

**ANALYSIS NEXT FOR BLOWOUT DEVICE:** The 300-ton device that failed to stop the massive Gulf of Mexico oil spill after a rig exploded arrived at a NASA facility in Louisiana for analysis. Lt. Suzanne Kerver said the barge carrying the blowout preventer reached the New Orleans facility Saturday. Government investigators plan to analyze it to determine why it failed.

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## Expanding enterprise

### Parsons Office Systems adds to staff as service coverage grows

By Bill Teeter

Tribune-Herald staff writer

Parsons Office Systems isn't abandoning its roots as it continues into a high-tech future.

These days, even as Parsons introduces updated versions of its own business computer software, the company has a technician on staff who can fix a typewriter, said Ray Parsons, president and grandson of company founder Harold Parsons.

The software — IMS, or Imaging Made Simple — and mailing equipment are Parsons' most active enterprises right now, Ray Parsons said.



The company is adding to its staff because of the mailing equipment sideline, he said.

Parsons is tripling the size of the Central Texas area where it serves as dealer for F.P. Mailing Solutions equipment, he said.

The sales area will extend from Hillsboro to San Marcos and from Bryan-College Station to Brownwood.

Parsons will be hiring a full-time sales person and at least 15 part-time sales representatives who will roam the region to drum up business, he said.

Harold Parsons started the company in 1944 at his home on Gorman Avenue in Waco two years after arriving in the city.

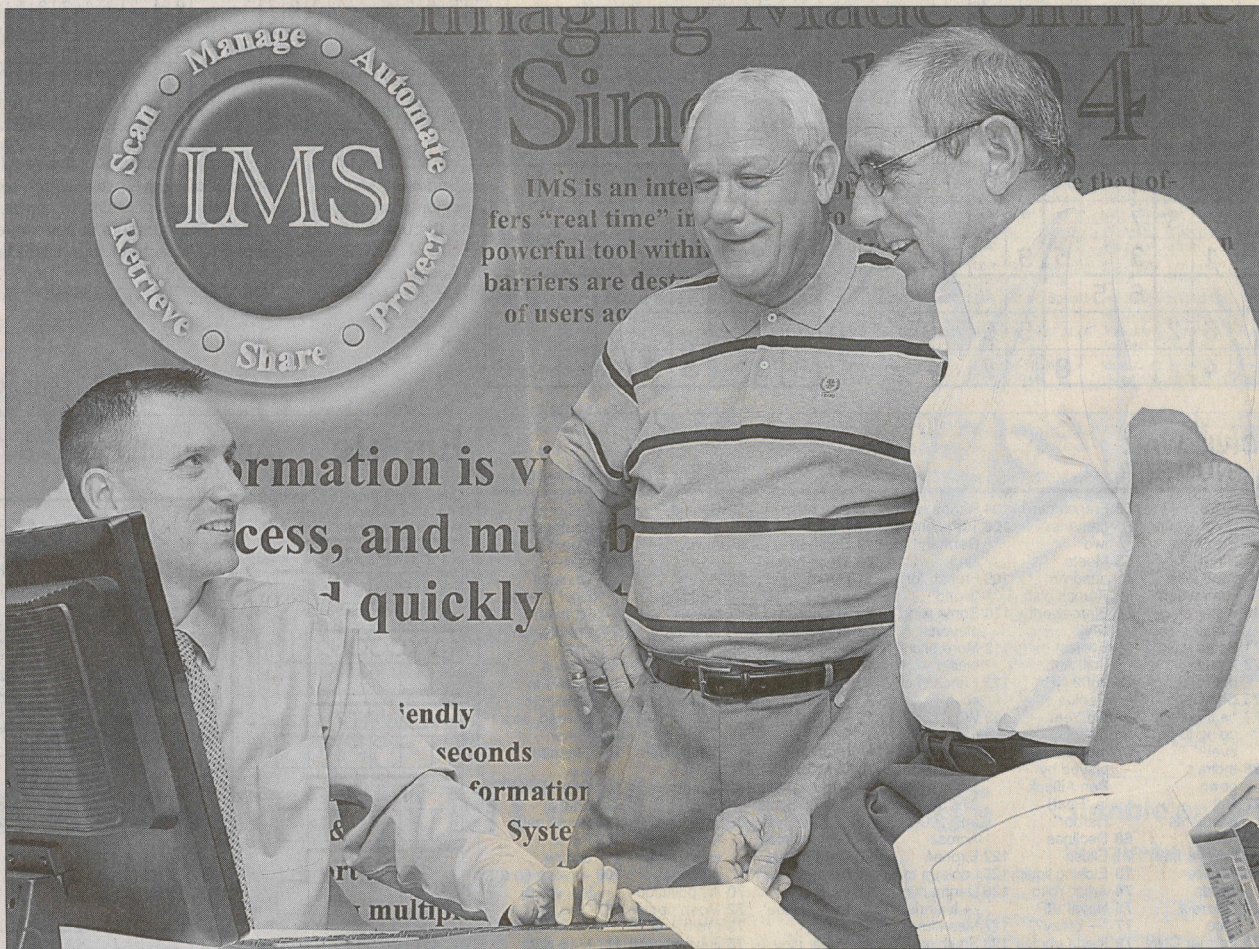
"He'd come from Fort Worth looking for employment," said grandson Ray Parsons, 56. "He worked for a typewriter company for a couple of years and then decided to go out on his own."

The company stayed in a building at the family homestead until 1976, when it moved to 212 Lake Air Drive.

The business was passed from Harold Parsons to his son, Don, and then to Ray. It changed its product line as office equipment evolved.

Copiers, mailing equipment, shredders and scanners have all become part of Parsons' business line.

Ray Parsons went to work for the family business in 1976 and has watched the advances made in office equipment. Electric typewriters gave way to word-processing units



Staff photo — Jerry Larson

Parsons Office Systems, which started in Waco by Harold Parsons in 1944, has kept up with changes in office equipment during the years but it maintains a staff of veteran employees. Included are (from left) Chad Cohrs, director of channel sales; Bob Whatley, company vice president; and Ray Parsons, owner.

with screens and eventually to personal computers.

Mailing equipment for offices, postage meters and mail-folding gear remain major parts of the Parsons business.

Fifteen years ago, Parsons started working with software. Its biggest growth item now is a program developed by Imminent Technologies, a division of Parsons Office Systems.

The program scans and stores documents, and puts different business databases into one spot for efficient access by workers.

The IMS software is used by out-

fits ranging from one-person small businesses to military installations, including Fort Hood, said Chad Cohrs, director of channel sales for Parsons.

It is available in a personal home edition, a small office and departmental edition called e-paper route, and a version for big operations called IMS Enterprise.

IMS is useful to businesses because it helps organize a variety of functions, he said.

"We can be the single location for all the databases if they need us," Cohrs said.

Although the office equipment business changes, the staff at Parsons has remained much the same, with some senior people having tenures exceeding three decades.

The new hires planned will be the first personnel changes in a long time.

Ray Parsons has 33 years of company service, while vice president Bob Whatley has been there 33 years.

The "newest" employee has been there six years, Whatley said. Treating workers with respect is an important part of retention, he said.

"We pay them good scale. They work hard," Whatley said.

The company uses a similar approach — building trust and respect — to enhance their customer base.

Loyal customers are important because competition in the office equipment business in Central Texas is stiff.

"We don't go head to head with them," he said "We pretty much have our customers and continue to grow on our customers. And the customer's always right."

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