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93-63

February 24, 1993

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GILBERT TO RETIRE

CHARLESTON, IL--John Gilbert of Charleston had no idea 33 years ago when he came to work for Eastern Illinois University as a mail carrier that he would eventually be responsible for the university's transportation and general stores service.

Gilbert, service enterprises manager, will retire from Eastern at the end of this month. "It has been 33 good years," said Gilbert, who has worked under five of the university's seven presidents.

He has seen the campus grow and change and recalls the time when Eastern's first mailroom was located in the Quonset Building, a large war surplus quonset hut directly south of what is now the Student Services Building. Mail was delivered to the Business Office where it was collected by department heads. Now it is distributed to every office on campus.

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Gilbert no longer handles campus mail, but rather oversees several major aspects of the university's central stores operation, including disbursing supplies, scheduling and maintaining 152 motor pool and fleet vehicles, making keys for all campus buildings and managing central receiving. He supervises eight full-time and four part-time employees.

An increase in students and staff over the past three decades has resulted in a corresponding increase in the university's inventory of supplies and expansion of the motor pool from six to 32 vehicles, Gilbert said.

"Keeping track of the thousands of keys for campus buildings is time consuming; however, information about key combinations that used to be kept in several book binders is now stored on computer, making it more accessible," he said.

"Coordinating the maintenance schedules for the university's motor pool and fleet vehicles is also challenging," said Gilbert.

He said his job also involves developing and maintaining effective relations between various service unit supervisors and the university community. "I enjoy helping others. Because I oversee a service-oriented department, it's even more important that my staff and I are responsive to individual's requests. I believe in team work and use humor to make work more enjoyable."

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GILBERT

Although Gilbert said he will miss the friends he has made at Eastern, he is looking forward to traveling with his wife, Lavona, who retired last year from Moore Business Forms. He plans to continue hunting and fishing and spending time with his daughters, Mary Gail Clayton of Charleston and Karen Sue Holton of Greenup, and grandchildren, Melissa, 7, Diana, 5, and Jonathan Dean, 3.

He also will remain active in the Charleston Moose, Elks and VFW clubs.