

- b) community. Utility promises price advantages for consumers, including 10% rate reduction. "The opposition doubts this will last. To be honest, this business is so uncertain that it's difficult to say." As far as philanthropy & comty svc, a clause in Edison's merger proposal promises increased charitable giving in SD;
- c) environment. "By becoming part of Edison, we won't have to build any new power plants."

Proposal is now under review by regulatory agencies. Process will probably take another 2 years. Actual hearings have not yet started. "We're in the discovery process," Smith reports. "That means other parties can demand info & we have to supply it." City has approved expenditure of \$2-1/2 million for legal fees to fight merger & enlisted many citizens for support. For its part, SDG&E has initiated numerous public programs, notably a \$1-1/2 million ad campaign. This caused an uproar, opposition calling for investigation into fraudulent ads. Speakers bureau made up of favorable employees is active.

—A REMINDER ABOUT PRR EDITORIAL POLICY—

It still surprises us that, when we run stories about issues, we hear from readers that we're taking sides. This invariably happens when we write gender-related articles. And our recent interview with companies who refuse to hire smokers evoked a complaint from smokers' rights advocates. Now, as a result of our interview with Louisiana rep David Duke, some readers asked why we aired a controversial platform on Affirmative Action & racism.

We do not take sides, nor try to get you to take sides. Our role is to present readers with the arguments & strategies being used in the Court of Public Opinion -- so they can apply it in their practice. We make no special attempt at balance; our job is to alert you to those activities or appeals that may be news to you. Often what one group is doing is already well-known or may be the usual approach. [The only time we take stands is on issues impacting the profession -- for which we are an advocate.]

We ran the stories enunciated above believing practitioners need to be prepared should the subjects hit them. We do get concerned when practitioners get so mired in employer's positions that they lose perspective -- & perhaps effectiveness? "The best advocates have big ears & open minds." (But we want to hear from you under any circumstance...even to chide us for "taking sides.")

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Lawrence Foster (Johnson & Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ), PRSA's Gold Anvil Award for significant contributions to the profession; James Grunig, (U of Maryland) Outstanding Educator Award for the advancement of pr education; Betsy Plank, (Illinois Bell, Chi) Paul M. Lund Award for contributions to the

common good through public service

DIED. Ian Sturrock, at 45, president of National Society of Fundraising Execs, active in CASE, vp-devel & univ rels, Bradley U (Peoria).

"PR OPPORTUNITIES OF THE FUTURE WILL INVOLVE ABILITY TO HELP MANAGEMENT 1) DETECT TRENDS, 2) READ WHAT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO THE PUBLIC, 3) DEAL WITH ISSUES AHEAD OF TIME"

So predicts Ralph Frede as he retires as vp-pa, Baylor College of Medicine (Houston). His remarks to prr preview an address to a colloquium of pr & medical notables gathering in his honor at week's end. In a highly honored career (Gold Anvil 1972, Outstanding TPRSA Practitioner 1988) Frede became known as a master of fundraising pr, peerless trainer of PRSA accreditation candidates & driving force in Baylor's rise to top medical school rank.

But he cautions practitioners to remember, when working on issue anticipation: "There are only 4-5 issues in the public milieu at a time." Your planning must defer to this fact.

His list of especially pertinent trends & conditions now:

1. Society's rapidly growing concern about healthy, life-saving environment. "We must plan the recycling of products in the design stage."
2. Globalization. "We can no longer ignore the thinking & feeling of people in other lands. There's no choice but to seek to be as one." George Washington's isolationist policy is no longer practical.
3. Technology. "Because they are instantaneous, worldwide, & individualized -- all at once -- new comm techniques will alter our strategies & tactics."
4. "We're a society of expectations. Everyone expects the government or someone else to take care of them. For instance, relate this to the environmental issue."
5. Ethics is becoming an issue in the military, gov't, business -- even clergy.

One of pr's key future functions: helping gov't agencies deal with transitions -- economic, political, social. Change must be accommodated; the political & educational arenas are good places to start. "We should devote more of our resources to communicating with the public working with our school systems, & thus save money down the road."

PR: Conciliator Or Advocate? Practitioners should seek compromises which are acceptable & beneficial to all involved. Unlike law, pr must often advocate. "We must retain our integrity, a sense of what's good for the public. In counseling the tobacco industry, for example, there is no place for compromise."

Frede believes practitioners must build new skills using the professional development process -- cognizant of where the field has been & is heading:

Past ¶ Press Agents, "whose role was to create the news, take the mundane & make it alive, dynamic. When done with honesty & integrity, it's an art worthy of respect."

Present ¶ Communicators. "We realized the importance of honest and accurate communication. Sending out the message was no longer the only function, but also measuring impact, changing attitudes, creating mutually acceptable goals, obtaining feedback."

¶ Counselors. "It became apparent that communicating was not enough. It was important to be concerned with the org'n's performance -- policies, procedures, the way they do business. We want them to be, not seem to be. So we must counsel with management to put the house in order. Performance must be part of the pr process."

¶ Interpreters of public opinion. "Communication became instantaneous. We had to learn to respond more quickly to those troubles which could fester & infect public relationships. Management began looking for people who would help them address & interpret public response. This meant more interaction with government."

Future ¶ Projectors of issues & trends management must heed. The most valuable practitioners will be those who can help not only with the current crisis, but also anticipate the demands of the future. "We don't have crystal balls, but if you monitor carefully, you can get an inkling of what will be important. Using various techniques, you see different scenarios."

Practitioners must expand, not insulate concerns. If pr is about public relationships, then practitioners must be receptive to everything. Example: PR for biomedical research should not be concerned only with training prof'ls to care for illness & find cures. Rather, it should help people maintain their health thru knowledge & understanding. "If the railroad industry had said, 'We're in the transportation business,' instead of 'We're in the railroad business,' it would be better off today. Many oil companies have learned that lesson & claim to be in the 'energy business.'"

¶ **Special Message To Nonprofit Practitioners:** "If you want to do pr, you must learn fundraising. You don't enter a corporation and say, 'I don't give a damn about the bottom line.'" Similarly, you don't go into a nonprofit org'n & eschew the vital function of fundraising.

IS PUBLIC INFORMATION A RIGHT? SAN DIEGO UTILITY WAR SHOWS WHAT 90s MAY BRING: A CITY UPSET OVER PROPOSED UTILITY MERGER, POWER COMPANIES DEFENDING MOVE, COALITIONS FORMING IN OPPOSITION

Since Southern Cal Edison revealed plans to take over San Diego Gas & Electric, 70 groups have formed to derail the merger. Several roadblock legislative bills have been proposed -- one calling for each utility to put up \$250,000 toward a public info campaign about consequences of merger. It passed, but Gov. Deukmejian vetoed it. Assemblywoman Lucy Killea said bill would add "perspective" to counter "highly financed public relations campaign" by utilities.

Background Merger began as hostile takeover, but with national trend toward utility combination, SDG&E management now favors. Many employees do not. San Diego Union biz ed Don Bauder says SDG&E capitulated based on bad legal advice.

Opposition ...including city of SD, is concerned by: a) loss of corporate presence -- hq would be in Rosemead;

b) downsizing & transfers would sacrifice about 1000 jobs;

c) abatement of charitable support from the corp to the community. People doubt branch office will serve community;

d) pollution -- some are afraid SD will share LA's smog problem;

e) magnitude can be a scary thing -- utility would be largest in US -- harking back to 30s when utility trusts had to be broken up.

Utilities' View a) economy. "By combining we'll eliminate duplicative functions," SDG&E's Dave Smith told prr. "There's no reason to have 2 pr depts, 2 legal depts, 2 regulatory depts, etc." Besides, Edison has too much energy because:

1) over last 5 years, customers began producing their own;

2) LA population growth has slowed. Meanwhile, San Diego is a "destination city", 4th largest growing in US;

Bauder cites Edison's gaffes: CEO Howard Allen told a Wall Street audience that merger would a) help LA's pollution -- whenever smog was bad, just operate the SD plant; b) benefit shareholders, who would partake of the savings -- this was a real boo boo because Calif rate payers are the only ones who are supposed to profit from savings from mergers. Edison denied statement, but internal documents revealed this was the rhetoric up until the day of the Wall Street speech. Edison also polled the public for its view, but never published results. And Bauder told prr that Ed's pr dir, after reading Bauder's column, called him up & blasted him. "I had never even met the man. That's no way for a pr person to behave, no way to handle the press."