Computer news concerns execs

United Press International

ATLANTA — Home delivery of news by computer and cable television is one of the chief concerns of newspaper executives attending the American Newspaper Publishers Association technology conference.

The ANPA research and management meeting, which has drawn some 10,000 newspaper officials and closes Wednesday, is aimed at the introduction of new technology and its application in the newspaper business.

New developments are being demonstrated in stackers, presses, strapping machines, computer terminals, satellite concepts and laser technology that is quickly outpacing cameras in popularity for producing press-ready plates.

While the display booths contain very little data on computer-available news, the subject is being widely discussed by the conferees, with a forum on the push button access to news set for Wednesday.

"I don't think anyone has a clear view of precisely what the potential for electronic dissemination (of news) is going to be," said Walter Mattson, president of the New York Times Co. and chairman of the ANPA convention.

Newspapers are big business. Daily newspapers last year took in $14.5 billion from advertising, nearly 30 percent of all the money spent on ads in the United States, according the ANPA figures.

The threat of technological advances cutting into that healthy chunk of the advertising revenue pie has some people in the newspaper industry worried.

Publishers have been concerned about the electronic threat, previously from television and radio, for 60 years, yet the newspaper industry is flourishing.

"Newspapers have come into the radio-television era healthier than they were before," Matson said. "Newspapers are making huge capital investments. (ANPA estimates $659 million in 1980). We are all confident newspapers are here and they will stay here."

The introduction of home mini-computers and the rapid technological developments in the cable television industry, prompted in part by the growing use of satellites for information transfer, is making the retrieval of news from the home a reality.

The largest commercial effort for home information access — variously referred to generically as videotex and viewdata — is called "the Source," a service for owners of personal computers offered by the Telecomputing Corp. in McLean, Va.

The Source provides its 4,000 subscribers with a dial-up capability from home computers, giving them access to a variety of information stored in computers, including news from UPI, business and financial information, real estate listings, classified advertising and other data.

Push a button and the requested information pops up on a screen.

The Source charges subscribers a $100 lifetime membership and $2.75 per hour of use. A portion of that income goes to the organizations that provide the computer company with information.

Plans to save Yosemite draw debate

United Press International

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Calif. — Three factions in the dispute over a $100 million plan to save Yosemite National Park from the onslaught of man agree on two things:

That the 1,200-square-mile pearl of the national park system is in jeopardy and that the whole issue may be moot. They realize Congress and the President are having trouble balancing the budget now without additional spending at Yosemite.

Conservative estimates now put the price tag of the National Park Service plan, on the drawing boards for 10 years, at $100 million based on 1980 dollars.

The three groups at odds on how to save the park are the National Park Service which believes it is time to stop talking and start work, the 30,000-member Wilderness Society, which claims the plan is too soft and MCA Corp., parent company for Yosemite Park and Curry Co., the park's concessionaire, which thinks the plan is too hard.

At present, traffic into the park's narrow valley at times creates the same kind of traffic jam stretching through a haze of pollution that motorists from the city are trying to escape.

And, in nearly a century of Park Service custodianship, hotels, motels, fast food restaurants, grocery stores, gift shops, golf courses, tennis courts and a laundromat have been built within park boundaries.

The sheer faces of El Capitan and Half Dome stare down on 30 miles of criss-crossing blacktopped roads confined within the one-mile-wide and seven-mile-long Yosemite Valley — the place park Superintendent Bob Binnewies calls the "heart of Yosemite."

At present, traffic into the park's narrow valley at times creates a traffic jam stretching through a haze of pollution that motorists are trying to escape.

More than 1,350 structures are spread throughout the park, and most are confined between the granite valley walls. An average 2.5 million people visited Yosemite annually during the last decade. It took 1,700 NPS and Yosemite Park and Curry Co. employees living and working in the valley to serve them.

To restore the slipping splendor, planners agree the automobile must go along with many of the buildings.

NPS officials say the plan would get cars out of Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove to the south, redirect development to the park's periphery and keep most of the park under a wilderness designation.

"The result will be that visitors can step into Yosemite and find nature uncluttered by piecemeal stumbling blocks of commercialism, machines and fragments of suburbia," the plan says.

The NPS proposed to move more than 1,000 employees out of the valley. Many services, including park headquarters, would be moved to the nearby communities. A golf course, tennis courts and ice rink would be removed. At least 90 percent of the park's 761,000 acres would be designated wilderness.

Overnight visitors would be limited by the number of rooms and campsites available. Day visitors would be controlled by the number of available parking spaces.

The Wilderness Society says that's not enough.

"As long as the hotels and myriad of tourist facilities remain, Yosemite will not really change," it said in a statement. "It will continue to be an urban center inappropriately pushed onto what has been called a 'premier masterwork of the natural world.'"

The Wilderness Society wants to move all motels, cabins, gift shops, employee housing, warehouses and maintenance facilities to outlying "staging" areas over a 20-year period and provide transportation into the park with a non-polluting shuttle bus system. It would finance this addition to the plan with tax-exempt bonds and income from concessions.

Ed Hardy, chief operating officer for Yosemite Park and Curry Co., argues that restricting overnight stays to on-foot campers is discriminatory.

"It will become an elitist park if the only way to stay there is to walk in," Hardy said.

Binnewies says it is time to stop talking because more debate can delay the work.

Saudis say no to $2 per barrel hike

United Press International

ALGIERS, Algeria — Saudi Arabia rejected an average $2 per barrel oil price increase Monday as too high and OPEC oil ministers predicted their summit meeting would fail to unify oil prices and end in a free-for-all.

Other nations, among them both doves and hawks on the issue of oil prices, also opposed the $32 proposal made by Iraq, which sought a compromise to unify oil prices, currently ranging from the $28 charged by Saudi Arabia, largest foreign supplier of U.S. oil, to the $38.21 charged by Algeria.

In practical terms, the proposal would have raised the average price of OPEC crude by $2 per barrel and added 2 to 3 cents to the cost of a gallon of gasoline or home heating oil in the United States.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates said no, as did Iran, but for a different reason. It thought the price increase was "too low."

Oil ministers said the apparently unbridgeable differences meant there would be no progress in unifying oil prices this time around.

After concluding their formal opening session, 13 ministers from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries closeted themselves in the tightly guarded Aurassi Hotel for a late evening session to debate the proposal to raise the benchmark price of crude to $32 a barrel.

For the Saudis, OPEC's largest producer, it would have meant raising the price of their oil by $4 per barrel.

But Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani said that was too much and his government would not agree to it.

Several other OPEC ministers also expressed reservations about the plan and said there was litle hope of unifying prices now.

At OPEC's last price session in Venezuela in December, its once-unified pricing system collapsed in disagreement, touching off a wave of increases that sent crude oil prices to record levels.

Iranian Oil Minister Ali Akbar Moinfar, one of the most radical "hawks" within OPEC, said a $32 marker for OPEC crude was "too low," and suggested $35 might be more acceptable to him.

"We will not come down (in price) for the sake of price unity," said Moinfar. "We don't have a unified price for what we buy, so why should we have a unified price for what we sell?"

Conference sources said the Saudi oil minister has come under pressure from his OPEC colleagues, particularly Venezuela and Iraq, to cut back Saudi oil production by between 1 million and 1.5 million barrels per day.

Saudi Arabia currently produces 9.5 million barrels per day and some OPEC members fear that with a small surplus developing in the market, the excess Saudi production could hamper OPEC attempts to boost prices later in the year.