

General Binding's earnings rise 50%

General Binding Corp. said Wednesday that new products and further market penetration boosted fourth-quarter earnings from continuing operations 50 percent, to 3.8 million, or 36 cents a share, from \$2.5 million, or 23 cents a share, a year earlier.

Per-share earnings reflect a 3-for-2 stock split last June.

Sales rose 17 percent, to \$65.7 million from \$56.3 million.

For the full year, the Northbrook-based manufacturer's net earnings increased 55 percent, to 14.9 million, or \$1.39 a share, from \$9.6 million, or 89 cents a share, in 1987. Sales rose 18 percent, to \$250.6 million from \$212 million.

General Binding's board of directors also voted Wednesday to increase the quarterly dividend 25 percent, to 10 cents a share. The higher dividend will be paid March 2 to shareholders of record March 6.

Rudy Grua, General Binding's president and chief executive officer, said the dividend increase demonstrates the board's confidence in General Binding's ability to continue its performance and is consistent with recent increases in earnings.

General Binding had two quarterly dividend increases last year.

A 12.5 percent increase was announced Feb. 23 and a 33 percent increase Aug. 5. The company manufactures and markets business machines and related supplies.

BALLY MANUFACTURING CORP. said its fourth-quarter net earnings rose 50 percent, to \$7.1 million from \$4.7 million, or 36 cents a share, from 23 cents a share, a year earlier.

Earnings

Bally said net earnings declined 33 percent, to \$38 million, or \$1.12 a share, from \$57.1 million, or \$1.62 a share, in 1987. Revenues rose to \$1.94 billion from \$1.73 billion.

PULITZER PUBLISHING CO. said fourth-quarter net earnings rose 34 percent, to \$7.65 million, or 73 cents a share, from \$5.70 million, or 55 cents a share, a year earlier. The St. Louis-based publishing firm said revenue rose to \$106 million from \$99.3 million.

For the full year, net earnings were up 28 percent, to \$19.6 million, or \$1.88 a share, from \$15.3 million, or \$1.46 a share, in 1987. Revenues rose to \$391 million from \$367 million.

UNION CARBIDE CORP. said it was restating 1988 earnings downward to reflect the \$470 million settlement to victims of the Bhopal poisoning tragedy in India. Danbury, Conn.-based Union Carbide reported restated fourth-quarter net profits of \$161 million, or \$1.17 a share, down from a previously reported \$219 million, or \$1.59 a share.

For all of 1988, Carbide reported restated profits of \$662 million, or \$4.88 a share, down from the previously reported \$720 million, or \$5.31 a share.



AP Laserphoto

Open wide

Dr. Francois Duret, a French dentist, uses a probe to scan a model's teeth during a demonstration Tuesday of the computer-aided design and manufacturing system of dental restoration at the 124th Midwinter Meeting here of the Chicago Dental Society.

Airfone's resigns, sues

By Christine Winter

John Goeken, founder of Airfone Inc., which was acquired by GTE Corp. in 1986 and is now known as GTE Airfone, resigned as chairman and chief executive of the Oak Brook-based company Tuesday.

Airfone is the company that put passenger telephones into commercial airliners in late 1984.

As a result, a battle could be brewing over the small segment of the radio frequency spectrum allocated to air-to-ground telephone service.

After his departure, Goeken filed a lawsuit charging a breach of his employment contract and seeking to nullify provisions that forbid him from competing with GTE Airfone after separation from the company.

Goeken maintains that since GTE breached its contract by stripping him of his authority in a reorganization of the subsidiary, he should be given the right to compete, according to his daughter, Sandra Goeken.

His plans, according to his daughter, a vice president at GTE Airfone who has also left the company, are to "start all over again."

Goeken, who founded MCI Communications and later sold the company, started Airfone in 1975.

"Considering his background, I wouldn't take his threat to start