Ceremonies dedicate new Hercules plant

(Reprinted from the April 5, 1967, "Lake Charles American Press")

Dedication of the new Hercules Powder company plant here “to meet the needs of the future” was held today with company and state officials participating in the ceremonies.

Taking part were Gov. Jimmie H. Davis, Albert E. Foster, Hercules president; Werner C. Brown, general manager of Hercules’ cellulose products department, who was called the “father of the plant”; David Bruce, director of operations of the cellulose products department; Earp Jennings, plant manager; and Ashworth Bursell, director of public relations.

After his address Governor Davis cut a ribbon made of “profax.”

Governor Davis termed the plant a “tangible” capsuled monument to the progress of Louisiana.”

About 100 trade people, editors of trade publications and other guests were to see the dedication on a closed circuit television broadcast to New York today. The program will be telecast over two local television stations tonight.

The ceremonies were held in front of a large warehouse at the plant and under a cloudy sky. A remote television crew from Baton Rouge “taped” the program for immediate rebroadcast to New York. The ceremony will be shown at the home office of Hercules in Wilmington, Del. tomorrow night.

The plant is the 17th major industrial plant in the petrochemical and oil refining complex at Lake Charles.

A tour of the plant, luncheon and the showing of a film followed the dedication.

Brown officially turned the plant over to Jennings during the ceremony.

Foster dedicated the plant to meet the needs of the future. He said that the plant was a symbol of faith in the products to be made.

Governor Davis told the more than 300 persons attending the dedication that “the attitude of Louisiana and its political leaders toward industry played a great part in the decision of Hercules Powder to locate and then to expand here in Lake Charles.”

The new plant has a capacity for production of 60 million pounds of polyethylene a year and augments Hercules’ first polyethylene plant which has been operating at Parlin, New Jersey, since 1957.

Work has already started on an additional unit at the plant when completed in 1962. The 120 million pound capacity of the units here plus 80 million pounds a year at Parlin, will enable Hercules to produce 200 million pounds annually of high-density polyethylene and crystalline polypropylene. Both of these new materials have found wide uses in the plastics industry and show great promise in film and fiber.

An ultra-modern plant, completely automated, the Hercules polyolefins facility gets its propylene raw material from Petroleum Chemicals, Inc. several hundred yards away.

Production at the Lake Charles unit will initially be confined to “profax” polypropylene. This material, developed by Hercules at its research center in Delaware was first commercially produced at Parlin in 1957.