

Y2K contingency planning—increases preparedness, heightens confidence

“What if...” That’s the question Western’s contingency planners have been asking themselves a lot recently. What if—despite all of our inventorying, renovation and testing—we miss something? What if outside entities—such as local telephone or electric utilities—have not prepared adequately? Although all the reports say most industries are on track and the chances of wholesale disruptions in services are low, if not improbable, the nagging question, “what if...” persists.

Good insurance

Western’s answer to the “what if” question is contingency plans. In some ways these plans are like insurance policies. You don’t expect problems, but if they do occur, you have a safety net.

Over the past few months, each region, as well as the CSO and CRSP Customer Service Center has prepared detailed Y2K contingency plans. They focus on strategies for operating the power system at times of key Y2K rollover dates to reduce the potential for disruptions in service. Although tailored to individual regions and offices, each plan analyzes risks, both in and outside Western’s control and identifies steps needed to avoid or minimize potential impacts. “Although we don’t expect any serious problems on the rollover dates, it gives us a good feeling knowing we’re going into this prepared,” maintains **John Harrington**, contingency plan coordinator for the Upper Great Plains Region.

What’s in a contingency plan?

Most contingency plans include staffing plans for manning key facilities during

rollover dates, provisions for manual operations of equipment should automated systems fail, communications backup links and operational preparedness for dealing with loss of power, telephones and/or other communications systems. **Jasen Strutt**, Sierra Nevada’s contingency planning coordinator, notes that contingency plans “are a must. They should cover every element of your business and organization that could be affected, Y2K or not. An effective plan will clearly map out how to operate your business with failures or breakdowns. Some of the best contingency planning is often plain common sense.”

The big picture

Some of the plans go beyond regional concerns. “For example,” CSO Contingency Plan Coordinator **Cathy Cunningham** points out, “the CSO plan covers Westernwide issues such as BIDSS and Corporate Communications.” In addition, we are also participating in North American Electric Reliability Council industrywide planning and drills. And we are working with Western Systems Coordinating Council, Mid-Continent Area Power Pool, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and many others.

According to Y2K Project Manager **Don Nord**, “We are very pleased with the work everyone has done in our contingency planning and the cooperation of other agencies. Western is ahead of many other offices in DOE and in step with other electric power entities. Good work everyone!”



“The CSO plan covers Westernwide issues such as BIDSS and Corporate Communications.”

–Cathy Cunningham

Personal Y2K Checklist

Have you seen your region’s or office’s Y2K contingency plan?

What are your responsibilities?

If unsure, ask your supervisor or contact one of these contingency plan coordinators:

Jasen Strutt (SNR)

Roy Tinsley (DSWR)

Roger Armstrong (RMR)

John Harrington (UGPR)

Mike Richmond (CRSP)

Cathy Cunningham (CSO)

All contingency plans are available on our internal Web page at www.cso.wapa.gov/y2k.