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Hospital conference

Denman & Company will sponsor a Hospital Financial Management Conference for hospital administrators, board members and medical staff on Thurs., June 30.

The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Hotel Fort Des Moines. James F. Hull of Network, Inc. will be the featured speaker.



Programs planned

The YWCA will begin two, four-week programs on Premenstrual Syndrome, Tuesdays, July 5 through July 26, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. This group will meet weekly and work together in identifying P.M.S. symptoms and recommended treatment. Participants will learn how diet and special exercises can free menstrual cramps, tension and depression.

Kathy Lewis, R.N., Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Iowa Lutheran Hospital is the speaker. The program fee is \$20.00 for members and \$25.00 for others. Call the YWCA at 244-8961 for class pre-registration.

IOWA

Branstad promotes Iowa tourism

Gov. Terry Branstad's "sell Iowa" tourism promotion will go on the road through the rest of the summer season when he visits three additional interstate highway information sites, according to the Iowa Development Commission. The Governor will work out of travel information centers the first Friday of each month, July through September, from approximately noon until 2 p.m.

The Governor's first visit to the centers was June 3 when he greeted travelers and suggested possible stops for them as they traveled through the state. Branstad had the opportunity to speak with travelers from over 14 states, including Iowa, as he worked as a center employee for two hours.

The remaining visits will follow a similar format. The schedule is: July 1, Underwood Information Center, I-80; August 5, Clear Lake Information Center, I-35, and September 2, Wilton Information Center, I-80.

Utility control centers: money-saver?

BY STEVE NORDER
JEN NOR NEWS SERVICE

Four state utilities, including Iowa Power and Light Company, announced last week a plan to jointly regulate the flow of electricity from a single control center for a possible savings of \$3.2 million.

Currently, each utility company has a computer control center responsible for the efficient generation and movement of electricity within its service area. However, when power must be bought or sold from one company to another, the decisions are made by people on an hourly basis.

The creation of a single electric control center for Iowa's utilities would coordinate the efficient use of electric generation plants, according to Ed Birdsall, vice president and general manager of Iowa Generation, a division of Iowa Power.

"Under the common control center plan, the most efficient generating capacity would be used to meet electric customer needs, regardless of which utility owns the plant," Birdsall said.

"Customers could realize the savings of the most economical electric generation because the production would be at the most efficient levels," he said.

The four companies that would share a common control center would be Iowa Power in Des Moines, Iowa Illinois Gas and Electric at Davenport, Iowa Southern Utilities in Centerville, and Iowa Public Service at Sioux City. The other three major Iowa companies could

also join in the development of the common control center.

Birdsall said the first year savings of the four companies is projected at \$3.2 million. "This figure was the result after deducting the initial costs of developing a control dispatch center, (estimated at \$10 million), costs of altering or terminating some long-term coal purchase contracts, and the loss from energy sales to utilities outside of Iowa," Birdsall said.

"Once the initial costs are paid for, the savings may be more. However, savings for Iowa Power customers would be modest since they already benefit from lower fuel costs than the average of the other Iowa utilities," he concluded.

Enver Masud, director of the operations review division of the Iowa Commerce Commission (ICC), agreed potential savings could be much more. "Having one control center to manage the efficient flow of electricity is exactly what we have been trying to achieve," Masud said.

"Earlier this month, we conservatively estimated the savings of a control center for all seven major utilities at \$10 million," he said. "I think that was low."

In response to a data request from the utility companies, the ICC has said the anticipated annual saving of energy cost for the four utilities could be \$21 million, according to Masud.

"If all seven power companies were to participate, the savings could be as high as \$30 million," he said. "However, their data response

indicates a \$24 million yearly savings."

Using a single control center to monitor electrical needs over large areas is not a new concept, Masud said. "This has been around for over 50 years. There are some state and interstate compacts around the nation already. Having these four companies get together exceeds my expectations. I only hope the other three join with them."

The three companies could join in the development of the common control center, said Chuck Seel, a spokesperson for Iowa Power. "If the others did join, the potential savings for electric users would be greater," he said. "However, with the four announced companies, our first year savings figure of \$3.2 million after start-up costs represents about \$3.50 per year for each customer. The savings could be reflected on the utility bill, but more likely it will be part of the cost adjustment formula."

Seel said the move to a single center would come in two steps. "First, an interim site will be chosen, probably at one of the existing centers," he said. "We could have that set up in two or three months. A permanent location could be ready in two years."

Before a center could begin, several items still need to be determined, Birdsall said. These include how to divide benefits and costs among participants, the allocation of economy energy sales, and the location of permanent facilities as well as the feasibility of interim operation. ■

Iowa pioneers automatic teller machines

BY MARILYN MCGEEHON

Most people think Iowa is a little backward and behind the times. For the latest in fashion, food and entertainment, most people go to places like New York—not Des Moines. But in at least one area, Iowa got a head start over New York, and it has started a national trend.

In the mid-1970s, Iowa took part in a piloting project for the use of automatic teller machines in banks and retail outlets, providing customers with access to their accounts virtually 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Instrumental in that project was the Iowa Transfer System, a corporation formed by five of the larger banks in Des Moines and around Iowa. United Central Bank, Bankers Trust, Banks of Iowa, Norwest, formerly Northwest Bancorporation, and Hawkeye Bancorporation were included. They joined together to lobby for legislation to allow for the evolution of the ATMs from their location at courtesy counters of Hy-Vee and Dahl's stores, where the transaction was assisted by a clerk, to customer-operated machines to point-of-sale terminals where a person can pay for a purchase with a bank card.

As evidence of their success, Robert Millen, president of United Central Bank and this year's chairman of ITS, noted that the organization now has 198 active members throughout Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota. The 430 terminals in the three states handle over 2 million transactions each month.

The only negative comments Millen said he has heard come when a machine is down. "But our up-time performance has been over 99 percent of the time," he added.

Overall, Iowa has had a very favorable reaction to the automatic tellers, Millen said. "Iowa has been one of the most successful



In Des Moines, the Iowa Transfer System averages 7,500 transactions per machine per month, according to Robert Millen, chairman of ITS.

states, with an extremely high number of transactions compared to other states. In Des Moines, our system averages 7,500 transactions per month per machine."

The use of the terminals is mutually beneficial to both the financial institutions and their customers, Millen said. For the consumer, it offers the convenience of a bank at any time, in 70 locations around Des Moines, plus the speed of making small transactions without waiting for a teller.

For the financial institutions, it reduces the paper that normally runs through the system, which helps maintain costs over the long run, and tends to displace transactions from the banks and their branches, which ultimately reduces the need for "brick and mortar," Millen said.

Because of these benefits, some major banks,