

The crowd of workers seemed to relax a little as the transformer was safely lowered onto a flatbed truck for transport.

Happy Home gets new transformer

By Cindy McGregor

The Happy Home area, which includes Spring Creek Drive and Guntersville High School, will have dependable electrical service for years to come. The Guntersville Electric Board replaced a 49-year-old transformer there Wednesday.

The transformer was built in the 1960s and installed in the early 1970s, said Tony Tucker, operations superintendent for the system.

Part of Spring Creek Drive was closed for a while because an enormous crane was parked in the street. Workmen hooked the crane up to the transformer, and the crane operator gingerly swung

the old transformer onto a flatbed truck.

There haven't been many problems with the old transformer, but the new one includes newer technology and will handle the load for that area for a long time, Mr. Tucker said. They had some problems with it 10 years ago but repaired it.

"Luckily, it's held," he said. "More people are moving into this area, and the demand is getting higher."

The Electric Board employees were able to change out the transformer without cutting power to the homes, school and businesses in the Happy Home area.

"We could not have done this 2 years ago," Mr. Tucker said. "We would have been over here trying

to do this on a weekend. But since we rebuilt that station on Loveless 2 years ago, we increased the capacity on it and got it to where we could do this job today. It's all been planned as far as 5 years back."

Besides the Spring Creek area, the substation feeds Val Monte and back toward the causeway. It also sends electricity up the mountain to feed the industrial park.

"The significant part of this substation is this is our main feed from TVA," Mr. Tucker said.

Last month, crews replaced 2 old transformers at the substation on Gerald Bryant Road in Alder Springs. That cost about \$100,000, and the work at Happy Home has cost about \$700,000. It was all

budgeted, so rates won't increase.

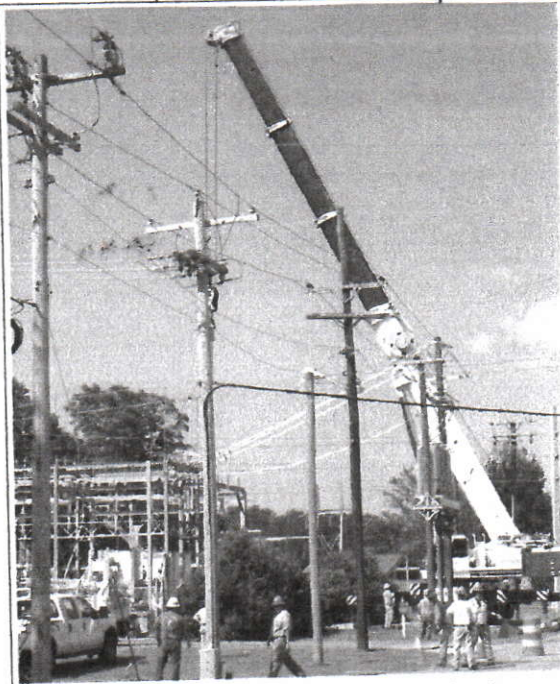
The work at the Happy Home substation consisted of changing out a breaker, changing the transformer out to a new one, reconstructing the conductors and the switches behind the transformer, adding a breaker in the front and putting regulators out in front. All of that has been done in a 5-year period.

The old transformer was sold to a recycling company.

"We've got 2 more sets of these regulators to build, and then our major construction will be over," Mr. Tucker said as he waited for the transformer at Happy Home to be removed. "Then we will look at starting the upgrade process on Willow Beach."

He hopes the Willow Beach work can be done within the next 2 or 3 years.

"We'll have to wait and see what it looks like after this," he said. "These are major steps."



Workers from the Guntersville Electric Board and a recycling company worked to unhook a generator at the Happy Home substation Wednesday morning