

# Repair expense hinders safety of Gulf pipelines

HOUSTON (AP) — The National Transportation Safety Board heard Tuesday that recommendations to improve gas pipeline safety in the Gulf of Mexico were ignored because they would have been too expensive.

The testimony came on the final day of a two-day NTSB hearing into an Oct. 3 explosion that killed 11 crewmen on the Northumberland, a fishing boat that ruptured a pipeline in shallow Gulf waters near the Sabine Pass.

The NTSB Tuesday reviewed a 1987 memo from Robert Aubry, former head of the Southwest Region for the Office of Pipeline Safety, an agency in the Department of the Interior.

In the memo, Aubry suggested that pipeline operators be required to review lines in shallow water every three years, and re-bury lines that have become exposed.

His recommendations followed a July 24, 1987 accident on the boat Sea Chief that killed two near New Orleans.

But those recommendations were never implemented because it would have cost operators too much, Cesar DeLeon, assistant director for Pipeline Safety Regulation, told the NTSB Tuesday.

DeLeon read from a memo he wrote to Aubry in response.

"These changes would be a substantial cost in order to protect imprudent vessel operators with little benefit to the public," DeLeon said in the memo. "I believe the problem can be handled at less cost with buoy markers and

or unburied. He should take prudent action to avoid them."

Edward Swindell, vice president of operations for the Zapata Haynie Corp., owners of the Northumberland, asked DeLeon Tuesday why he did not read the final paragraph in his memo for the investigative panel.

DeLeon said he thought he had answered the question completely without reading the final paragraph.

After direction from Lee V. Dickinson, who is conducting the two-day hearing, DeLeon read his final paragraph.

"In addition, a pipeline without sufficient cover in shallow offshore waters are considered unsafe. The existing regulations... further require that the operators take appropriate, immediate action."

In other testimony Tuesday, Dan Bourgeois, Gulf of Mexico regional supervisor for the Minerals Management Service, said his agency does not inspect oil and gas pipelines to make sure they remain buried in the Gulf.

When asked how pipelines remain buried, Bourgeois said, "We don't know if that is actually occurring."

The pipeline struck by the Northumberland in nine to 11

"...I believe the problem can be handled at less cost with buoy markers and charts than require pipeline companies to continually lower their lines."

— Cesar DeLeon  
Pipeline Safety Regulation

"These changes would be a substantial cost in order to protect imprudent vessel operators with little benefit to the public."

— Cesar DeLeon,  
Pipeline Safety Regulation

charts than require pipeline companies to continually lower their lines."

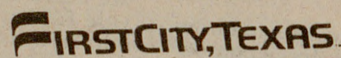
He told the NTSB hearing Tuesday that, "We viewed that as a navigational problem that a boat captain should assure himself of knowing where these pipelines are whether they're buried

feet of water was supposed to be buried three feet beneath the Gulf bottom, but was not, testimony has shown.

Bourgeois said there are 4,500 active oil and gas pipelines in the Gulf of which 2,467 fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Interior and 1,033 are the responsibility of the Department of Transportation, he said.

The interior department lines constitute 4,550 miles of pipe, while the DOT has 13,305 miles of pipe, he said.

# An Open Letter To Our Customers and Friends



An open letter to our customers and friends:

As First City begins a second century of service, we are mindful of how closely related a successful financial institution and progressive community are.

The mutual trust and loyalty we have shared with our customers over the past one hundred years is the cornerstone of First City's growth and success. Our customers have been and continue to be a major part of the backbone of the Brazos Valley which is a justifiable source of pride for all concerned.

As we begin a new decade and a second one hundred years at First City, we are optimistic about the future and poised to meet the challenges ahead. We believe that *strength, stability and leadership* are more than mere words; they are the legacy of our past, and the foundation upon which we face the future.

Please join us in celebrating our first century of service. We will be hosting an informal reception in the First City lobby during normal banking hours the week of December 18-22.

We look forward to seeing you here.

Very truly yours,

*Bookman Peters*

Bookman Peters  
Chairman

*Mervin D. Peters*

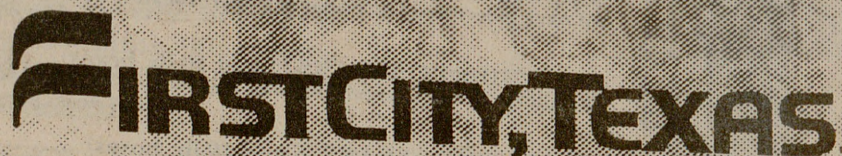
Mervin D. Peters  
President



Mervin D. Peters and Bookman Peters

Briarcrest Drive P.O. Drawer 913 Bryan, Texas 77805 (409) 776-5402

1889



1989

3000 Briarcrest Drive  
776-5402

### Board of Directors

**C.J. Allen**  
President  
Allen Olds-Cadillac, Inc.

**Delvin R. Barrett**  
President  
Feather Crest Companies

**Dr. A. Benton Cocanougher**  
Dean of the College of Business Administration  
Texas A&M University

**A.W. Davis**  
Partner  
Davis & Davis Attorneys

**Ronald E. Hale**  
Executive Vice President

**Arthur A. Herwald**  
General Manager  
Herwald Pest Control

**Dr. Stephen A. Holditch**  
Professor, Petroleum Engineering  
Texas A&M University  
President, S.A. Holditch, Inc.

**James D. Ingram, III**  
President  
Ingram, Wallis & Company, P.C.

**Dr. Sara Jarvis Jones**  
Clinical Psychologist

**Johnny S. Lampo**  
Partner  
Pizza Huts of Brazos Valley, Inc.

**Leonard E. Morehead**  
President  
Acme Glass Company

**George L. Nelson**  
Executive Vice President

**Louis M. Newman, III**  
President  
Newman Printing Company, Inc.

**Bookman Peters**  
Chairman of the Board  
Chief Executive Officer

**Mervin D. Peters**  
Chief Operating Officer

**Richard A. Smith**  
President  
Coldwell Banker  
Richard Smith, Realtors

**Phil Springer**  
Owner  
McDonald's Restaurants

**James W. Stegall**  
Executive Vice President and Senior Trust Officer

**Kenneth A. Telg**  
Executive Vice President and Senior Operations Officer  
Secretary, Board of Directors

**T. Parten Wakefield, Jr.**  
Vice President  
Wakefield Corporation and Dreamer's Oil, Inc.

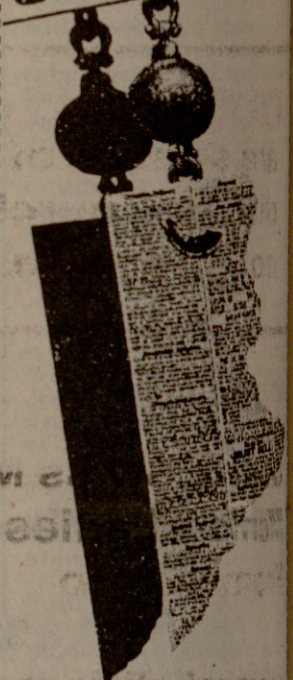
**Jerry Windham**  
President  
Bernath Concrete Products Company

**Freddie A. Wolters**  
Ranching & Investments

\* Advisory Directors

Member F.D.I.C.

CLASSIFIEDS



ANY ADS,  
BUT REAL  
HEAVYWEIGHTS  
WHEN RESULTS  
REALLY COUNT.

No matter what  
you've got to say  
or sell, our Classifieds  
can help you  
do the big job.

Battalion

Classified

845-0569