PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF DALLAS
POWER & LIGHT COMPANY

THESIS

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By

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This study presents detailed analyses of public relations practices of the Communications Services Department, Dallas (Texas) Power & Light Company. Information sources included interviews with company personnel, company publications, and other publications. Four chapters deal with unique problems with which the electric utility industry in the United States is confronted; history and development of the electric power industry in Dallas; history and development of Dallas Power & Light Company, and organizations, functions, and operations of Communications Services Department of Dallas Power & Light Company.

The study finds much strength in the department, but recommends several minor writing and clerical changes in the department's practices. It recommends further scholarly examination of public relations activities in other electric utilities.
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Electricity plays a vital role in maintaining an industrialized society in the United States. Increases in technology have led to a complex, automated, and interdependent economic structure supporting a high gross national product; and this structure is intricately linked to electrical energy. In industry, a myriad of once-difficult chores are done so swiftly and competently, thanks to a continuous input of electrical power to operate office machines, computers, industrial machinery, and assembly lines, that electricity has become not only just desirable, but also indispensable.

A steady and dependable flow of electricity is necessary for the high standard of living enjoyed in American homes as well as for industry. Efficient operation of homes calls for electricity because of the variety of functions that electricity performs. The clothes are washed and dried, meals are cooked, the routine of the day is timed and measured by electricity, and the entertainment and informational needs of the residents are supplied by electric radios and television sets.
In commenting upon the indispensable role of electricity, Farris noted dependence on electrical service is so great that only when the flow is curtailed or interrupted is the service noticed:

This dependence is forcefully brought to our attention when the services are interrupted. Chaos prevailed without electricity in the famous "Northeast Blackout" a few years ago. Elevators stopped, vehicular traffic became hopelessly snarled without traffic lights, airports could not operate without landing lights, furnaces were cold, dinners remained uncooked, and radio and television stations were dead. The indispensability of electric power in our society was thus dramatically demonstrated to a large segment of the American public.¹

Electricity is generated and distributed by either privately owned or municipally owned power plants. No matter how it is owned, a power plant is considered one of a special group of industries called public utilities. Praegar said that a public utility is an industry that is "affected with a public interest, and its business is regulated so that it must serve all the public without discrimination as to rates, service, and employment practices."²

Farris saw utilities as sort of "half-way house" in terms of social function, because they combine characteristics of the completely governmentally controlled industry with those of free enterprise:

¹Martin T. Farris and Roy J. Sampson, Public Utilities: Regulation, Management, and Ownership, (Boston, 1973), pp. 4-5.

Prices are strictly controlled, although privately owned organizations follow the profit motive in providing their services. The rules under which services are provided are also strictly regulated. Generally, society recognizes that a monopolistic organization of the market serves it best--but it controls the monopoly. Entry is restricted in order to preserve the beneficial results of a monopoly, with the public regulation limiting the exercise of monopoly power. Examples of businesses in this category are electric power, natural gas, communications and transit firms.  

Because of their secure position in society, and because of the essential quality of their services, the public utilities in the past have operated from a calm, conservative base. They have viewed public relations, or community relations, in a paternalistic manner, and they have enjoyed a "calm relationship with customers, a stable one with stockholders, and a generally reasonable relationship with the various bodies and agencies of government that contribute to regulation."  

Wheeler said the past was a golden age of mutual trust for electric companies and their publics, that the practice of utility public relations was so relaxed in the past that its function was mainly to give out releases to news media on expansions and budgets, "along with the reminders that energy remained the biggest bargain in the family budget."  

He said,  

It was also an article of faith among utility executives that, come what might, the company would meet the energy requirements of its customers. And the  

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3 Farris and Sampson, p. 8.  
accomplishment of this objective in spite of tornados, hurricanes, ice storms, and other disasters... was presumed to earn the company the unlimited approbation of its grateful customers... It was indeed a Golden Age when service, reliability, and low rates were the foundation of most public relations efforts.6

This serene golden age has changed now, however, and it has changed drastically. Praeger said that lack of capacity to generate enough electricity to meet public demand is a major problem facing all electric utilities, and that because of inflation, the utilities have been forced to seek increases in rates.7 Wheeler termed the utility industry now a "nightmare of frustration."8 He said public utility public relations concepts had completely changed in a period of less than three years. He said,

Soaring costs, inadequate rates, fuel shortages, and regulatory and litigious delays in bringing new facilities into service have made it difficult to supply current electrical requirements, much less to plan adequately for tomorrow's electrical demands.9

With increased public demand for more electricity goes public alarm over rising electric bills. Fuel sources are being depleted, so that development of alternate sources is mandatory, yet environmental damage from these alternate sources must be avoided, too. The public demand is for new fuel sources quickly, yet without drastic increases in fuel bills or reduction in present standards of living. Farris and Sampson wrote of these problems:

8Wheeler, p. 26. 9Ibid., p. 27.
We must realize that the public has grown accustomed to, and expects, a large quantity and a wide variety of high-quality electric services at reasonable rates. Even small deteriorations in services or small rate increases normally bring large public outcries and complaint to regulatory authorities. ... Further, the consumption of electric services in this country has been doubling each decade for some time now, and even conservative estimates predict continued rapid growth in demand for electricity during the next generation. But all the current practical methods of producing electricity on a large scale have been attacked on ecological grounds.10

The seriousness of the problem in the viewpoint of experts other than those in the utility industry was emphasized in 1975 by Zarb, chief of the Federal Energy Administration. Zarb told a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors that his data show that the United States would run short of electricity within five years, and that the United States government would be forced to ration electricity to industry in order to supply power to residents and have some for emergency use. He blamed the anticipated shortage on slowdown of construction of power plants, difficulty of some utilities in borrowing enough capital. ... and the difficulties in obtaining suitable sites for new power plants.11

No economic relief for the future is predicted, according to a study for the Environmental Protection Agency entitled "Economic and Financial Impacts of Federal Air and Water

10Farris and Sampson, p. 321.
Pollution Controls on the Electric Utility Industry." The study was about anticipated costs of electricity by the year 1985. The study predicted that by 1985 the average residential electric bill would be $42.40, plus an increase of about $2.80 per month per household for the direct impact caused by the federal government's requirement for clean air equipment to be installed on lignite-fired power plants. An additional indirect budget impact of $5.80 was to be added to the estimated bill for increased prices per month of other goods and services which will be passed on to electric customers by other businesses.12

The gravity of the problems faced by electric utilities today seems to demand an expanding, long-range, and systematic effort by utility communications personnel to present the electric utility's viewpoint to all its publics. The public relations activities of these electric utilities, it is presupposed, will be under pressures as extreme as they have ever experienced to communicate the changing picture of electric energy to customers and government alike. However, Ward, communications services manager for Dallas Power & Light Company, commented that this is not the case, exactly. He said that events of the past five years have changed the utility public relations concept to such an extent that

bewilderment has now become common in the industry because "for the first time, we are finding it almost impossible to have stable long-range public relations goals. Now more and more the business is becoming crisis-oriented."13

Public relations activities in a utility beset in today's world by complex multiple problems become crucial. Vital questions need to be asked about the entire scope and function of public relations in a high-pressure situation.

There are many definitions of public relations duties. Starr described public relations as "the function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance."14 Nolte said public relations was "all the things done (or not done) that affect public opinion (whether favorably or unfavorably)."15 Cutlip and Center said "Public relations is the planned effort to influence opinion and action through socially responsible performance based on mutually satisfactory two-way communications."16


Statement of the Problem

This study examined the organization, function, and scope of public relations activities in the Communications Services Department of Dallas Power & Light Company (DP&L). DP&L was chosen because it was a public utility, it had a public relations department (called Communications Services Department), and it was in Dallas, so that it offered convenient access to its offices and personnel. In addition, no thesis had been written on DP&L Communications Services activities.

Questions Answered

1. Did DP&L have special public relations problems different from problems faced by other industries?
2. What specific activities were undertaken in an effort to solve these special problems?
3. What plans were made for long-range and for short-range public relations activities by Communications Services?
4. Did management at DP&L view the public relations activities as conducted by its Communications Services Department as an important outlet for building and for maintaining corporate good will?
5. How was the Communications Services Department at DP&L organized?
6. How were the duties of the personnel in Communications Services planned; and how were they implemented?
Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were (1) to examine the basic philosophy of management at DP&L, (2) to examine briefly the development of DP&L and of its Communications Services Department, (3) to examine the existing structure of Communications Services Department, (4) to examine the department's existing public relations practices, and (5) to evaluate these public relations practices through criteria established by public relations experts.

Recent and Related Studies

A search of Journalism Abstracts showed that, from 1963 to 1975, 3,452 doctoral dissertations and master's theses were written about journalism fields. Of those written about public relations, only a few dealt specifically with public utilities and their specialized problems. None was written about DP&L. 17

Moore wrote a dissertation in 1965 at the University of Illinois, "An Evaluation of the Art and Technique of Corporate Public Relations as Practiced by the Georgia Power Company." He concentrated on three steps in the communication process that he believed were basic to any successful corporate public relations program. These steps were the means a company employs (1) in getting information to help the company understand its own problems, (2) in determining the

methods of reaching the company's publics, and (3) in determining the effect of the company's public relations communications. Moore found that the third step, communications research into the effect of the company's public relations communication, was the weakest step.18

Gallagher wrote a master's thesis at North Texas State University in 1974, "An Evaluation of Public Relations as Practiced by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company." Gallagher made a detailed analysis of public relations as practiced by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company in the Dallas, Texas office. Her study covered the history and the development of the company as well as the company's public relations program. It analyzed the organization, functions, and operations of Southwestern Bell's public relations department. Her study recommended that the public relations department establish a committee for formulation of long-range goals, initiate a management orientation program, and advertise in area high school and college publications.19

Finkelstein wrote a master's thesis in 1970 at the University of Wisconsin, "Public Relations at Central Illinois


Public Service Company: a Case Study." Finkelstein examined the public relations activities of a medium-sized utility, the Central Illinois Public Service Company. The study discussed public relations activities at CIPS from 1955 to 1970, with an overview of the development of the power industry as a whole, along with the utility industry's use of public relations tools. The study traced the rise of CIPS' corporate image from a low position in 1955 to a high one in 1970. It concluded that the rise resulted from the effectiveness of the public relations department's activities.20

Brandt wrote a master's thesis in 1969 at the University of Wisconsin, "Corporate Response to Urban Crisis: Illinois Bell Telephone Company." Her study emphasized the importance to corporate public relations of "precise fact-finding, flexible planning, effective communication, and comprehensive evaluation." It dealt with the growing need for corporations to use their communications skills for the betterment of their own urban environments.21

Christopher wrote a master's thesis in 1964 at The American University, "An Evaluation of Chesapeake and Potomac


Telephone Company Publications as Part of an Employee Communications Program." She examined two publications of the company, and did content analysis on the two, a magazine and a monthly newspaper. Findings were that the two publications were conforming to the purposes for which they had been established, that of playing a part in the total program of informing company employees. The study found that the major weaknesses of both publications, but especially of the magazine, were remoteness, infrequency of contact, and lack of two-way communication with the reader.22

Hogan wrote a master's thesis, "Public Relations Aspects of Utility Rate Cases," in 1966 at The American University. The study dealt with a specialized function of utility public relations as Hogan examined the problems of communicating the viewpoint of a utility when the utility seeks rate changes. Hogan told of the historical background of utility public relations as they evolved in the industry's effort to build a more favorable public image. He discussed his own philosophy for achieving the utility's goals in the event of a rate case.23


Justification

Public utilities such as electric companies have an important effect on life in the United States, and because now the electric utilities are experiencing pressures unique in the history of their public relations programs, there is a need for more documentation of these programs. There is a scarcity of scholarly information about public utility public relations programs, so that such a study is needed.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, the following definitions have been formulated.

**Corporate Public Relations** - Corporate public relations is "the function responsible for corporate good will--protecting that which the company has, building additional stores of it for the future."  

**Public Relations** - Public Relations is "the function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance." 

**Publicity** - Publicity is "communications in action that normally obtains space or time without purchasing it."  

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26 Farris and Sampson, p. 240.
Company Publications - Company publications are those nonprofit periodicals published by a company to "interpret the company, its policies, and finances, as well as employee news."\(^{27}\)

Publics - Publics are "those groups with common interests affected by the acts and policies of an institution or whose acts and opinions affect the institution."\(^{28}\)

Communications Services - Communications Services referred to corporate public relations activities as practiced by the Communications Services Department of Dallas Power & Light Company.

Dallas Power & Light Company - Dallas Power & Light (DP&L) Company is a subsidiary of Texas Utility Company. The general offices are at 1506 Commerce Street, Dallas, Texas 75201.\(^{29}\)

Utility - A utility or a public utility is "an industry that is affected with a public interest, and its business is regulated so that it must serve all the public without discrimination as to rates, services, and employment practices."\(^{30}\)


\(^{28}\)Cutlip and Center, p. 144.


\(^{30}\)Praeger, p. 261.
Limitations

This study was limited to the activities of one utility, Dallas Power & Light Company. It was limited to consideration of only the public relations activities conducted by the Dallas Power & Light Communications Services Department.

Basic Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the following basic assumptions were made.

1. Public utilities are faced with specialized problems in communication that are not experienced by other businesses.

2. Dallas Power & Light Company is typical of an investor-owned public utility.

3. Additional information is needed on the public relations practices of public utilities.

Instruments and Procedures

Information for this thesis was taken from public relations and public utility periodicals and textbooks, from personal interviews with the public relations (Communications Services) personnel at DP&L about the department's organization and duties, from DP&L management executives about the company's philosophy and policies on public relations, and from brochures and pamphlets about the electric industry written and distributed by DP&L Communications Services Department, and by Texas Utilities Company, a holding company for DP&L, Texas Electric Service Company, and Texas Power & Light Company.
Procedure for Analysis of Data

After describing the organization, functions, and activities of the Communications Services Department of DP&L, these elements were evaluated by criteria formulated by public relations experts.

Farris and Sampson's criteria in their textbook, Public Utilities: Regulation, Management, and Ownership, were used to evaluate. In their chapter on Utility Public Relations, they listed six P's of public relations that serve as the foundation for a successful utility public relations program: philosophy, policy, performance, publics, planning and publicity.31

Praeger's criteria were used because he developed a check list for review of utility public relations. The check list gave areas such as employee relations, customer relations, stockholder relations, community relations, and dealer relations. He recommended that public relations staff members for utilities have specific experience in at least five fields: public relations advertising, social studies, employee relations, community relations, publicity, and public educations.32

31 Farris and Sampson, p. 241.
32 Praeger, pp. 259-289.
Organization of the Study

The study was organized into four major chapters. Chapter I introduced the study and explained its purpose, structure, and procedure. Chapter II described the development of DP&L. Chapter III focused on the organization of the Communications Services Department, and its personnel and their duties. Chapter IV summarized the study, drew conclusions, and cited recommendations.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Dallas Power & Light Company (DP&L) holds a franchise from the City of Dallas to serve the Greater Dallas area, including the cities of Dallas, Highland Park, University Park, and Cockrell Hill. "The company engages in generation, purchase, transmission, distribution, and sales of electricity wholly within the State of Texas." 1 It is an investor-owned public utility, and is one of the subsidiaries of Texas Utilities Company, along with its sister utilities, Texas Power & Light Company (TP&L) and Texas Electric Service Company (TESCO).

The general offices for DP&L are at 1506 Commerce Street, Dallas, Texas, 75201. The company employs about 2,300 people, and on April 9, 1976, had 2,908 preferred stockholders and four common stockholders. It serves an area with an estimated population of 956,000.2

The company was incorporated on September 22, 1917, under the Laws of the State of Texas. Dallas County residents,

2Ibid.
J. F. Strickland, W. B. Head, and C. E. Calder were given the right to construct an electric light, heat, and power plant. DP&L bought the properties of a predecessor, Dallas Electric Light and Power Company, on September 28, 1917, for 18,500 shares of capital stock and $4,000,000. DP&L began operations on October 1, 1917, with Strickland as its first president.³

The City of Dallas first received electric service in 1883. Between that year and 1917 when DP&L began its operations, several companies had supplied electricity to portions of the city, sometimes serving just a few blocks. DP&L does not have the books and records of all these companies, but got information about some of them from the office of the Texas Secretary of State, and from records of the County Clerk of Dallas County. In addition, fragmentary records of the companies were obtained from papers describing transfer of equipment, plant, and property from one company to another through the years.⁴

When electricity first came to the City of Dallas, "the service was rendered to a few sputtering arc lamps in stores, hotels, saloons, and in the streets from a small

³History and Development of Dallas Power & Light Company," unpublished material prepared by Dallas Power & Light Company staff (Dallas, 1940), p. 3. This reference may be found in the Texas Collection of the Dallas Public Library.

⁴Ibid., p. 5.
generating plant on Carondolet Street (now Ross Avenue), between Austin and Market Streets."\(^5\)

At that time, 1883, Dallas was in a period of rapid growth. In 1870, Dallas had been a town of about 3,000. When two railroads began serving the town (the Houston and Texas Central in 1872, and the Texas and Pacific in 1873), residents arrived with the railroads. The population of Dallas almost quadrupled in ten years, the years between 1880 and 1890. In 1880, the population was 10,358, and by 1890, it had grown to 38,067.\(^6\)

The first of at least eleven electric companies authorized to serve Dallas before 1917 was Dallas Electric Lighting Company, incorporated June 10, 1882. W. C. Connor, J. C. O'Connor, and Alex Sanger, all Dallas residents, were given a charter by the State of Texas to furnish Dallas with electric light for public and private use. The charter was forfeited in 1895 when the company did not pay a franchise tax. However, the company might well have been dissolved before that year, since 1895 was the first year the state franchise was accessed. This is true of other electric companies organized in Dallas between 1883 and 1895, since records are incomplete.\(^7\)

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\(^5\)Excerpt from undated press release prepared by Dallas Power & Light Company staff, p. 3. Internal evidence indicates a date between 1960-1965.

\(^6\)"History and Development," p. 3.

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 5.
In 1886, another electric company was chartered for Dallas. Texas Electric Light and Manufacturing Company was formed by J. M. Wendelkin, D. M. Clower, L. Craddock, W. S. Simpkins, and W. L. Hall. The state charter gave permission for the new company to "supply light to the public, to manufacture and sell Garrett Burglary Alarms, stock, manufacture, and sell all types of electric machinery and supplies."\(^8\)

The third electric company in Dallas was the Electric Light, Power, and Manufacturing Company, chartered on December 3, 1887 by L. Craddock, W. S. Simpkins, and G. H. Schoellkopf, all of Dallas County. They were given the right to manufacture and sell electric power, and manufacture and sell electric appliances, implements, and machines.\(^9\)

Next was the Queen City Electric Light and Power Company, chartered June 8, 1888. S. V. Hopkins, Jno. P. Davidson, and Owen J. Cooke, all of Dallas County, were granted the "right to manufacture electricity and power for the public by any means."\(^10\)

Next was Dallas Electric Company, chartered June 7, 1890. Joseph P. Smith and J. B. Kirby, both of Dallas County, and R. T. McDonald from Allen County, Indiana, were the incorporating agents. State records show their new company

\(^{8}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{9}\text{Ibid., p. 6.}\)

\(^{10}\text{Ibid.}\)
was begun "for the purpose of acquiring, purchasing, building, erecting, maintaining, and operating electric light, heat, power, and machinery and plants in the State of Texas, and in all the other states and territories in the United States." 11 The new company had its electric generator and distribution system on the site of the present DP&L Dallas generating station (the oldest of DP&L's five gas-powered generating units). Records indicate that the company subsequently acquired the property of the four earlier electric companies. 12

The Dallas Electric Light and Power Company was chartered May 28, 1902, by J. B. Adoue, C. A. Keating, A. V. Lane, and T. W. Scollard, all of Dallas, and Charles M. Hayden of Boston, Massachusetts. Dallas Electric Light and Power Company obtained a franchise from the City of Dallas for a twenty-year period, with the stipulation that the city could purchase the system after that time, if it desired to do so. The construction and maintenance of the new company's system was under the supervision of the Dallas city engineer. The company acquired the property of the Dallas Electric Company in October, 1902. 13

There were other companies authorized to furnish electricity to Dallas, but DP&L's information on them was meager. One, the Standard Light and Power Company, was
formed in 1898 by Emmett A. Ellis, C. H. Alexander, and L. Ashton, all of Dallas. The Dallas Electric Light and Power Company obtained Standard's pole lines in May or June, 1904.\textsuperscript{14}

Another early company was Oak Cliff Water Supply, Electric Light and Power Company, formed in 1896 by John W. Roach, George R. Carlton, and Dee Edward Greer, all of Dallas County. Dallas Electric Light and Power Company acquired the Oak Cliff company's electric plant in 1905.\textsuperscript{15}

DP&L was chartered September 22, 1917, for fifty years. It acquired the Dallas Electric Light and Power Company, along with the property the latter company had acquired from earlier companies. When DP&L began its operations in Dallas, there were still other smaller companies serving a few businesses each. DP&L later acquired the property of these companies.

One of these small companies was the Dallas Ice Factory, Light, and Power Company. It was formed in 1897 to manufacture ice, heat, light, and power for a portion of East Dallas. Its plant was on Hall Street between Swiss and Live Oak Streets. The company sold its electricity franchise to DP&L in 1919, and amended its charter to Dallas Ice Company.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 12 \\
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 14
\end{flushright}
Another small company was the Carroll Electric Company, incorporated in 1914. This company provided electricity to several stores and offices in the block bounded by Court, Main, Murphy, Elm, and Scollard Streets. Because Carroll Electric did not use the city's streets or alleys, it could operate without a Dallas franchise. This company's plant and equipment were acquired by DP&L in 1918.\textsuperscript{17}

The Southwestern Heating Company was a partnership of P. H. Smith and M. L. Whitney, and it operated an electric power plant in the basement of the Southwestern Life Insurance building. The power plant had been installed in the building when it was built in 1913. The area served was the block bounded by Main, Commerce, Akard, and Ervay Streets. In 1920, DP&L acquired the plant and the distribution system.\textsuperscript{18}

DP&L's First President

The company's first president, J. F. Strickland, had a career that ranged from that of a farm laborer at age 16 to that of "industrial and business empire builder. . . his career was fully as fantastic as those depicted in Horatio Alger novels that fired the imaginations of countless boys in the early 1900's."\textsuperscript{19}

Strickland was born in Alabama in 1861, and he came to Texas in 1878 when O. B. Sims of Waxahachie paid his way.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 15. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{19}Press release, pp. 1-2
hiring Strickland to work on the Sims farm, and deducting Strickland's fare from his wages. The 16-year-old Strickland was thrifty, and saved enough from his wages as a hired hand to buy a team of oxen that he used to break the prairie for farmers nearby. With the money saved from this business venture, Strickland bought a cotton gin near Waxahachie. When Sims opened a grocery store, he again hired Strickland, as a grocery clerk this time. Strickland later became owner of the store, and from there he entered the wholesale grocery business. After a business recession in 1897, Strickland dissolved the grocery company, and became manager of the Waxahachie Electric Light Company, where he remained until 1902.  

Strickland entered into business about 1902 with Judge M. B. Templeton and Osce Goodwin to operate the electric light plants at Hillsboro, Bonham, Cleburne, Sherman, and Waxahachie. They founded the Dallas Securities Company in 1904. In 1906, they started building an interurban railway line from Dallas to Sherman. The line was completed July 1, 1908, and one to Waco in 1912. In 1912, the original charter of TP&L was granted by the Texas Secretary of State, and Strickland was elected TP&L's first president.  

When Strickland died May 21, 1921 at age 60, he was president of

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20 Ibid., p. 2.  
21 Ibid., p. 3
TP&L, DP&L, the Texas Electric Railway, the Dallas Railway Company (later Dallas Transit Systems), and other firms.\(^{22}\)

**DP&L's Operations Today**

When DP&L first began operation, its predecessor company (Dallas Electric Light and Power Company) had served 23,230 customers and had a system peak load demand in 1916 of 18,300 kilowatt hours. About one half of this load powered the streetcars in the city transit system. In 1917, DP&L owned a plot of land, and a two-and-one-half-story brick building at 1504 Commerce Street. It soon purchased a site nearby and built a two-story brick warehouse and garage.\(^{23}\)

From these small beginnings grew a system that in 1975 had 248,965 customers and total kilowatt sales of 10.2 billion hours.\(^{24}\) At the end of 1975, DP&L owned and operated five electric generating stations that use natural gas as fuel: the Dallas plant, the Mountain Creek plant, the Parkdale plant, the North Lake plant, and the Lake Hubbard plant. These plants can burn fuel oil for short periods of time as emergency conditions demand. The company had 78 substations, 3,980.4 structure miles of transmission and distribution lines, and 237.1 miles of underground lines.\(^{25}\)

\(^{22}\)Ibid., p. 1.

\(^{23}\)"History and Development," p. 20.


\(^{25}\)Moody's Public Utilities, p. 638.
Because of the dwindling supply of the world's natural gas, DP&L became involved in the search for alternate fuel to use to generate electricity. DP&L statistics showed that natural gas accounts for 1 1/2 of the U. S. fuel reserves, but 32% of fuel needs were met [1975] with gas. Likewise, oil accounts for a little over 2% of the fuel supply, but 44% of the fuel demand. Coal, on the other hand, accounts for 63% of the U. S. fuel supply, but on 22% of the demand, and finally, uranium accounts for 31% of the fuel supply, yet only about 1% of the fuel demand.26

The company owns a percentage of Big Brown Generating Station near Fairfield in Freestone County, and of the Monticello Generating Station in Titus County. The other owners are TP&L and TESCO. The companies are building and operating plants at Martin Lake in Rusk County, and at Forest Grove in Henderson County. These are all lignite-fueled plants, and were built or were being built adjacent to large lignite deposits.27 The parent company, Texas Utilities Company, Incorporated, purchased the rights to an underground coal conversion process developed by the Soviet Union. The process uses deep deposits of lignite coal that are not economically feasible to mine, but convert the lignite to gas on the site underground, without causing appreciable upper level land sinkage. The conversion project was begun in 1975 at Fairfield.28 In 1975, DP&L used 70


27Moody's Public Utilities, p. 638.

28"Energy and You."
per cent natural gas and 30 per cent lignite to fire its power plants.\textsuperscript{29} Additions of the other lignite-fueled plants will help reduce the company's dependence on natural gas even more. This is important to DP&L, because the Texas Railroad Commission forbade the use of natural gas to fuel power plants in the future, with a reduction to 25 per cent natural gas to come as early as the mid-1980's.\textsuperscript{30}

DP&L joined with the other two companies in building a nuclear-fueled power plant at Comanche Peak, near Glen Rose in Somerville County. The plant was to use uranium-235 as fuel, and it was expected to have a capability of 2.3 million kilowatts by the early 1980's.\textsuperscript{31} However, DP&L, looking to the more distant future when even the world supply of U-235 will be expended, was taking part in development of ways to utilize two more known potential nuclear fuels, U-238 and hydrogen fusion.

U-238 is an element that occurs in nature almost 100 times more plentifully than U-235. U-238 is not fissionable in today's reactors. But it is being worked on with the fast breeder reactor which will convert U-238 to a usable fuel. The unique concept in the fast breeder reactor is that it literally creates more usable fuel than it consumes.

The electric industry, including DP&L, is actively supporting fast breeder research in a prototype reactor that will soon be built. The upcoming liquid metal fast breeder reactor will be built in Tennessee and the industry is working with the Tennessee Valley Authority,

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid. \quad \textsuperscript{30}Ibid. \quad \textsuperscript{31}Annual Report of the Dallas Power & Light Company, 1974 (Dallas, 1974), p. 1.
the Energy Research and Development Administration and the U. S. Department of Interior on this project.\textsuperscript{32}

DP&L was one of ten investor-owned electric utilities sponsoring research in fusion at the University of Texas at Austin through the Texas Atomic Energy Research Foundation, formed in 1957.\textsuperscript{33} This research was aimed at tapping as an energy source the hydrogen atoms contained in water, because the world has an abundant water resource.\textsuperscript{34}

In addition, DP&L explored the potential of geothermal energy sources, particularly along the Texas Gulf Coast,\textsuperscript{35} and sponsored a solar project. The solar project involved the installation of a solar collection system on the roof of a house in a new area of north Dallas. A Dallas home builder added the DP&L-funded solar collector to a luxury home he built. An identical home, except for the solar system, was set up nearby. Monitoring equipment to gauge the effectiveness of the traditional and the solar systems was to be read monthly for five years by a research team from Southern Methodist University, Dallas.\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32}"Energy and You."
\item \textsuperscript{33}Moody's Public Utilities, p. 639.
\item \textsuperscript{34}"Energy and You."
\item \textsuperscript{35}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{36}"Solar '76," unpublished material written by the Communication Services Department staff, Dallas Power & Light Company, 1976.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF DP&L'S COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES DEPARTMENT

To understand the relationship of the Communications Services Department to the rest of the Dallas Power & Light corporate structure, it is necessary to examine the company's organizational arrangement. J. S. Farrington is president and chief executive of DP&L. Reporting to him are two systems managers and four vice-presidents, each of whom has departmental managers reporting to him. The departments are further divided into divisions.

W. E. Griffis is vice-president and treasurer, in charge of the Special Assignments, the Accounting, and the Data Processing and Treasury Departments. C. E. Watson is vice-president in charge of the Personnel and the Taxes, Insurance, and Property Departments. E. A. Nye is Corporate Services and Legal Counsel, in charge of the Purchasing, the Rate and Economic Research, and the Research and Environmental Services Departments. Max H. Tanner, Jr. is manager of system operation, in charge of the Distribution and the Plant Departments. R. S. Miner is manager of engineering and planning, in charge of the Engineering and the Planning Departments. W. W. Aston is vice-president, in charge of the
Commercial, the Customer Information, the Marketing and Utilization Research, and the Communications Services Departments (see Appendix A). ¹

Each of Aston's departments has much public contact. He is in charge of the employees who meet with industrial and individual customers to help plan customers' special lighting requirements; the highly specialized and technical engineers; the home economists; the statistical researchists; the people who answer the 1,000 or so customer telephone calls daily and who deal with customer complaints and requests for service; the people who read the meters and bill the customers; the people who plan and coordinate the Speakers Bureau; the people who plan displays and exhibits; the specialists on power requirements for all types of industrial machinery; the specialists on power requirements for all types of home equipment; and the people who handle communication, press relations, and the various company publications. Because all Aston's departments have much contact with the public, and because the electric utility plays a unique role in the life of the people of Dallas, Aston said his departments have the special problem that everything the company does, or that any of its employees do, is really public relations work:

Every person out there is a customer of ours, so everyone in our company is in public relations. We can't be like some companies that can set up definite structures of operation and say, "we have twenty people in public relations." For example, when our meter readers, fifty of them, go out in the morning, everything they do is public relations. Our line crews, how they drive, the noise they make, how they work up on the poles, all convey to customers that they are professional and efficient, and that says that we are an efficient and well-managed company.

In the sense of putting together a PR operation in the classical sense of the word, we can't approach it exactly in that manner. Our real public relations is tonight at 9:30 if your lights go out and you call down here. It's how the operator handles your call and how the man acts when he comes out. It's how long it takes to get your lights back on. That's where our image stands or falls.

It doesn't stand on the fact that we mailed you a particular brochure or we ran a certain ad in the paper or that we were successful in getting one of the news media to use one of our press releases. Our PR is twenty-four hours a day, every employee we have. We can do all these other things, but if your electricity doesn't stay on, we can't hire enough people and buy enough ads and write enough press releases to change that image.2

L. Ray Ward is manager of one of Aston's four departments, the Communications Services Department. In the DP&L corporate structure, this department is responsible for four broad areas: media communications, displays and shows, publications, and press relations. Media communications consists of planning the company's mass media communications programs and preparing schedules and materials to achieve DP&L objectives, and monitoring the company's participation in industry communication programs.

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Displays and shows consist of designing and installing DP&L show windows and general exhibits, and preparation and installation of special exhibits. Publications consists of preparation of company publications for distribution to employees, customers, and shareholders.

Press relations consists of handling news information concerning the company; establishing and maintaining favorable journalistic relations; conducting and monitoring public opinion research; coordinating photography required for news information and other activities, and planning tours of company facilities and assisting with activities of Speakers Bureau (see Appendix B).

Ward has a staff of eleven people. The department is divided into positions of function, with no one as second in command. The positions comprise Ward, one secretary, two communication services assistants, two copy writers, one clerk typist, and five display persons.

Ward has been employed with DP&L for fifteen years. He said he did not know exactly when his department was organized:

No one does. We've always been here, but originally as a group in the Commercial Department called the Advertising Division. That was forty years or so ago, when sales promotion was our activity, and there was no news contact. Then, natural gas was being flared away in the oil fields and electricity was plentiful and cheap, so it wasn't news.

3 "Organization and Procedures Manual."


5 Ibid.
Fourteen years ago, it became the Advertising Department. Three years ago, the name changed to Communications Services, to reflect the change in the department's primary duty. "Sales promotion declined, and energy promotion changed drastically. Once our only occupation was advertising. Now, we have only one full-time employee in advertising, and the rest work with communication," Ward said.\footnote{Ibid.}

Ward said the department still has basically the same number of people as before, but the changing nature of the department's duties has caused it to change the requirements for departmental employees. At one time, Ward explained, it was traditional for the electric utility industry to have engineers working even in areas such as advertising and public relations. This is changed now, and utilities employ communications specialists. Ward said DP&L has always employed advertising-trained people, and Communications Services has only one person without journalism training, other than the display people. "Our job specifications are written so that a degree in a communications field and two years' practical experience or the equivalent is our requirement, for all except the display personnel," Ward said.\footnote{Ibid.}

Ward has both bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism with advertising concentration. Don Wilson, communication
services assistant, has a bachelor's degree in psychology; and Jim Little, communication services assistant, has a bachelor's degree in radio productions and a bachelor's degree in journalism advertising. Joan Dittmer, copywriter, has a bachelor's degree in English and taught English and journalism at the high school level; and Mike Blackwell, copywriter, has a bachelor's degree in journalism.

Ward holds weekly departmental staff meetings, where each person tells the progress of the projects on which he is working, and receives assignments from Ward. Each of the four areas of departmental responsibility has some overlapping with the other areas, and the small size of Ward's staff requires that each person do a number of different tasks without a sharp division of duties.

Ward makes all assignments, coordinates the work of the department with other DP&L departments, is primary news media spokesman for DP&L, writes the Annual Report, and approves all photographs and editorial copy for all the departmental publications. Wilson handles physical arrangements for displays and exhibits, compiles and updates the department's Media Book, gathers statistical information for the department's fact file, and arranges tours of DP&L facilities. Little works with advertising-related duties, acts as liaison with the DP&L advertising agency (Kerss, Chapman, Bua, and Norsworthy, Incorporated), and is purchasing agent for departmental office supplies. Dittmer is former
editor of the company newspaper, the *Synchronizer* and still writes much of the copy. She is "Special News Reports" editor, acts as liaison with the news media, writes copy for brochures, coordinates special projects with other DP&L departments, and writes press releases. Blackwell is editor of the *Synchronizer*, takes photographs for all the departmental publications, and does much of the graphics and art work for the department.

Ward works very closely with Aston. They exchange information several times a day by telephone and in person. Ward said the smallness of the company is an advantage, because all the management people know each other and can exchange information horizontally as well as vertically in the company table of organization. "We are small enough and informal enough that personal contact can take place. There are only twenty-five department heads, so personal contact is frequent and customary," Ward said.\(^8\) He said the company was informal enough so that if Ward needs some information, he just picks up the telephone and asks. Others in management do this, too. "Our president is informal enough so that if he wants something, he is likely to stick his head in my office door and ask if we have so-and-so. Smallness has an advantage here," Ward said.\(^9\)

Aston expanded on the close contact he and Ward keep, and said he and Ward call each other frequently at home at

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\(^9\) Ibid.
night because he does many things that overlap Ward's job as media contact:

If I get a call, for example, from New York City that something affecting the industry has hit the papers there, I immediately call Ray and tell him to get ready for some local press calls. We check signals so I won't be telling the media one thing and Ray another.10

Media Communications

The first duty listed under the media communications category was to plan the company's mass communications programs and prepare schedules and materials to achieve company objectives (see Appendix B). Ward plans for his department as much in advance as possible. He makes a yearly plan with written goals, and the plan is very general so that it remains flexible (see Appendix C).

Ward said the nature of his department's work now and the changing conditions in the industry made detailed long-range and much short-range planning impossible. "I know a man with the best written goals in Dallas and I envy him. I can't do that any more. But he sells a manufactured product, and I don't," Ward said.11

Examples of short-range planning were the activities that result from requests from customers or media for information of various types. Sometimes this information is already written down in DP&L or electric industry brochures

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and these can then be mailed to the customer requesting the information, or if the request is by telephone, it can be answered by a return call. Ward, Wilson, and Dittmer do much work of this type, Ward said.12

Prior to 1976, records of formal media contacts were not kept; but, in 1976, the department staff had 869 media contacts and wrote eighty press releases. In addition, it handled arrangements for the company's two news conferences. "The company has not had many formal press conferences, only about three dozen or so the whole fifteen years I've been here. The event has to merit it," Ward said.13 The two in 1976 were following the city council's decision on DP&L's request for a 17 per cent rate increase, and at the announcement of the company's solar home project.

The announcement about the city council decision was coordinated by the department, but the officers of the company made the public statements to the media. Ward's staff planned their part quickly. "We did the rate increase in about an hour's notice. We just all got busy and phoned all the media. We held it in our conference room here in the department," Ward said.14

The announcement about the solar home project was a formal conference, in the company auditorium, with all the

12Ibid.
14Ibid.
media in the coverage area mailed written invitations. At the press conference, some of the company executives spoke on the goals of the project. The designer of the solar system, the home builder, the architect, and a representative from the physics department at Southern Methodist University all explained their part in the project, too. Communications Services people planned and coordinated the press conference, but they did not make statements to the press.

Ward is primary media spokesman for the company; the majority of the calls from the news media go directly to his private extension. He answers their questions himself if he has the information. If he does not, he arranges to call the information back as quickly as he can, and he usually does this himself unless he has another appointment. "We have a practice here at DP&L that, if you call me, I talk to you and handle it. If you call and ask for the president of the company, you get the president of the company if he is available. We feel this is important," Ward said.15 Ward is on call twenty-four hours a day, and keeps the company telephone operators advised where he may be reached. The company operators have a list of names to be contacted if any news media person calls for information after working hours or on weekends. Ward's name is first on the list, with Wilson's second, and Dittmer's third. It was a matter of pride with

15 Ibid.
the trio that an operator has not had to go beyond their names to obtain information.

The second duty listed under the media communications category was coordinating activities of advertising agencies serving the company (see Appendix B).

Little, communication services assistant and advertising specialist, serves as liaison between the company and its agency, Kerrs, Chapman, Bua, and Norsworthy, Incorporated. Little said changes throughout the industry and in the Dallas coverage area changed his job from promoting the use of many electrical appliances to encouraging the conservation of electric energy. His job was especially affected following the 1976 rate increase, when the Dallas City Council put restrictions on the quantity and the type of advertising DP&L could do. The council restricted advertising to informational material about ways in which customers could lower their electric bills and conservational topics. Little's advertising emphasis was affected:

We used to have an ad about an outage and our crews going out in bad weather to fit it quickly. That's really patting our own employees on the back, but we are proud of our record for quick outage recovery. We can't do this type of advertising any more. After the rate increase hearings last year, the city council restricted us to conservational or informational type advertising.16

Little said that DP&L tried in the past to reach the heads of households at night through advertising in the

16Statement by Jim Little, communication services assistant, Dallas Power & Light Company, Dallas, Texas, January 3, 1977.
television news programs. Now DP&L tries to reach a broader audience to tell them fuels are running out, and to give the audience conservation tips. One conservation ad, called "Heat Wasters," advised closing dampers on fireplaces when not in use in order to keep heat from escaping up the chimney and causing furnaces to run more often. Another ad is about the E-OK program. Ads on E-OK, the energy efficiency program, stress the proper use of insulation, caulking, weatherstripping, and other aids to save electricity. "We don't sell or install appliances, but it is our duty to inform customers if there is a new one that conserves energy, like the heat pump," Little said.17

Little uses all the different news media in the Dallas coverage area for his ads. He tells the ad agency what he wants to achieve and what audience he wants to reach, then the agency develops copy and graphics, and Little and the agency decide which news medium to use and when:

Right now, we use TV about two or three times a week. We float our spots, depending on who we want to reach. We try to be on a news spot at night. We also try to reach the housewife on TV in the afternoon when she has just received her electric bill in the mail. For years and years we were only on the news, now we are broadening. For example, we were in the Summer Olympics; we are reaching new times and new events.18

Little said that most of his advertising planning covered only a month now, but sometimes as much as a quarter-year, in order to take advantage of media bargains. "We try to know

17 Ibid. 18 Ibid.
what our long-range goals are, and to budget for this," Little said.19

The third duty listed under the media communications category was coordinating media communications programs to accomplish company objectives (see Appendix B). Because of Ward's role as primary media spokesman, he considered radio talks and television appearances as routine requirements of his job. He never counted the total number of these in a year, planning them as the need arose. It was his own responsibility to decide if he should appear, or if the event called for someone in the company with specific expertise.

For example, Ward appeared on television in early December, 1976, when people were putting up their Christmas trees, and warned about fire hazards from using old, frayed Christmas tree lights. This was filmed in Ward's conference room and was shown on several TV news shows. On December 30, Ward recorded a statement explaining DP&L's new policy of refunding electric utility deposits to Dallas senior citizens. He wanted to be sure coverage went to as many radio stations as possible, so he furnished tapes to twelve stations. These tapes had been planned several days in advance, but tapes recorded December 31, 1976, were done under emergency conditions, when a snow and ice storm hit Dallas. Ward recorded statements that warned about an impending shortage of fuel to

19 Ibid.
run the company's generators. Many of Dallas businesses and industries and all the schools were closed for two days during the severe cold. Ward's messages asked people to conserve electricity during that period.

The fourth duty listed under the media communications category was monitoring company participation in industry communications programs (see Appendix B). Little coordinates DP&L participation in electric industry advertising cooperative programs. Little said developing cooperative attitudes within the industry was an important facet of his job. He exchanges advertising ideas with other companies in a cooperative program that saves money as well. Another method of cooperation is by pooling money to make TV commercials that can be used by several utilities simply by changing the identifying audio and video segments at the end. Little said,

In the past, we have been in the Texas TV pool. That's a group of Texas utilities that got together to make TV commercials because we could all put part of the money in and all use it, changing the tags at the end. The pool had dwindled off, but now it has begun again, and we are now getting inquiries from others who have not been in it before, because it is a way now to save money. You have to synchronize what everyone wants to say, but in Texas we all have basically the same type of utility problems. We couldn't be in a pool with, say, Missouri, because of the greater differences in house construction. They burn lots of a different kind of coal than we do, etc. In Texas, the TV pool has been going on for five or six years; it dies down, and then starts back up again.20

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Another function of cooperative communications programs is the duty of Blackwell, copywriter, who serves as liaison between DP&L publications people and their counterparts in Texas Utilities, Texas Electric Service Company (TESCO) and Texas Power & Light Company (TP&L). Editors of the four utility newspapers meet once a month to exchange ideas and stories that might interest the other newspapers. This cooperation made an important contribution to all four of the industries' communications programs, Blackwell said. An example of this cooperation occurred when one of the utilities tested a new transmission pole made of concrete and steel to see if it could replace the small steel towers traditionally used. The editor of the TESCO newspaper covered the test for all the other utility papers because the editors knew the test outcome would affect all their companies. The TESCO editor sent each editor a copy of his story and a selection of photographs so that each could rewrite the story and use the photograph each preferred. Blackwell said that the pooling of resources helped all four of the editors.\textsuperscript{21}

Displays and Shows

Another category of the Communication Services function is that of displays and shows. The first duty listed in this category was designing and installing company show windows.

and general exhibits (see Appendix B). The display group headed by W. W. Derow performs this function. The group has its offices in a company-owned building at 3800 Commerce Street, several blocks from the rest of the Communication Services in the main DP&L building at 1506 Commerce Street. Being away from the main building downtown gives the group more space to work, but they still maintain close contact with Ward by telephone or by company shuttle bus. Ward plans the displays and approves all finished work for the three dozen or so displays the group builds each year. Ward called his display group the best in Dallas. The group is responsible for designing and setting up all displays and exhibit material for fairs, trade shows, conventions, the public areas of the DP&L building, and the show windows in front and at the side of the building. A permanent display is at the Dallas Health and Science Museum. The largest one the group handles each year is at the State Fair of Texas, covering 8,000 square feet in the Electric Building. Fair officials estimated that half of the fair's three million visitors see the DP&L State Fair exhibit each year. This is because of the central location of the Electric Building, Ward said. Exhibits were constructed so that portions could be used repeatedly during the year. "Right now, the windows on Commerce Street have a portion of the exhibit we used at the 1976 State Fair. We use the exhibits as much as possible,
because this is more economical," Ward said. He said the Commerce Street windows faced a Dallas Transit System bus stop, and all these exhibits are planned to attract people waiting for a bus. Company observers noted that some people read everything in the exhibit during their ten- to fifteen-minute wait for a bus.

The exhibits inside the building are arranged to catch the eye of people as they enter the lobby. Brochures are available for people to take with them. Two especially popular lobby exhibits in 1976 were about the lignite coal-powered and the nuclear-powered plants DP&L was building in Texas. One in 1977 was about the E-OK program. This exhibit featured insulation samples to show the proper thickness and amount of insulation for walls and attics for efficient energy conservation. It showed samples of weatherstripping, storm windows, and other insulating helps for the homes, and advised the installation of these helps to prevent heat loss in winter and air conditioning loss in summer. A check list of things homeowners could inspect around their homes to see if maximum energy conservation was practiced was available at the exhibit so people could take the lists home with them.

The second duty listed in the displays and shows category was preparation and installation of special exhibits (see Appendix B). Special exhibits are those such as those

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DP&L sets up in large shopping malls. The mall-type center has become popular in Dallas over the past few years, and many such large shopping centers have been built. Don Wilson, communication assistant, handles the physical arrangements for exhibits at malls. He contacts all mall public relations people to book the DP&L exhibits and then ensures that they are set up and taken down on schedule. "This is really something new for us, and is opening up new audiences for us to reach. It gives us another interface with the public," Wilson said. He said the exhibits are built so that they do not require DP&L people to staff them.

Publications

Another category of the Communication Services function is that of publications. The duty listed in this category is the preparation of company publications for distribution to employees, customers, and shareholders (see Appendix B). DP&L has several different employee publications: "News Tips," "Special News Reports," the company newspaper, the Synchronizer and bulletin board posters. Customer publications are bill inserts and brochures. The shareholder publication is the Annual Report of the Dallas Power & Light Company. Ward has direct supervision of all of these publications.

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23 Statement by Don Wilson, communication services assistant, Dallas Power & Light Company, Dallas, Texas, January 13, 1977.
"News Tips" are circulated twice a day, and contain clippings of articles from publications. To get information for the "Tips," the staff reads local, state, and national publications. Ward said he did not know exactly how many publications were read, but there was a tremendous flow of information in and out of his office. Once when he prepared a speech to give to a school class, he asked his secretary to count the magazines that arrived that week. "I was surprised at the total; it was forty-eight," Ward said. Ward said this illustrated how important it was for his staff to read constantly. Ward, Wilson, Dittmer, and Blackwell divide the daily newspapers the office receives. They read the Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio, Texas daily newspapers, as well as the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. They mark stories about the electric industry, specific utility companies, lignite coal, strip mining, utility rate increases, alternate sources of energy, legislation that might affect DP&L, and "anything else remotely connected with us," Ward said. The clerk typist clips the articles, makes fourteen copies, and distributes the copies to fourteen of the top management people. "News Tips" is considered by the department as one way to help management keep up with what is in the media, because they

24Ward, Denton, Texas, February 9, 1977. Speech to a North Texas State University journalism class.

25Ibid.
might miss certain items. They can keep the information for their own files if they want to, or can distribute it to others in their departments. "News Tips" is looked on as an indicator of a certain amount of prestige within the company, Ward said.

Starr mentioned prestige within the company as one of the benefits of a limited-circulation management newsletter. "... an excellent tool for keeping supervisors and other members of management aware of what is going on in the company. It also has the additional benefit of heightening [their] prestige." 26

The "Special News Report" is considered a supplement to the company newspaper, the Synchronizer, but the "Report" is distributed to the employees in the plants rather than being mailed to their homes, as is the Synchronizer. The "Report" is printed at irregular intervals when something has happened affecting the company, something that is so important the employees should be told at once. The rationale for the "Report" is, "We know this will be on the news tonight, and we want our employees to hear about it first from us, since it affects them, too," Ward said. 27 Dittmer is editor and major copywriter for the "Report," and Blackwell takes pictures and writes copy. Both do the layout and proofreading.


Ward said there had been publications similar to the "Report" in the past, but he did not know when the practice of preparing them began. Those Ward's staff writes are numbered and dated now; they wrote six "Reports" in about nine months in 1976 and early 1977. The first "Report" of the six was printed May 21 when the president and chief DP&L executive, L. S. Turner, Jr., became executive vice-president of Texas Utilities Company. The "Report" was printed on both sides of an 8 1/2-by-11-inch page. It carried photographs of Turner and the new DP&L president, Jerry S. Farrington, along with their statements, and statements by other company officials.

The second "Report," five days later on May 26, was printed after a small tornado hit Dallas. No deaths occurred, but it was the first Dallas tornado in nineteen years, so it caused wide interest in the city. Extensive damage occurred to roofs, windows, and DP&L utility poles. The "Report" was thicker than the first one, printed on both sides of two pages. Most of the space was devoted to pictures of property damage. A brief story told of the storm, and the front page had a map of the section hit, showing the path of the tornado.

The third "Report," June 17, 1976, was on the E-OK program. The E-OK program was new, and the company wanted to emphasize to its employees how electric bills could be reduced if people insulated and weatherstripped their homes.
The "Report" explained that DP&L was launching that week a campaign to inform builders and customers about energy efficient construction. Homes built like this would use up to 50 per cent less energy than homes not with this type construction.28

The fifth "Report" told about the Solar Home project. It had a picture of the architect's model of the home, showing the solar panel on the roof. The "Report" told the purpose of the project; to find whether solar-assisted heating and water heating would be practical for Dallas homes. It said DP&L would provide costs of $12,000 for the solar equipment and $5,000 for special test metering to go in a home in the $70,000 to $100,000 price range in a section being developed by a Dallas builder.

A second "Report," dated January 3, 1977, told of an unexpected sleet and snow storm. Dallas was icebound for two days, but DP&L crews did emergency work throughout the period. This "Report" was four pages long. It featured pictures of DP&L employees at work. A short message by the DP&L president thanked the employees for working when most of the city was closed by the storm.

Several other "Reports" were written throughout the spring and summer, 1976, during the company's rate increase hearings

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before the Dallas City Council. The "Reports" gave brief summaries of the hearings. These were very informal and quickly done, and were distributed to the employees so they would know about the progress of each hearing before they heard it on television that evening. "We would come right back to the office as soon as each hearing ended. Everyone would pitch in to write the summaries so they could be duplicated and distributed that day," Dittmer said.29

Another employee publication is the DP&L newspaper, the Synchronizer. It is published near the end of each month. Woods listed fourteen reasons for a company to have a newspaper.

(1) It promotes loyalty to the company and shows them they are part of an organization of which they can be proud.

(2) It improves cooperation of the workers with the management and shows them why management is essential to their own welfare.

(3) It gives employees a feeling of being "one big family."

(4) It interprets company policies, problems, and objectives to the workers.

(5) It informs employees of company rules, products, methods of doing business, new policies, and plans.

(6) It increases company prestige among employees.

(7) It inspires individual initiative and the desire to get ahead, and publicizes promotions and awards for accomplishment.

(8) It promotes employee activities, the morale-building activities that give the workers the feeling the management is interested in them.

(9) It promotes health and safety.

(10) It increases productivity and performance.

(11) It serves as a sounding board for employee attitudes.

(12) It can combat harmful rumors or adverse publicity.

(13) It builds understanding and support in the communities where the company operates.

(14) It is an important contribution to the building of good will for the company. 30

Woods recommended the company newspaper devote the major space in the newspaper to news about employees and employee interests, hobbies, activities and the like. He recommended writing informally and taking pains to humanize the top management. He said that it was important to develop a feeling of personal participation in the newspaper by the employees and suggested taking about the same approach as that of the editor of any small-town newspaper. 31

Mike Blackwell is editor of the _Synchronizer_. He takes the majority of the pictures, plans the layouts, and does the

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31 Ibid., p. 103.
pasteups with the help of Dittmer. He and Dittmer write the copy. Ward plans the lead stories and assigns special pictures. The Synchronizer has no advertising and has no funding from outside the company.

The Synchronizer usually contains from four to eight pages. Sometimes, there is an insert of important information that came in too late to go into the body copy, was too important to ignore, and not important enough to warrant a "Special News Report." In February, 1977, the Synchronizer carried such an insert about the 34.5 per cent increase that TP&L had requested. It was carried as an insert because many of the DP&L people live in the TP&L service areas around Dallas, so the TP&L action affected them directly.\footnote{Blackwell, January 13, 1977.}

The appearance of the Synchronizer is bright and attractive. In part, this is because it is printed on a heavy quality white paper, and the company employs a commercial printer with an offset press to print the newspaper rather than utilizing its own small press that is used for the "Special News Report." In part, the attractive appearance of the paper is because the Synchronizer was redesigned in the fall of 1976 and a lighter type face replaced the medium-weight face. Blackwell said he thought this gave a cleaner, brighter look to the paper. Another attractive feature is the use of color as an accent for rules, headlines, photograph captions and the nameplate. Sometimes a color screen or

\footnote{Blackwell, January 13, 1977.}
or duotone will be used on the main front page picture to repeat the color used as accent. Blackwell said the printer had a large assortment of colors from which to choose the monthly accent and it was seldom necessary to repeat the same shade of a color in a year.

Blackwell said an employee survey in 1976 included several questions about the Synchronizer and its image. "You could just about predict what they were going to say, 'more live babies and dead fish,' more employee news. Which we'd be glad to do except we are understaffed and we don't have time to go out and talk to people," Blackwell said.\(^3^3\)

Blackwell said departmental reporters were assigned to collect news of employees' activities and to forward pictures employees wanted printed. The names of these reporters are printed each month on the masthead of the Synchronizer. He said reporters lacked contact with the Synchronizer staff because most of the reporters were in other DP&L buildings or generating plants, and this was a weakness to be overcome. In addition, the reporters have no training for their jobs and don't write copy; they merely collect the news from their departments. "Usually the reporters don't volunteer, the supervisor appoints them, and they really don't have understanding of what they are supposed to do," Blackwell said.\(^3^4\)

He and Dittmer planned a meeting with all the departmental

\(^3^3\)Ibid. \(^3^4\)Ibid.
reporters for the summer of 1977. Then, Blackwell and Dittmer could discuss basic requirements for news stories and pictures. "We can talk on the five W's and H of news writing, and how to take a picture so at least they won't chop all the heads off," Blackwell said.35

Blackwell said the employee survey showed the Synchronizer enjoyed credibility with the employees, resulting from a relaxed company policy. "We are now phrasing a lot more liberally, telling it like it really is. Everybody knew things before; but you didn't say them, and you lost your credibility that way. We don't try to cover up anything," Blackwell said.36

The paper helps employees develop the desire to get ahead, Blackwell said, because the page on promotions was shown in the survey to have wide readership. "I had a man tell me yesterday he read of the promotion of a man who came to work here the same day he did, and it made the man realize he better get on the stick and try harder," Blackwell said.37

Pictures of those promoted are printed, as are the names of employees with service anniversaries during the month. The names of those with five and ten years' service are listed, those with fifteen years or more have photographs.

35 Ibid. 36 Ibid. 37 Ibid.
Even retired employees are included, so that in any one issue there might be a picture of someone with fifty years' service, along with the notation that the employee was retired, and the name of the department from which he retired. Pictures of new employees are printed, and there is a section for the pictures and obituaries for employees who died during the previous month.

The company uses a mailing service for labeling and mailing the papers. Papers go to employee's and retired employees' homes. Courtesy copies go to other utility companies, including some to the company papers of Texas Utilities, TESCO, and TP&L, and to some others in the community who have requested copies of each paper.

Blackwell and Dittmer write feature stories for each issue. These are usually on progress of construction of the lignite plants or the nuclear plant, new company policies or purchases, important activities or projects in the company, and the like. One event that gets many stories and pictures each year is the Peak Load Contest.

The Peak Load Contest is a big event for all DP&L employees. They guess what the maximum generating load will be for the year, and the day, time, and temperature when it occurs. The ten guessing the closest receive prizes. Usually two or three expensive prizes such as microwave ovens, color television sets, or trash compactors are the top prizes. Lesser prizes are less expensive electric appliances. Blackwell makes an
official entry box in which each employee may deposit only one entry. Blackwell and Dittmer count and tally entries each year. "We pick a cutoff date a couple of months in advance and have all entries due by that date. We know the peak load always comes some time in August when the summer is the hottest, so the cutoff date usually is about the middle of June," Blackwell said.38

Each fall, Blackwell makes a graph showing the range of peak maximum loads, with the closest entries to those dates, both before the date and after it. Blackwell said the job of deciding winners was difficult, because sometimes he would get it finished, then find one of the winners had left the company, so more entries had to be considered then. Some of the veteran contestants are quite expert, so ties are common. "Last year, we had four ties with eight people tied in one of the days. We had to go all the way down to the temperature to decide. Also, the same man tied for tenth place the past two years," Blackwell said.39

Blackwell said a serious motive lay behind the contest, in that it made employees aware of how much electricity the company must generate, and that this means long-range planning to keep facilities capable of meeting such demand. "We have to know from year to year how much our demand will be in the summer when it's hot and all the air conditioners are turned on at once," Blackwell said.40

\[38\text{Ibid.} \quad 39\text{Ibid.} \quad 40\text{Ibid.}\]
A weakness of the Synchronizer, in Blackwell's opinion, was that the paper did not appear on the same date each month. He said he thought regularity would help the employee and his family anticipate the paper more. Ideally, he said, the paper would arrive at the employee's home about the twenty-fifth of each month. However, delays in the approval of articles by supervisors often cause printing delays, he said. All copy for the paper routinely goes to Ward, Aston, and Terry Griffin, DP&L personnel manager. In addition, feature articles containing technical information are routed to the departments affected, where vocabulary and technology are checked for accuracy. Stories about individual employees are sent to the employee's department so that both he and his supervisor may approve. "We don't really mind this, we are not engineers and we want the technical details to be accurate. But if someone who does not know journalistic style of writing tries to rewrite a story completely, we have to redo it and this is a delay," Blackwell said.\footnote{Ibid.} It is a problem when someone gets busy and forgets to return the story promptly or wants someone else in the department to see it too, so that deadlines are overlooked and delays result.

Blackwell recommended that a time limit be placed on copy sent to supervisors for approval; that a form letter go along with all such copy stating that corrections should be for accuracy, not writing style, and that if a reply were not
received by a specified time limit, the article would be considered approved. In addition, Blackwell recommended that Aston and Griffin see the paper each month in the page-proof stage, rather than by each individual article. This would save routing time by sending copy and photographs to Aston and Griffin at one time rather than piece-meal. At the page proof stage, Aston and Griffin would see where each article and picture would appear, and how the pages would look, Blackwell said.

Blackwell said he thought the Synchronizer achieved the goals of which Woods wrote, and that the Synchronizer made a major contribution to the employee, the DP&L management, the related utility companies, and to the electric industry, because it served as the principal employee communication medium within the company, both horizontally and vertically.

In addition to his duties with the Synchronizer, Blackwell is in charge of bulletin board posters. Starr said employee bulletin boards are "an inexpensive news source and permit frequent readings. Perhaps most valuable of all, they offer the communicator one of the best ways to disseminate news quickly." Blackwell designs bulletin board posters to be placed from the twelfth floor down in the eighteen-story main DP&L building, and in all the other buildings. Blackwell has sixty posters printed each month. He uses a variety of

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42 Woods, pp. 103-105.


44 Starr, p. 67.
subjects for each month's poster, such as the State Fair of Texas; asking for employee support of community or charitable causes or events in which the company is interested; replicas of ads the company is running in publications; other goals, such as inviting DP&L employees to attend the Solar Home Open House, or urging participation in the annual Peak Load Contest. 45

In addition to employee publications of all kinds, Communications Services Department is responsible for customer communications. These are brochures and bill inserts. Brochures are usually designed at the request of one of the other departments in the company to meet a specific need. One such brochure was designed in 1976 to show customers how to read their own meters, and was at the request of the meter-reading division. The brochure showed drawings of meters and told how to read the different dials on the meters. It contained the information that DP&L meter readers do not have to go inside the homeowner's yard to read the meter, because they carry special binoculars developed for just this purpose. The meter reader can stand in the alley and read the meter through his binoculars. Many of the yards in Dallas have fences with locked gates and/or unfriendly dogs, and many of the homeowners both work so they never see the meter reader,

so the brochure serves the added purpose of informing the customer that the meters are actually read.46

Another way of communicating with customers is through the bill insert in each month's bill. Ward said he considered reaching customers by direct mail through this means very important. He said it was a most exacting writing function. He wrote them himself for more than ten years, and still takes a personal interest in the impact of each monthly insert. He said it was an exacting text of a writer's skill because of the small size of the computer-printed bills and their envelopes, and the brochure-type inserts had to fit inside these envelopes. Each insert is three inches by six inches, folded. The front was always a bright, eye-catching graphic, "and you better believe we design them to be appealing. We know they arrive along with Sanger's, Neiman's and everybody else's colorful inserts, and they have to compete with all those for attention," Ward said.47 The back was reserved for a recipe written by the DP&L chief home economist, so this leaves only the inside for the message the company wants to communicate that month. "It's a real test of writing expertise to condense a message that much and yet have it accomplish our purpose. Feedback from our


customers and from surveys prove the customers read it, because they remember the message. 48

Ward said the company knew the customer remembered the message, because the annual public opinion survey contained questions about these messages. Some of the messages had appeared in no place else but in the bill inserts. "We'll ask if they heard or saw this message. They'll say they saw it on TV, but we know they didn't; it wasn't on TV," Ward said. 49

Ward said the recipes were planned carefully. Most are "things people really cook, like macaroni and cheese. The rest are things like 'BaBa's Old Rum Cake,' which sounds great, but practically no one ever makes. Psychological studies show women like to fantasize cooking elegant desserts in beautiful settings," Ward said. 50 Customer feedback on the recipes is received through telephone calls and written requests for the most popular recipes. Some requested recipes appeared in a bill insert as much as eight years earlier. 51

Publications duties include communicating with shareholders, too. Shareholders are reached through The Annual Report of the Dallas Power & Light Company. Ward said planning and writing the Report was one of his primary duties.

48Ibid. 49Ibid. 50Ibid. 51Ibid.
He said the *Report* each year contains information to enable stockholders to determine the financial condition of the company, and the format is always about the same. Ward gathers the statistical and financial material and assigns the pictures that need to be taken for the *Report*. The advertising agency then prepares the layout and designs the graphics. Ward met with executives of DP&L and the advertising agency in January, 1977, to discuss the philosophy of the annual report and the image the company wanted the 1977 *Report* to reflect. It was decided to retain the basic format of past years: "We want to keep the dignity, strength, and image of stability, a solid business image we've had for many years. We want to look like an AAA-rated company to our publics," Ward said. 52 Each year, much of Ward's time from January until the issuance of the *Report* April 1 is spent with the preparation of the *Report*. Each year it contains pictures of progress on construction of new DP&L facilities, but it has pictures of new construction in Dallas, too, along with pictures of interesting or beautiful spots in the city. Ward said the rationale was to make the *Report* reflect something of the beauty and vitality of Dallas as well as the solidity of DP&L. 53

The Annual Meeting of DP&L is small and informal, since there are only four common stockholders, and the department

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53 Ibid.
takes no special preparations for the meeting. The Annual Meeting of the parent company, Texas Utilities, is held in the DP&L main auditorium. Communications Services supervises the physical arrangements for the meeting, checks to be sure the room is in order, supplies any special equipment that is requested, such as additional projectors, etc. However, the parent company conducts the meeting, and their public relations people have the primary responsibility for the arrangements.54

The final area of responsibility in the "Organization and Procedures Manual" was press relations. The first duty listed in this category was "handling news information concerning the company" (see Appendix B).55 Some overlapping of duties in this area with that of media communications exists. As this study mentioned earlier, the staff made 869 media contacts and wrote eighty press releases in 1976, each participating as he was assigned projects by Ward. News about the company is disseminated to the press through personal contacts, telephone calls, and press releases. Many of the personal contacts and the telephone calls are originated by the reporters, with first Ward, then Wilson, then Dittmer answering the inquiries depending on which of the trio is available. If research is necessary, it is done, and then

54Ibid.

the call is returned promptly to impart the requested information. The department endeavors to maintain good press relations in an atmosphere of candor, Ward said.  

Some special projects require in-depth planning before news is released to the press, such as the public relations campaign for the Solar Home project. This project was assigned by Ward to Dittmer. Dittmer worked with her counterpart in the Commercial Department as special projects coordinator. The Commercial Department was in charge of technical planning, selection of a Dallas home builder, and the development of the research to be done by Southern Methodist University. Dittmer said,

I got with Charlie Carter, special projects coordinator for the Commercial Department and found out what he knew about the goals, objectives, why we were doing the solar project, everything.

We sat down with a calendar and planned our news conference for just prior to the start of the construction, worked out the different phases of the home construction that might have news value, and decided when we might publicize each phase. We figured out every possible thing that could have any news value.  

Dittmer said the planning was very detailed. She decided what visual aids were needed to launch the campaign at the formal press conference. She listed a map, a technical fact sheet, a nontechnical fact sheet, photographs of the model of the home showing the solar panels, copies of statements

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56 Ward, October 22, 1976.
57 Dittmer, January 14, 1977.
on the importance of the solar project by various company officials, and other items. These were made up into a press kit distributed to all media representatives who attended the press conference. She and Carter planned the announcement when the solar panels were placed on the roof of the house. "We had a big crane to lift the panels up for the media to film. We could have gone up there with ladders, but the crane was visually better for publicity purposes," Dittmer said.58

Dittmer said she and Carter discussed other publicity possibilities for the Solar Home: the initial press conference announcement; the installation of the solar panels; the Open House; the selling of the house after it was built; the moving in of the new owners, and the research results. These events would cover several years if research results were announced periodically.

The two coordinators planned a multistage Open House: a media tour of the project January 5, 1976; tours for DP&L employees January 8 and 9; tours for the general public on weekends, January 8 to February 27. A special tour was arranged for those attending the large National Home Builders Convention in Dallas January 23 to 26. Dittmer said the Solar project was a good example of the detailed planning that went into other informational campaigns for DP&L projects.59

58Ibid.  
59Ibid.
A second duty listed under the Press Relations category was establishing and maintaining favorable journalistic relations (see Appendix B). Ward said the department's policy of treating news media inquiries for information in a prompt and courteous manner and in an atmosphere of candor was the primary way this duty was accomplished. Another way was delivering press releases to the appropriate news persons rather than mailing them. The staff divides the releases among Dittmer, Blackwell, Wilson, and Ward if all are available to take the releases to the newspapers, radio stations, and television stations in person. This allows the staff to meet the news media persons and establish a personal contact.60

Another way to establish favorable press contacts was through a new program Communications Services began in 1976 to seek out the small publications that they did not usually contact. These publications included small weekly newspapers, the ethnic weeklies, and the ethnic radio stations. This project was assigned to Dittmer. Dittmer said she thought the project was important because Dallas was so large and much of society's programs were impersonal. "We've always sent the little papers and stations our releases," she said, "but we never had any personal contact with them.

I've made it a point to visit and talk with the people there." Even though these small ethnic publications had few subscribers, these subscribers were loyal to the publications, and usually read them from cover to cover; "this is especially true of the ethnic press," Dittmer said.

An example of the new ethnic-oriented contact project was with the Post Tribune, a small Negro newspaper in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas. Dittmer went to the newspaper office and introduced herself to the editor, telling of some of DP&L's work in Oak Cliff. Later, DP&L adopted a policy of refunding electric deposits to elderly persons in Dallas. The first person requesting the refund was a Negro woman from Oak Cliff. The department took a picture of the woman receiving the refund. Then, Dittmer telephoned the Post Tribune editor and "I said we had taken the first senior citizen refund picture and it was one of the editor's subscribers in Oak Cliff. This localized the story for them, so the editor used our story and picture both, with good response from their readers," Dittmer said.

Another way the department endeavors to maintain good press relations is by keeping its media directory current, by revising and up-dating. Cutlip and Center stressed the importance of continually revising the media lists:

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
Few things could be more annoying to an editor than to receive news addressed to the person he or she replaced in the job two or three years earlier. The same reaction occurs when a publication or station outlet receives news material forwarded from or misaddressed to a location it vacated years earlier.64

Wilson keeps the department's "Media Book" up-to-date. He revises it completely every six months, and makes day-to-day changes as they occur. The book is a looseleaf notebook listing all the newspaper, radio, and television news personnel and executives, and news media addresses for the DP&L coverage area.

Wilson gathers statistical information for the department's fact file. This information is available for dissemination to the news media, for writing press releases, or for use by the Synchronizer or the Speakers Bureau. For example, January 9 to 11 was a period of colder-than-average Dallas weather. "I had to find out what the peak load was on those days, what it would have been if businesses had not closed, what equipment at our plants didn't work, the temperature range, storm reports, and the like," Wilson said.65 In this way, the department had the information available for quick reference when news media calls for information were received.

A third duty listed under the Press Relations category was conducting and monitoring public opinion research (see


65Wilson, January 13, 1977.
Appendix B). Cutlip and Center listed the function of research-listening as the first step in the public relations process. In fact, they wrote, "Monitoring the public environment is the first step in public relations." 66

DP&L conducts a public attitude survey each spring. An out-of-state research team is employed to survey the public opinion of DP&L. "We set up benchmark questions so we can measure opinion change over as much as twenty years. This is a valuable tool to us," Ward said. 67 One of the questions asked each year was, "Would you like your son or daughter to work for DP&L," because Ward said this reflects accurately the public image of the company. 68

Dallas opinion leaders are an important source of information to DP&L. Wilson compiles and revises periodically a list of these opinion leaders. Cutlip and Center discussed the importance of identifying and developing these leaders as sources, because the leaders serve as links in the communication chain in a community. Opinion leaders receive large amounts of information from many sources and are active communicators in their own strata of society. The leaders, in turn, pass information along to more passive nonleaders. If the leaders can be persuaded to receive a

66 Cutlip and Center, pp. 186-191.
68 Ibid.
public relations message favorably, their opinion has an influence with those whom they contact.69

Wilson's list of opinion leaders contains names of people active in Dallas civic, business, social, and professional organizations; religious groups; names of senior citizens; educators; ministers; members of ethnic organizations, and special interest groups of all sorts. Periodically, the department uses the list or portions of the list for mailings on subjects the company wishes to discuss. This is especially important now that the company's advertising is restricted to conservation topics. The company can use this means to contact opinion leaders by letter to discuss the company's position on various matters. In early 1977, 5,000 letters were mailed to Dallas opinion leaders on the subject of fuel sources.70

The fourth duty listed under the Press Relations category was coordinating photography required for news information and other activities (see Appendix B). Blackwell takes most of the photographs for the Communications Services Department, and these are used in the company publications, and for exchange with electric industry publications. If portraits are needed for any of the publications, they are done commercially. All films are processed commercially.

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69Cutlip and Center, pp. 242-243.  
70Wilson, January 13, 1977.
The fifth duty listed under the Press Relations category was planning tours of company property and assisting with activities of the Speakers Bureau.

Wilson coordinates formal or planned tours of company plants and other facilities. Each summer he arranges a tour for high school science students and their teachers to the atomic research laboratory in Austin. Wilson accompanies these groups as DP&L public relations spokesman.

Some tours are informal, with quick planning. These occur when any of the media call and ask to be taken on tour of a DP&L facility. Dittmer accompanied a Channel 13 Television team in November, 1976, to inspect the progress of the nuclear plant construction at Comanche Peak, near Glen Rose. When the Open House tours for the Solar Home were being conducted on weekends, Dittmer arranged special week day tours for the news media if they requested them. She escorted journalists from Christian Science Monitor to the home in January, 1977, and other news media personnel at other times. She and a representative from the Commercial Department escorted all such media groups through the Solar Home. "We both always went along. The Commercial Department representative could answer all sorts of technical questions and, because I'm not a technical person, I could monitor this and discern if the reporter didn't understand, so I'd put it in more layman's terms," Dittmer said.\footnote{Dittmer, January 14, 1977.}
Another duty not listed as Communications Services responsibility, but which is seen as extremely important by Ward, is community relations. Myriad functions might be categorized as community relations; and public relations experts cite long lists of these possibilities. Praeger listed nine functions that a utility public relations program can perform as part of community relations.

1. Integrate company interests with other civic leaders in wise community planning.
2. Tie-in with other business groups on industrial development.
3. Cooperate with community groups for civic betterment.
4. Join and work with civic and other associations.
5. Support community-wide cultural and philanthropic interests.
6. Arrange utility plant visits for the entire community.
7. Provide proper (a) publicity (b) advertising
8. Maintain close newspaper and radio station contacts.
9. Conduct attitude surveys.\(^7^2\)

Ward said that the first five functions are performed routinely by company executives and employees at all levels, because DP&L employees were traditionally involved in their communities. Ward, Wilson, Aston, and Dittmer work with the

\(^7^2\)Praeger, p. 284.
Speakers Bureau, although the Bureau is not a Communications Services responsibility, the head of the Marketing and Utilization Research Department is chairman of the Speakers Bureau. The Communications Services staff assists in fact finding or in speaking if they are asked to speak before community groups.

Wise community planning, industrial development, civic betterment, civic organizations, cultural and philanthropic interests are vitally linked with DP&L's philosophy, Ward said. The department arranges tours of various company facilities. The department provides publicity and advertising both, it maintains close newspaper and radio station contacts, and it conducts or participates in DP&L's attitude surveys, so that the department is engaged in the whole spectrum of Praeger's list.73

Ward, his staff, and Aston are all heavily involved in civic and professional organizations of all sorts. Aston was state president of the American Heart Association in 1977, was on the board of trustees of the Dallas Health and Science Museum, is a former president of the Dallas chapter of Public Relations Society of America. Ward is a member of many civic and professional organizations, and served as 1977 president of the Dallas Advertising League. Aston, Ward, and his staff participate in Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists, activities. Aston and

73 Ibid.
Ward are active in the Dallas Press Club and helped the Press Club in its 1977 Gridiron benefit to fund scholarships for journalism students by being responsible for physical arrangements for the Gridiron reception and show. Wilson acts as company representative at various meetings and serves on a number of committees: he coordinated the opening of Thanksgiving Square's chapel and bell tower in November, 1976. The Square is a monument built by business leaders in downtown Dallas. Wilson is on the Speakers Bureau, works with YMCA fund drives and the United States Savings Bond drive, and coordinates the leadership breakfast that opens the drive each year. Wilson helps with Dallas Press Club activities, too. Dittmer is active in professional organizations, and was 1977 secretary of the Dallas chapter of Women In Communications, Incorporated, the national organization for professional women journalists. Little is a past president of the Dallas Advertising League and participates in a number of other groups.

Ward said,

We take a very active part in community affairs and organizations. The company encourages us to do this. Historically, utility people are very involved in the communities, and this company is an excellent example of this participation. There is a good reason for this participation: if business is not very good, we can't pack up and move to Oklahoma City. They already have an electric company, and all our facilities are here. We have a billion-dollar investment in Dallas, so we are here to stay.74

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

This study sought answers to several questions regarding Dallas Power & Light Company Communications Services Department. The first question asked whether DP&L had special public relations problems different from problems faced by other industries. The extreme social, economic, environmental, and governmental pressures under which DP&L and Communications Services Department operate resulted in the study's conclusion that DP&L, indeed, had special public relations problems different from problems faced by other industries.

The second question asked what specific activities were undertaken in an effort to solve the special problems. Specific activities covered a range of diverse projects. The department began an intensified effort in 1976 to establish and maintain sympathetic relationships with small weekly and ethnic newspapers and radio stations. The department endeavored to expand and sustain existing working relationships with news media in the Dallas coverage area by some type of personal contact. The department maintained a consistent effort to reach DP&L employees with the company's messages through company publications. The department endeavored to influence Dallas public opinion leaders favorably
by presenting company messages in personal letters to opinion leaders. The department maintained a consistent effort to reach customers each month with the company's message through use of bill inserts.

The department endeavored to inform stockholders of the company's economic condition through the Annual Report Of The Dallas Power & Light Company. The department endeavored to reach the general public through special displays in mall shopping centers, and lobby exhibits and window displays in the DP&L building. The department cooperated with other DP&L departments' efforts to inform customers by helping plan and write special brochures, such as a brochure on meter reading; by participating in the company's Speakers Bureau; by helping coordinate tours of facilities, and by coordinating public relations activities for company projects. Examining all these activities led to the study's conclusion that efforts were being made to solve the company's special public relations problems, and that these efforts showed strength in the public relations concepts practiced by the company.

The third question asked what plans were made for long-range and short-range Communications Services activities. The study found long-range communication goals written only a year at a time, and in broad and general terms. Short-range plans for specific projects were very detailed, but much of the department's work was done in response to customer or news media inquiries, so that planning was impossible.
These characteristics of the long-range and short-range departmental goals were found to be weaknesses, but weaknesses inherent in the utility industry as it exists in a crisis situation.

The fourth question asked whether the management at DP&L viewed the public relations activities conducted by Communications Services Department as an important outlet for building and maintaining good will for the company. The study found that management did consider the Communications Services activities as an important, but not the most important, factor in building corporate good will. Efficient performance by the entire company to provide a reliable electric service was considered by management as the most important public relations activity the company could undertake. Management considered public relations as a function of every employee's job.

Cutlip and Center said an organization's performance was the foundation upon which to build all public relations activities, but made the distinction between maintaining good public relationships as an operating concept of management and that of the practice of public relations as specialized staff functions to serve management.¹ This study found public relations functions at DP&L centered under one vice-president, W. W. Aston. Aston's areas of responsibility were

the four departments with the most direct customer contact. The functions of Communications Services Department were basically those providing information to the various company publics. Because providing information is a specialized staff function, recommendations concerning this area will be found later in this study.

The fifth question asked how the Communications Services Department was organized. The study found that one man, L. Ray Ward, the department manager, was responsible for planning, assigning, and approving all work of his department. The department was functionally divided into two sections: display team and a departmental staff. The display team worked for the manager, who instructed the team director about the special exhibits and displays the other departments or Communications Services needed. The team worked at a DP&L building physically separated from the rest of the department by several city blocks so there was no close daily personal contact. The departmental staff worked in the main DP&L building. It was composed of the manager, two assistants, two copywriters, a secretary, and a typist. This small staff had many overlapping duties, and worked closely with each other and with other departments.

This study found the close cooperation to be a strength of the department, especially since it took place in a small and relatively informal organizational hierarchy. Perhaps, however, if the public relations duties of the department grow
more numerous, the staff should be expanded, and more clearly and narrowly defined job descriptions should be written and implemented in order to avoid fragmentation as the department grows larger.

The sixth question asked how the duties of the personnel in Communications Services were planned and implemented. As mentioned, the duties of the personnel were planned by the manager of the department. Nowling discussed planning and writing a public relations program, terming this process a top priority function. He said this process called for a high degree of precision and knowledge of the company, the company's objectives, personnel who would implement the program, news media methods to be employed, and all the other professional techniques one could command. Nowling said the writing process was strictly a management function. He stressed that whereas the writer could, and should, get input from others in the company, "The written public relations program is essentially a one-person job. . . . It cannot be written (not well, at any rate) by a committee."

Based on Nowling's experience as a public relations practitioner and president of a public relations firm (Nowling & Company, Incorporated of New York), his statement led to the conclusion that this portion of the DP&L Communications

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Services function was planned in accordance with accepted public relations practice.

Conclusions

Conclusions were reached as a result of this study that indicate DP&L's Communications Services Department evolved out of an advertising concept into a public relations concept. The department took the traditional steps in public relations practices that were regarded by public relations experts to be practical and sufficient for efficient operation. The study found that DP&L's Communications Services Department operated in a crisis-oriented atmosphere, one that was dominated by social, economic, political, and environmental pressures, and that the department showed great strength and relatively minor weaknesses.

Criteria Discussed

Criteria were described in Chapter I as guidelines to evaluate Communications Services activities. Praeger listed several areas in which a utility public relations unit operates: employee relations, customer relations, stockholder relations, community relations, and dealer relations. He recommended that public relations staff members for utilities have specific experience in at least five fields: public
relations advertising, social studies, employee relations, community relations, publicity, and public education.  

Farris and Sampson listed six P's of public relations: philosophy, policy, performance, publics, planning, and publicity. They said these six serve as the foundation for a successful utility public relations program.

Many strengths were found in Communications Services activities. Communications Services operates in all Praeger's areas except dealer relations; DP&L does not sell or advertise electric appliances. In the five recommended fields, Communications Services has staff members (with the exception of the display team) with experience or education, or both, in each of the five fields.

Communications Services activities were conducted with an awareness of the importance of all six of the P's Farris and Sampson listed.

Recommendations

Few weaknesses were found in the Communication Services Department's activities. Nevertheless, a need for improvement in certain areas was discerned; and relatively minor procedures could increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the program. The following recommendations were made:


1. Update all files. Because the staff is small and works under pressure in answering unanticipated inquiries, it is even more necessary that Communications Services personnel have a variety of facts and statistics readily at hand, than a public relations staff working in a product-producing business would need. Statistical information is gathered, the study found, and a daily "fact file" of newspaper clippings is distributed to management. These should form a nucleus for a collection of information to which the spokesmen for the company, and the Speakers Bureau members as well, could refer. All filing procedures should be updated to separate material by years. A cumulative record of all press releases should be kept by numbering and dating a master copy of each release as it is written, and filing the master copies in one file. In this way, at any time during the year, the department can quickly ascertain the total number of press releases written to date during that calendar year without having to tabulate them continually. All press releases, publicity letters to opinion leaders, news clippings, and "Special Reports" should be dated and cross-filed by subject matter as well as by the type of publication it is. Copies of each news clipping that is duplicated daily for distribution to management should be filed with the name and date of the publication from which it is taken clearly marked. Every effort should be made to date and number any special "News Tips" or "Special Report" printed even under emergency
conditions, so that these can be easily referred to later.

2. Collect a picture file for the Annual Report. The annual report of any company can be an excellent tool for creating corporate identity, public relations experts say. Shapiro discussed the role photographs could have in projecting personality or style to encourage trust in the financial and statistical information given in the report.5 Because the editor of the Synchronizer is staff photographer in addition to his editorial duties, and he takes photographs for the company newspaper, the "Special Reports," and the Annual Report as well as designing bulletin board posters, his time is necessarily at a premium. However, he could be encouraged to "think Annual Report" all year long, and to take additional shots of interesting construction or beautiful scenery in the Dallas area whenever he is out on assignment for other pictures. A file of possible Annual Report pictures could be accumulated during the year so that all would not have to be taken at one time of the year, before the Report is due. Beside saving time, this would ensure more interesting and visually satisfying pictures if made in the spring or summer months when background flowers and grass were available.

3. Encourage employee input to the company newspaper. A company newspaper is an important tool of management for getting the company message to employees. Woods suggested a president's column or editorial written over the signature of the president or someone in top management as a good way to humanize top management, yet get its message across. Woods said the editorial could be written by the editor after interviewing the executive, then could be presented for the executive's approval, and should be written in an interesting and fairly informal, not stilted, language and style. He said, however, that to be successful, an employee newspaper must foster a high sense of employee participation, or readership would not be high. He said the company's message must not take up more space than information, features, and pictures of employees and their interests if a sense of participation is to be developed. Because the writing staff of the DP&L newspaper is small and they have many other duties, much input from employees should be encouraged. This could be in the form of brief notices in the Synchronizer that employee stories and pictures are solicited. Along with this should go accompanying "how to" hints on taking better snapshots, details of the type of information needed for stories about employees, and discussions of "The Five W's and the H" of

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newswriting. A standard form such as a commercial newspaper would use for a fact sheet should be designed and distributed to the departmental reporters.

4. Recruit, train, and recognize departmental reporters. As discussed in an earlier chapter, the lack of input from the existing departmental reporters was a definite weakness of the paper, showing a lack of employee identification. If it is determined that the best way to obtain reporters is to continue the practice of having the supervisors appoint reporters, this should be done on the basis of choosing those who want to serve, then allowing them to perform this function without censorship by the supervisor.

The reporters should be allowed to attend a few Communications Services training sessions on submitting news. The training sessions should be brief and informal. Reporters should be instructed in using the standard form on which to submit the basic information in a "fact sheet" format, so the staff could then write the stories quickly, using the data the reporters submit. The staff should do the actual writing, because the reporters are not trained journalists. Finally, all the departmental reporters should be recognized for the part they play, other than simply by listing their names on the paper's masthead as is the practice. They might be featured in a "meet your reporter" type of story plus picture in several issues of the Synchronizer, with one or two featured in each issue. They might receive yearly certificates,
thanking them for their contribution to the paper; and they should receive contact by telephone and in person from the newspaper staff, encouraging them to submit news. Other ways to help the reporters do a more effective job and to help them develop a sense of personal participation should be developed.

5. Simplify procedures for approval of copy, pictures, and layout of company publications and conform to deadlines. Routing of copy and pictures to persons about whom the stories are written should follow a simple and standard procedure. Those involved and their supervisors should be asked to check all facts, technical information, and picture identification for accuracy.

Because journalistic writing is a specialized style of writing, instructions should accompany material to be checked for accuracy saying that the standard journalistic format must not be changed, because this causes rewriting delays, and interferes with deadlines. The submitted copy should carry the notation that if corrections were not received within a predetermined length of time, the copy would be assumed to be correct, and to be run as written. Procedures for submitting copy to top management for their approval should be simplified as much as possible, too. If possible, management people outside the department should check the material in the brown line or galley proof stage after it has been assembled into page form. This would enable management
to approve the content of the copy at the same time they see how the stories and pictures will look on each page. Such a step, rather than submitting each piece of copy individually for approval, then resubmitting in page form, would be a more realistic way for management to view the material, and would help meet printing deadlines.

6. Fix firm deadlines for submission of material to the company newspaper, for approval of the copy, and for publication and mailing. The goal should be to have each employee receive the newspaper on the same day each month, so he will anticipate its arrival.

7. Purchase Associated Press and United Press International stylebooks for everyone in the department and insist that all copy conform to this style. The joint AP-UPI Stylebook is the standard reference for spelling, style, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviation, and grammar for the nation's newspapers. Adopting such a style should discourage "rewriting" by well-intentioned, but uninformed personnel to whom copy is routed.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study examined only one department in DP&L's total of four departments with direct customer contact. It examined the traditional public relations activities that department practiced; those activities directed primarily toward news media and employee communications.
As noted in the justification for this study, a paucity of scholarly information exists about electric utility public relations operations. It is recommended, therefore, that further scholarly examination be undertaken in other public relations-oriented departments of DP&L and of the public relations practices of electric and other utility companies in order to expand the existing store of knowledge of their operations.
APPENDIX B

DALLAS POWER & LIGHT COMPANY

ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

L. R. Ward
Communications Services Manager

Responsible for:

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Planning Company's mass media communications programs and preparing schedules and materials to achieve Company objectives;

Coordinating activities of advertising agencies serving the Company;

Coordinating media communications programs to accomplish Company objectives;

Monitoring Company participation in industry communications programs.

DISPLAYS AND SHOWS

Designing and installing Company show windows and general exhibits;

Preparation and installation of special exhibits.

PUBLICATIONS

Preparation of Company publications for distribution to employees, customers and shareholders.
PRESS RELATIONS

Handling news information concerning the Company;

Establishing and maintaining favorable journalistic relations;

Conducting and monitoring public opinion research;

Coordinating photography required for news information and other activities;

Planning tours of Company property and assisting with activities of speakers bureau.
APPENDIX C

Communications Plan

1977

Goals:

1. Build acceptance of the need for a rate increase late in the year. This will be affected by TP&L and TESCO filings, but the public reaction is likely to be strongly negative. A normal summer could make this more acute.

2. Build acceptance of higher bills in the summer of 1977. Such action is closely tied to weather trends.

3. Improve load factor. This will be accomplished by use of the E-OK program as an umbrella covering efficiency of equipment (EER), the heat pump, insulation, etc.

4. OPEC will raise oil prices in December, an action which will have an impact on domestic oil and gas prices. This may create two additional problems which will need attention:

   A. Build understanding and acceptance of higher fuel costs.

   B. Participate in a nationwide conservation program called by the new President.

5. Winter emergency education activities may be required. There are strong indications that the winter will be colder and wetter than normal. This increases the probabilities of ice storms, heavy snows and other weather disturbances. Gas curtailment has already taken place (November 16). This winter may be one that has serious effects on the system.
Budget:

The 1977 budget will be adequate, unless problems are more severe than can be foreseen today.

Expenditures are planned in flights: winter, summer; and, to a lesser extent, spring, fall.
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