

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.

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Chapters have available three films about the Alaska pipeline that are excellent programming aids to supplement a luncheon meeting. And of course, a continuing effort is made to provide current information that is publishable for **RIGHT OF WAY**.

RW: What programs are planned in the future? Is there a special project that the Committee is working on?

Guichon: Roger Ryman, SR/WA and Bill Grissom, SR/WA, who are members of the Committee have been instrumental in establishing an educational program with the Bureau of Land Management. The beauty of the BLM school, with the third annual presentation being made this fall, is that it builds a bond of communication between a regulatory body and the Association. Not only are the programs beneficial to our members and the regulatory personnel, but coordinated activity in the field of education is established, with the International Right of Way Association viewed as the organization providing the education needed by their people.

Due to the success of this program, the United States Forest Service is also attempting to establish a similar program with the Association. Additionally, I have been attempting to interest more colleges in **IRWA** educational programs.

RW: Why have some of these activities been established?

Guichon: Regulatory authorities in both the United States and Canada seem to roll the landman and Right-of-way people together. Traditionally, landmen deal with wells, mineral leases, etc., and have not been overly concerned with the landowner or with an education program. As a result, legislation was passed in Alberta requiring certain educational standards be met.

Yet, at the same time **IRWA** already has a viable, continuing education program. Our efforts are to educate the regulatory bodies and Association of Petroleum Landmen members that we do provide the education now being required. This, hopefully, would lead to increased membership in the Association, especially in areas like Alberta which have a high concentration of

right of way agents who currently do not belong to **IRWA**.

RW: What additional projects could IRWA do to attract more individuals from the Pipeline Industry to join the Association?

Guichon: Our committee is a focal point to help understand what industry requires of its right of way people. But, establishment of chapter industry committees would be a definite plus, if they provide industry the information it needs.

RW: For example?

Guichon: A chapter committee could take on the job of legislative watch, and passing that information on to its members and the industries they represent. Laws are being passed constantly across the continent that affects employers in building new facilities, whether it be highways, electric transmission lines or pipelines.

RW: What do you see as a stumbling block to the growth of the Association?

Guichon: Unfortunately, it is difficult to get everyone active. When a person becomes active, that person starts to learn. The Right-of-way people have a responsible mandate when dealing with the land. An agent's responsibilities encompass regulatory statutes, social-economic considerations of a project, environmental parameters, etc. An agent must liaison with all parts of a project and that takes involvement. That same involvement is necessary for a highly professional association in order that **IRWA** can be looked on as *the* source when it comes to right of way expertise.

With involvement, i.e. Chapter industry committees, we can establish more programs with regulatory agencies and industry. Additionally International, regional, and chapter level programs would increase the Association's visibility within the field and solidify and increase the number of members who belong to the Association.

RW: You have been a member since 1961. In that time what changes in the Association have you seen that benefits the pipeline member?

Guichon: The emphasis on education now is the major benefit. The original concept of the old American Right of Way Association had a real estate orientation. Now there has been a

definite swing to education and its benefits.

The International Seminars were more of a convention, now the Seminar is a definite educational seminar program. It's gotten away from the annual bash syndrome. This is a definite plus for the member. The seminar has gotten so that you really want to participate in more than is possible.

RW: Any thoughts you'd like to share with the membership?

Guichon: I feel a strong bond will be established as the interchanges between industry, regulatory bodies, and **IRWA** are increased.

I also see a bright future for young people if they have a land background, be it in farming, forestry, etc. As long as they have a consciousness of what happens outside the urban area, they will have a successful future in the right of way field. A young person can have any academic discipline, biology, engineering, agricultural sciences, and if he has common sense, the ability to see the other's point of view, and communicate his point of view he will do well.

Subsidiary (cont. from pg. 38)

Westcoast is also a participant in the Foothills-Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline project which received legislative approval by the United States Congress in December 1981. Alberta gas is now flowing through the western leg of the southern portion of the line to San Francisco. Construction of the eastern leg to Chicago is almost complete. By the winter of 1986-87 when gas will be flowing from the North Slope of Alaska to California and Illinois, the pipeline will have cost \$40 billion—the largest privately financed project in history.

For a quarter century, the Westcoast natural gas transmission system has operated without any major disruption of service and with no measurable adverse effects on the environment. In large measure, the development and growth of northern British Columbia and the burgeoning of industry on Canada's west coast and in the U.S. Pacific Northwest can be directly attributed to the construction of the Westcoast pipeline.