

A Conversation with International Pipeline Committee Chairman, Bernie Guichon, SR/WA



International Pipeline Committee Chairman Bernie Guichon, SR/WA, is employed by Westcoast Transmission Company, Ltd., a British Columbia energy conglomerate. Guichon, as Manager, Lands, Right-of-Way and Environment Division, is responsible for all pipeline right of way activities for Westcoast.

Guichon is a twenty-one year member of IRWA first with Puget Sound Chapter 4, then a charter member of British Columbia Chapter 54. He began his term as Chairman of the Pipeline Committee last June.

This special June pipeline issue would not have been possible without the efforts of Bernie Guichon and members of his committee. Their diligence in producing first-rate articles has made this special industry publication a success.

RIGHT OF WAY talked with Bernie Guichon recently about the Pipeline Industry and IRWA's role within the industry. Here are some of his comments.

RW: What do the right-of-way agents who are in the pipeline industry do?

Guichon: The typical agent acquires through negotiations the right of way required for the pipeline. We view our job as very important, for every pipeline project requires land and right of way. Without land or rights-of-way through the land the pipeline facilities cannot be built.

RW: How does your department work?

Guichon: At Westcoast, right of way agents are involved in the beginning of the planning stage of every project. The agent is involved in aerial studies,

photographic and map studies, then ground studies and surveys. The engineers may want to build from A to B, but it's the agent's job to work with the engineers that are designing the facilities to inform the engineers of any location problems that may arise.

RW: What is the purpose of the Pipeline Committee?

Guichon: The International Pipeline Committee is an industry oriented committee who's purpose is to equip the members to better fulfill their professional obligations in the pipelining field. The committee serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, drawing on the combined industrial expertise to keep members well-informed of problems, procedures, and developments associated with pipeline rights of way. Committee members also help prepare educational programs for use at the regional and chapter levels and at the International Seminars. Hopefully, these opportunities for personal and professional development afforded by the committee enable members to improve their performance on the job to the advantage of their employers.

RW: What is the structure of the Pipeline Committee? How is the information transmitted to the member?

Guichon: The committee has a chairman, a vice-chairman, who is

currently John Knecht, SR/WA from Tulsa, Oklahoma and a Secretary, Ross Woodward from Spokane, Washington. The committee has ten regional representatives and a variety of members at large. Anyone who wishes to become a member of the committee would submit their name to the committee for consideration.

Information relation to the industry is discussed at the meetings and then is transmitted by the regional representatives to their chapters. Each representative attempts to put on a program at a Seminar. For example, I helped present a program at the Western Canada Bi-Annual Seminar as representative for Region 10.

RW: What programs has the Pipeline Committee developed for the benefit of the members?

Guichon: Of course the major emphasis over the last few years has been at the International Seminar. Programs have been varied and well-attended. At past International Seminars we have had over 200 people attend each of our early bird workshops and regular sessions.

This year the committee will feature talks discussing the effects of pipelines on agricultural land values, the effects of cultural resource laws, energy legislation, and leasing and drilling requirements. It should be a very successful program.