

Our environmental commitment

As Earth Day 2000 approaches, I'm proud that Western recently renewed its commitment to environmental protection and stewardship.

As our environmental policy affirms, environmental compliance is everyone's responsibility. To do your part, you must be informed. Our environmental community will provide you that information on a regular basis.

The following synopsis outlines our approach to this important aspect of our business.

We are strengthening our environmental program by developing an Environmental Management System based on internationally-accepted standards. To be completed in 2003, this quality-based, life-cycle system is beginning to streamline

our processes, measure their effectiveness and guide improvements.

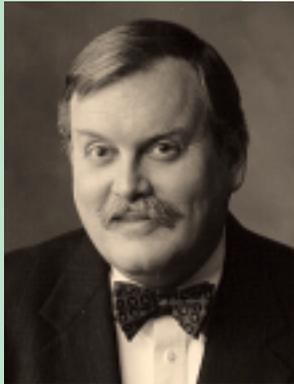
Some large commercial power users already demand environmentally preferable electric power. Our EMS is the first step toward future competitiveness for both Western and our customers in this growing market segment.

en route to Canadian nesting grounds. In central Nebraska, 10 times that number are doing the same thing. These are just some of the millions of birds representing hundreds of species that move into and through our service territory.

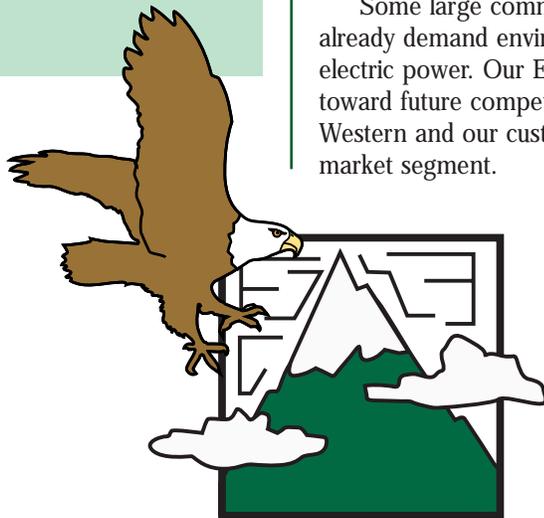
Problems arise when birds hunt or nest near our high-voltage transmission lines and substations. We have documented more than 100 different species of birds—from swallows to golden eagles—that nest in our buildings, bus work, transformers and transmission structures. They hunt from and roost on our lines, towers and vehicles. Their interaction with our electrical facilities can lead to flashovers, which sometimes result in outages or the electrocution of the bird (see the related feature on page 4). Collisions may also occur.

Yet, most of the problems between birds and Western's system can be solved. As a Federal agency, Western must comply with conventions in the migratory bird treaties the United States shares with Canada, Mexico, Japan and Russia. We must do our part to ensure that these birds pass through our service territory without harm.

To find out more about our efforts to protect and preserve the environment, check out the environmental pages on our external website or visit the folks in your local environmental group.



Mike Hacskaylo



In the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado, 40,000 to 50,000 sandhill cranes have gathered to feed