

— and couldn't — happen at an American-style nuclear plant.

Looking to the future, one cannot predict with certainty what USCEA's advertising programme will look like next year or the year after. Although the programme continues to be very effective, new issues — like the environment — may be addressed as the research indicates. For example, research shows that a majority of Americans are not aware that using nuclear energy cuts gas emissions contributing to the greenhouse effect. But when asked, by more than a 3-to-1 margin, Americans favour using more nuclear energy if it would reduce the problem of greenhouse gas emissions.

There are many challenges for the nuclear industry as it moves into the 1990s. The need for more nuclear energy plants will likely become more acute by the middle of the decade. In some parts of the USA, electricity supply has not kept pace with demand. And the public wants its energy needs met without increasing foreign oil dependence and without damaging the environment.

When the time comes to build new nuclear energy plants, local communications on that subject will be needed. The ease in gaining acceptability will depend on long-term relationships between the utilities and their consumers, as well as a broad recognition of the need for nuclear energy and the benefits it provides. USCEA's national communications, including its advertising, are helping to build that recognition.

USCEA's INFOWIRE

An early warning system for nuclear communicators

by Patricia Bryant

INFOWIRE is a newswire service designed, operated, and written specifically for nuclear communicators. Based in Washington, DC, at the US Council for Energy Awareness (USCEA), INFOWIRE currently serves 104 subscribers in 16 countries.

INFOWIRE was started in the early 1970s in response to the nuclear energy industry's need for prompt distribution of information. At that time, media and congressional interest in nuclear energy was beginning to intensify. Anti-nuclear activists were organizing and beginning to understand the importance of "media events" as an effective means of reaching the public with their messages. New words and phrases — abnormal occurrences, containment, pluto-

nium, breeder reactor — were creeping into the public lexicon.

The increased focus on the nuclear industry placed new and heavy demands on the industry's communicators. Too often, it seemed, communicators did not have the most current information needed to respond to the latest event, issue, allegation, or activity.

The industry needed a means of quickly and simultaneously alerting industry communicators to fast-breaking news and events, equipping them with facts and background to respond to inquiries before the telephones began to ring. The INFOWIRE newswire service was created to meet this need.

Although largely devoted to US activities at first, the international nuclear community was quick to subscribe to INFOWIRE. Media and public interest in the fire at the Browns Ferry nuclear plant in Alabama in 1975, parliamentary elec-

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NucNet: Nuclear information network in Europe

Beginning in January 1991, the European Nuclear Society (ENS) will start operating a news and information service for public information officers in the nuclear field. Called the European Nuclear News Network, or NucNet, the system is being co-operatively launched by organizations in Belgium, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and USSR. Other East European countries are expected to join shortly.

NucNet will cover nuclear developments in Europe by working with individual contacts, correspondents, and other news sources. It is hoped that it will interlink with the USA's INFOWIRE news service and a possible Far Eastern nuclear information network. Main subscribers are expected to be communicators at utilities, nuclear facilities, research centres, safety inspectorates, regulatory bodies, and other organizations requiring timely and factual information about nuclear events, controversies, milestones, political issues, media reports, upcoming developments, and other topics.

More information about NucNet may be obtained from ENS, Monbijoustrasse 5, P.O. Box 5032, CH-3001 Berne, Switzerland.

