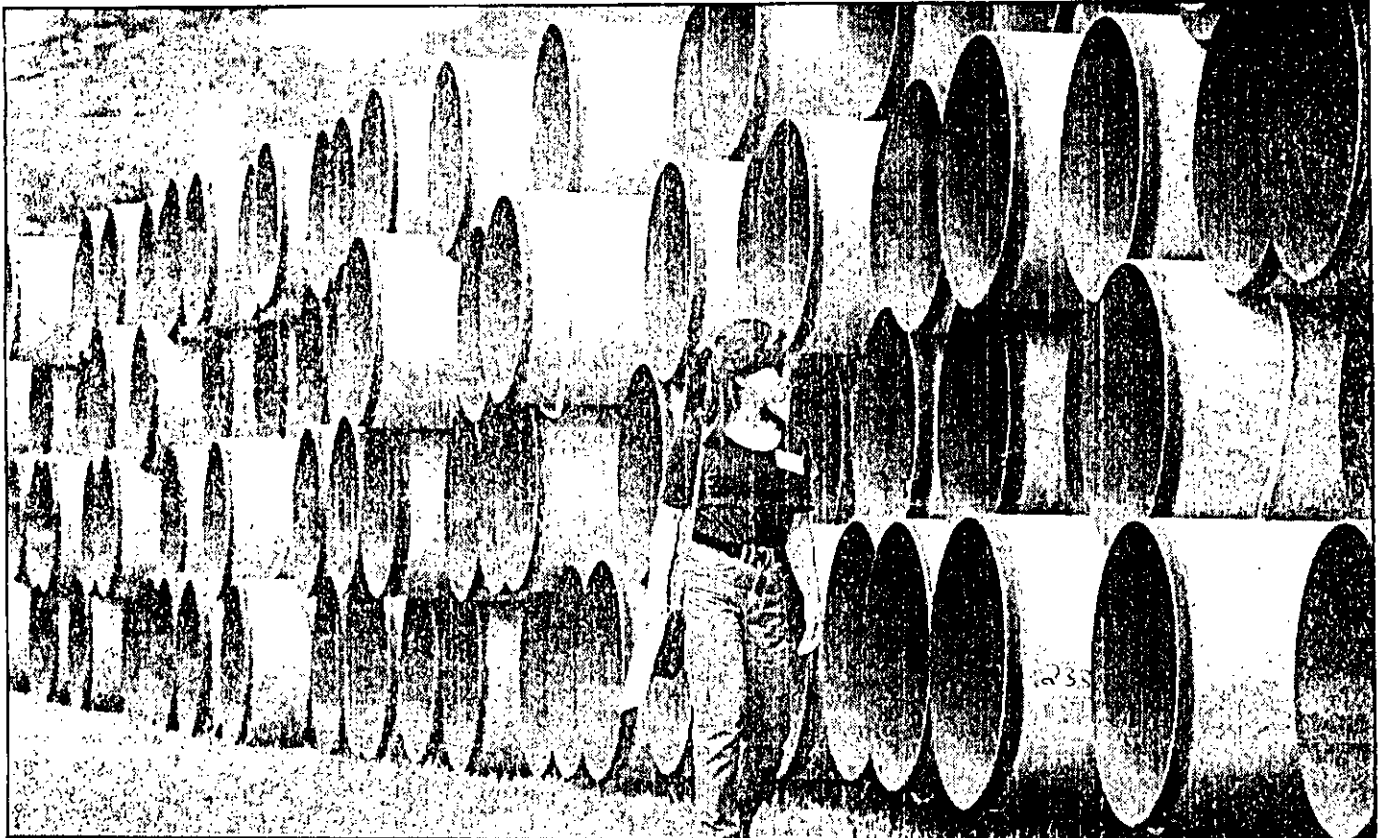


815 miles of pipe



ED SACKETT/SENTINEL

Lilly Teng of Florida Gas Transmission Co. looks over some of the pipe in Kissimmee.

Future of natural gas brightens with mammoth project under way

By Jerry Jackson

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

The largest natural gas pipeline expansion in Florida history was launched Thursday with a ceremony in Kissimmee at a pipeline storage yard.

Florida Gas Transmission Co. executives joined about 125 other businesspeople and a top federal energy offi-

cial to commemorate the start of the \$900 million project.

The expanded line will help the state meet its growing needs for natural gas as an alternative to oil, coal and other fuels.

The additional gas will fuel everything from power plants to home heaters and help the state reduce its reliance on foreign oil, officials said.

"Increased use of natural gas is good policy," said Elizabeth Moler, chairwoman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington.



Moler

The line will stretch 815 miles from gas fields in Louisiana to Central Florida. It will significantly expand the amount of cleaner burning natural gas for more than two dozen major customers in Orlando, Tampa and other communities.

"It will be on time and in service by Dec. 31, 1994," vowed Tom White, chief executive officer of Enron Operations Corp. Enron, also based in Houston, is one of the owners of Florida Gas and the pipeline.

Natural gas is abundant domestically, reducing the need for imports,

Natural gas pipeline expansion

Owner: Florida Gas Transmission Co. of Houston

Cost: \$900 million

Length: 815 miles from Louisiana to Central Florida

Purpose: To expand gas availability for everything from power plants to home heaters.

Significance: Largest such pipeline project in Florida history.

Source: Florida Gas Transmission Co.

inch diameter pipes — began in February. Laying of the pipe, including a more than 50-mile leg through portions of Orange, Osceola and Brevard counties, will begin in a few weeks, officials said.

"This is the biggest [pipeline project] in Florida history," said Bill Allison, president of Florida Gas.

Florida Gas operates the only natural gas pipeline serving the peninsula of Florida, a line that was installed over a period of years beginning in 1958. Other pipelines serve the Panhandle, and several others are proposed and under review.

Once complete, the expanded lines and bigger compressors will handle up to 1.4 billion cubic feet of gas a day, up from 925 million.

The additional Florida Gas capacity will serve a wide range of customers such as Citrus World Inc., a juice processing plant in Polk County, and the Lake Apopka Natural