

Coolidge Rhodes retires after 58 years of service

Tuesday, March 22, 2016 – It was 1958 and Dwight Eisenhower was the president of the United States. Elvis Presley was inducted into the Army. Congress confirmed Alaska for statehood. And Coolidge Rhodes went to work at Savannah Electric's Port Wentworth electric generating plant.

Little did Rhodes realize the lifetime commitment he was making, nor the influence he would have at the plant over the next 58 years. It only took Rhodes a day to realize that he liked the work and the company. And continue working he did, as Port Wentworth was renamed Plant Kraft in 1991 and Savannah Electric merged with Georgia Power in 2006.

Rhodes retired from Plant Kraft, on Feb. 1, just days before his 58th service anniversary with the company.

"He was a fixture at the company," said William Mock, coastal plant manager for Georgia Power. "He was always there with his winsome smile and his constant willingness to help others."

Rhodes official job title was mechanical tractor operator but he was much more than that. He was a friend and a mentor to everyone, especially new employees, helping them to learn their job and the work ethic at the plant. But his legacy will be his constant focus on the importance of working safely.

Safety was Rhode's passion, safety for himself and his fellow workers. It was something he focused on from the beginning.

"Coolidge was doing job safety briefings before there even were job safety briefings," said Dennis Heinen, fuels team leader at Plant Kraft. Rhodes called safety the most important part of any job, adding his appreciation for the company's increased focus on safety over the years.



Though now officially retired from the company, Rhodes' legacy will remain for many years through the employees he touched at Georgia Power and Savannah Electric.

"I've met some of the best people here," Rhodes said at his retirement reception. "I've especially enjoyed training the young guys and I have tried to teach them and help them to do their best."

When asked what he was going to do in retirement, Rhodes said he did not know for sure, but he did know he was not going to just sit down. "I'm going to keep moving and keep working and plan to start volunteering in my community."