

# RIVER PARISHES & the Metro area

SECTION B  
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## Sugar plant accident investigated

By MARTHA CARR  
 River Parishes bureau

Federal officials Monday began investigating a dump truck accident that killed two men at a Gramercy sugar refinery, after the company fenced off the site and stationed armed guards to prevent intruders from tampering with evidence.

Investigators from the Occu-

### Two workers killed; OSHA conducts probe

pational Safety and Health Administration said they are trying to determine the cause of the accident at Colonial Sugar Refinery, where two men died Friday when the bed of a dump truck unloading raw sugar cane loam and fell on them. OSHA is a federal agency under the U.S.

Department of Labor.

Meanwhile, company officials released the name of the second victim: Hyron Clement, an employe of Lafourche Sugar Mill in Thibodaux. Clement was believed to be about 38, refinery manager Ben Loup said.

Colonial employe Edward

Jaeger, 62, of Paulina was also killed. He worked for the refinery for 16 years, most recently as a raw sugar foreman.

OSHA state Director Robert Holmes said the agency investigates workplace accidents that involve fatalities or those in which three or more people are

hospitalized. If an employer is found to have violated agency safety standards, it can be fined. The agency's findings don't become public until an investigation is completed and citations are issued.

Colonial Sugar is the only refinery in the River Parishes, and produces close to 1 billion pounds of sugar each year. The plant

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## DAY OF THE DOCTOR



East St. John High School students Sheri Schexnayder, left, and Robin Smith look the part as they read a book to Kristina Miller's first-grade class at Fifth Ward Elementary on Monday. Several East St. John students traveled to elementary schools to read stories to the youngsters. STAFF PHOTOS BY THOM SCOTT



Third-graders at LaPlace Elementary School, dressed in hats they made in art class, gather around a big cake during their reading celebration Monday. Classes all over the New Orleans area observed Dr. Seuss' birthday.

And so the Lorax said to the Cat in the Hat, who whispered to Horton, who heard a Who and talked to Marvin K. Mooney, who passed it on to Mr. Brown, who moo'ed it to Sam I Am: Today is our father's birthday. There must be a party, exclaimed the Cat in the Hat. And a read-a-thon, chimed Sam I Am — but please, please, no Green Eggs and Ham! Across metro New Orleans Monday, children celebrated what would have been Theodore Geisel's 94th birthday with parties and programs, sponsored by Read Across America and Read Across Louisiana, and countless school groups in between. Geisel, you ask. Your brain must be loose. For Geisel is none other than Dr. Seuss.

## Injured worker to get \$2.2 million

### Union Carbide plans to appeal

By RHONDA BELL  
 River Parishes bureau

An Ascension Parish man was recently awarded \$2.2 million by a state district judge who agreed that the man suffered permanent injuries because of a 1994 incident at Union Carbide's Taft/Star Manufacturing Complex.

Donald J. Oubre, 50, of Prairieville, filed suit in 1996 alleging that he was injured in an incident that exposed him to a highly irritating chemical — amine, a derivative of ammonia — when he was working as a contract draftsman at the Taft plant. Oubre's employer was Jacobs Engineering Inc.

In his ruling filed Feb. 19, state District Judge Ralph Turrou of the 23rd Judicial District agreed that Union Carbide failed to protect Oubre by not warning him about risks and not providing protective equipment.

A Union Carbide spokesman said Monday that the company plans to appeal, and denies that Oubre was injured in an accident at its Taft plant.

Spokesman Stan Dufrene said the plant is dedicated to operating safely and has a proven safety record.

"Union Carbide has also continuously upgraded the tools and methodology to identify and mitigate risks as part of its overall risk management program," he said.

Oubre's suit said that on July 28, 1994, he was exposed to an irritating chemical in the plant's ethylene-amine unit, which is used in the manufacture of plastics. Oubre said the irritant burned his eyes and made him

## Suit: La. man awarded millions

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cough, and that later he became nauseated.

A Union Carbide technician allegedly reassured Oubre that he had the "amines crud" but would soon recover, his suit said.

But Oubre and medical experts testified that he never did fully recover. Months after the incident, Oubre had two operations on his sinuses, and produced experts who said he would suffer memory loss and eye and lung damage.

Leonard Cardenas III, Oubre's Baton Rouge attorney, said Oubre was not given a personal monitor that would have recorded if he were exposed to a chemical leak.

"They made no effort to compensate a man they hurt when clearly their own investigation reported the cause was their equipment," Cardenas said.

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