Most industry sectors held their own in 1993, while energy companies moved into the black after several slow years.
FLYING HIGH

Cardinal Services
Ranked #31

BY RICHARD BAUDOUIN

Cardinal Services Inc.
Ranking: 31
Net sales: $22 million
Number of Employees: 300
Type of Business: Oilfield Services

Cardinal Westline's push for diversification eventually conflicted its name. So in late 1992, the company changed itself to Cardinal Services Inc. to account for its entry into several new energy support businesses. The change allowed Cardinal to tap into skills that worked in a particular division that can work in other areas," says company president John Peroyez. "We wanted to be more valuable to our clients."

Peroyez, a former broadcaster from Baton Rouge, was recruited to Cardinal Services last year to oversee the expansion into new areas. The company is based in New Iberia and has offices in Houston, New Orleans, Belle Chasse and Houma, Louisiana.

A major component of Cardinal's business is still its wireline equipment, which allows well operators to perform surveys and subsurface studies at a cost-effective rate. But last year, several new divisions were added to the company, and a number of other divisions were expanded, as well:

- Data Acquisition and Interpretation. The energy industry is undergoing a technological revolution, and Cardinal is participating in the upheaval. Last year, the company began providing data acquisition and interpretation services for companies in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Louisiana.

- Data Interpretation. The company acquired special equipment and trained personnel to provide information from producing wells. "We're sending electronic tools down the hole to gather and record data on the well," says Peroyez. Then, Cardinal staffers interpret the data and provide the producer with information on pressure, temperature and other vital indicators.

- "We help the operators enhance production and extract additional funds from data we gather," says Peroyez.

- Rigging and Abandoning. As Louisiana and Texas oil fields mature, there is increased demand for environmentally safe closures of existing wells. Cardinal began offering the service in 1905 and now has 30 people working in the division. "There are few companies in Louisiana that offer such services. Cardinal has become a leader in this," Peroyez says.

- Sandhills Services. Strict environmental regulations and a concern for safety have virtually eliminated the use of dynamite as a means of removing drilling equipment which is no longer needed. In its place, companies like Cardinal are employing predrilled holes to assist in the disposal of subsurface tubing and casing.

- A mixture of acid and water is forced at high pressures through a special tool developed by Cardinal. "It's just like a hot knife would cut through butter," he says.

- This service has been of particular use to companies that own production platforms being removed from the Gulf or inland waters.

- Marine Activites. Cardinal had already moved into the liftboat business in prior years and added five additional vessels in 1993. "We're probably the largest liftboat company along the Gulf Coast," says Peroyez. These utility boats are used to perform a variety of supply, construction and maintenance functions in and around such vessels platforms or rig.

Cardinal has also opened a shipyard at the Port of Baton Rouge to service and maintain its boats. "We have better control over the projects, better control over the time schedules, and we're able to control expenses," he says.

Like most energy service companies, the year just completed was a healthy one for Cardinal. Revenues are up 29 percent, reflecting a pickup of drilling and production off the Gulf Coast, where the company operates.

"We were optimistic. We saw a lot of positive momentum," says Peroyez. "There was a lot more activity last year."

James H. Holland (left), vice president-marine division, and Cardinal Services president John Peroyez on a liftboat at the Port of Baton Rouge.