A spectacular display of fire and sparks (top) leap up from a cast at the Moresi Foundry in Jeanerette, as Rimzer J. Bouie (right) and Irvin Theodile (left) pour molten iron to form an iron sugar kettle. Above, Theodile takes a break between pourings. The foundry was built in 1890 by Antoine Moresi, a native of Switzerland.

Foundry remains key cog in community

By Bernard Chaillot
Vermilion Bureau Editor

JEANERETTE — A pair of Inca doves settled in a wild cherry tree near Moresi Foundry as the first in a series of reproduction sugar kettles rolled off the production line.

Foundry sales manager Jim Farmer took the birds as a good omen. He pointed out the flashes of red that appeared under the doves wings whenever they took flight, seemingly as proud of them as he was of the foundry's new business venture.

After all, both the birds and the kettles are rare and beautiful pieces of work.

Moresi president Pierre Larroque, who was born and raised in Jeanerette, noted that for more than a century, the foundry has been an integral part of the community.

Larroque and his partners acquired the brick landmark on Main Street in 1983, leasing it for several years before buying it, he said.

“My father, Adolph, was a blacksmith, and his father, Vincent, before him,” Larroque said. “We used to come to the foundry to buy sacks of blacksmith coal.”

Moresi now has about 160 employees and gross annual sales of approximately $22 million, Larroque said.

The foundry was built in 1890 by Antoine Moresi, a native of Switzerland, according to a written history. When the prominent businessman died in 1904, the

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March 17, 1996
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