 822-7139.

MICHELIN • SEMPERIT • PIRELLI • DOUGLAS • CARNEGIE

PLANTATION OAKS APARTMENTS

ATTENTION APARTMENT HUNTERS! SUMMER LEASES

"30% DISCOUNT"

You can **SAVE** up to **\$374.00** when you sign a summer lease. Please come by today and see how much we can help you save.

Furnished & Unfurnished Efficiency, 1, 2 & 3 Bedroom Apartments All Utilities Included No Escalation Clause or Fuel Adjustment Charge 24 Hour Emergency Maintenance Service

Two Swimming Pools Tennis Courts Party/Meeting Room Health Spas, including Saunas for Men & Women Three Laundry Rooms

Rental office open Monday through Friday 9-6 Saturday 10-5 Sunday 2-5

693-1110 1501 Hwy. 30 693-1011

Couple's Special

2 8X10 Color Photographs only **\$22⁹⁵**

And if you're an engaged couple, the 5x7 glossy for the newspaper is free with this offer. Your choice of eight color proofs of your sitting in traditional studio style.

Additional portraits available at lowest reprint rate.

Offer expires June 1, 1978

University Studio
115 College Main Northgate 846-8019

SUPER WEEKEND STUDENT DISCOUNT

The **INDY CARS**
Foyt - Andretti - Sneva
Johncock-Rutherford
The Unsers at
200 MPH

THIS COUPON WORTH \$5 discount on \$15 reserved seat when presented at grandstand gate

\$2 discount on \$7 infield admission when presented at infield gate (Limit one per person)

SATURDAY APRIL 15

Overnight Camping and Concert **BATTLE OF THE BANDS** continues Sunday, April 16 with Motorcycle Races

TEXAS WORLD SPEEDWAY on Hwy. 6 south of College Station, Texas

MUSIC MAN the music booth

779-3988 Bryan GIBSON "Your Guitar Specialist" 3202-A TEXAS AVE. TAKAMINE

Sun Theatres

333 University 846-9808

The only movie in town

Double-Feature Every Week

Open 10 a.m.-2 a.m. Mon.-Sat.
12 Noon - 12 Midnight Sun

No one under 18
Escorted Ladies Free

BOOK STORE & 25¢ PEEP SHOWS

More Of A Good Thing

HAPPY HOUR

5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Monday Thru Friday

Call any weekday during the dinner hours and have a piping hot pizza delivered to your door — at these discounted prices!!!

\$1.00 off any 16"
75c off any 14"
50c off any 12"

(No coupons accepted during Happy Hour, please.)

846-7785

Casino '78

APRIL 14

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT! GAMBLING!

AND GEE GOLLY GOOD TIMES AT

RHA CASINO NIGHT, FRIDAY,

APRIL 14

7:30 P.M. 2ND FLOOR MSC

Advance tickets - \$2.25 at MSC, Commons, Sbisa
At the door - \$2.50

GET A PIECE OF THE ACTION!

DISCO DANCE CONTEST

April 13 12:30 noon
Rudder Fountain
PRIZES SPONSORED BY
TOWN HALL
IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE OHIO PLAYERS SHOW
SIGN UP IN ROOM 216 MSC