

The Battalion

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Computer ads a 'step' into videotex industry

United Press International

OKLAHOMA CITY — America's first metro-area public information computer system will begin operation in Oklahoma City and investors say only their first entry in the billion-dollar "videotex" industry.

Founders of infoVision Inc. say their system will give them a head start in the heated competition for the expected billion-dollar computer information market. "We view this as a first step," said Mike Farnham, president of Blue Jay, chief executive officer of infoVision. Farnham, previously an analyst and planner for TG&Y Inc., spent more than two years researching the videotex concept, which he describes as "a home name for a user-friendly run home to retrieve information."

By May 15, the group of Oklahoma City investors will place 40 terminals at high-rise office areas such as airports, convention centers and shopping centers. The screens, up to 100 by 100, will allow users to get descriptions of the city's shopping centers, motels, entertainment and restaurants free of charge.

Advertisers will pay fees of up to \$470 a "page" per year to be included in the system. InfoVision investors are betting their first videotex system

will set the stage for an intense assault on the grassroots consumer market.

"There's profitability in the public access environment, but obviously the billion-dollar industry that all the experts refer to is in the home," Farnham said. "We have to acclimate the consumers and get them used to interacting with the computer."

Within months, InfoVision plans to introduce "closed" subscription computer services that could offer exclusive information for the legal, medical, financial and real estate industries. Next could come a computer catalog shopping service. Ultimately — perhaps within five years — infoVision officials hope to offer an affordable full-service in-home computer information subscription service.

"The third phase would be to allow you to sit in your recliner and shop, bank and read the Wall Street Journal and transact business through your television," Farnham said.

InfoVision investors, who have spent less than \$1 million so far, say they expect to reach the "break-even" level of about 2,800 pages of advertising for their system in about eight months.

Larry Lucas, a principal shareholder, said videotex systems are nothing new in other countries, especially in Europe.

"The states have kind of lagged behind," he said.

He said videotex systems are operating in France, where an "electronic Yellow Pages" is offered, and in Switzerland. Florida's Disneyworld has a videotex system as does a mall in Dallas, but Lucas said his will be the first in the United States to offer a citywide public access videotex system.

Farnham said other American investors previously spent some \$50 million to promote in-home videotex systems, but subscription prices were too high for residents and the computer boom had not taken hold. He says experts estimate some 30 million homes will have computers by 1990.

Sears and CBS recently formed a \$50 million partnership to establish videotex systems around the country, Lucas said.

"It's a very hot subject — the videotex business — right now," he said.

In the next year, various companies probably will install about 20 metro-area videotex systems across the country, he said, with commitments already having been made for San Francisco, Phoenix and Honolulu.

He said thousands of investors are expected to attend a videotex conference in Chicago April 17.

InfoVision's video advertising plan is based on a program being operated successfully in Toronto by Genesys Group Inc., of Ottawa, Canada. Users of the Toronto system dial up some 4 million pages of advertising each week.

InfoVision has purchased Genesys software, which includes capabilities for intricate color graphics, and has rights for it in seven southwestern states.

The company will be looking at other cities — particularly those with high tourist traffic, like Denver — for possible expansion.

Advertisements in the system


can be updated almost immediately. Eventually, users will be able to read a restaurant menu, find a motel, get a football score or the weather forecast or even see who's performing at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas.

Farnham is confident the public will adopt the infoVision concept, but studies have shown it may be the young who will lead the way.

"In fact, the first people to walk up and use them are the

kids, but they lose their interest fairly quickly because there aren't any aliens to zap," he said.


"Computer technology does not frighten them like it does some adults."



CHANELLO'S PIZZA

CHANELLO'S PIZZA

\$1 off



Two Item Chanello's Pizza Or More
ONE COUPON PER PIZZA EXPIRES

PARKWAY SQUARE 696-0234

NORTHGATE 846-3768

Time to think of budgeting

United Press International

WILMINGTON, Del. — Where did the money go? As Americans begin to look at the year while completing their tax returns, this may be the most common question.

Personal finance advisers say it is the time to take stock of 1983's expenditures before setting your 1984 budget, to set this year's priorities.

Tracking last year's dollars is difficult, particularly if the financial records are kept in a shoebox, to be pulled out only at tax time.


"My feeling is that the best way to prepare is to go through the checkbook and detail the expenditures. But often, what you get in the end is a dollar amount that cannot be accounted for," said Frank Alberio of Wilmington, who is with the New York

City-based Deloitte Haskins & Sells accounting firm.

To reconcile the account, Alberio said, approximate miscellaneous expenditures by figuring average daily expenses.

To establish a budget, estimate monthly net income and then subtract fixed expenses such as housing and credit payments, and set estimated spending limits on other categories — food, utilities, clothing and fun.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD



EUROPE

- 12 COUNTRIES
- MAY 18 - JUNE 15
- \$ 1700

CHINA

- 6 MAJOR CITIES
- MAY 17 - MAY 30
- \$ 2100

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Thursday March 29, 1984

7:00pm

Rudder Forum

Featuring these fine Retailers

J. Riggins
R. Rush & Co.
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Desmonds
Mary's Bridal Shoppe
Al's Formal Wear

Shala's

Entertainment: Miss TAMU 1984

Kim Walters

Tickets \$2.00 at the door, from any Hospitality member, or at the MSC Box Office

