Lockhart takes leadership role in energy field

By MORRISH BAKER BEEK, ALUMNUS Editor

In the rapidly changing world of public utilities, 1997 distinguished alumnus Tom Lockhart (BS '57) is taking on a leadership role on the road to the 21st century.

Lockhart is PacifiCorp vice president for Wyoming, plus the first such position in the company. He has been in the company for 31 years and is responsible for all the company's operations in Wyoming.

Open access dispatching is one of the biggest changes facing the energy industry today. Dispatch involves using transmission and distribution systems currently owned by companies like PacifiCorp as common carriers. Making the transition has not been accomplished before in this country, and Lockhart is charged with identifying and implementing a process to achieve this goal.

Lockhart began his engineering career, following graduation from UW in 1957, as an instrumentation engineer for Marquard Aircraft in Los Angeles. He then moved to the military and served in Korea. When his father died and his mother had a stroke while he was home for the funeral, Lockhart left the military and joined Pacific Power and Light. He started as a distribution engineer in Casper and quickly rose up the ranks, filling positions ranging from manager at Thermopolis, Wyo.; to rate and policy administrator at Portland, Oregon; to district manager at Sandpoint, Idaho, and Laramie. He left PP&L for seven years (1978-1985) and worked as vice president of engineering and operations at Black Hills Power and Light in Rapid City.

Lockhart returned to PP&L in 1985 as director of power planning in Portland. He then moved on to the position of assistant vice president in Salt Lake City, then vice president for power systems at PacifiCorp Electric Operations in Portland, vice president and Wyoming regional manager in Casper and vice president, strategic customer segments, and to his current position in March 1997.

PacifiCorp Power & Light started out as a moderate-sized company in Wyoming and two other states. Lockhart was present during a period in the corporation's history that was marked by a series of acquisitions. He also took part in one of Pacific Power's largest moves, combining with Utah Power and Light. That was completed in 1980, before Lockhart's first successful energization of its type in the United States in 50 years.

Lockhart worked in Salt Lake City at the time, helping to lay the foundations of the company.

Lockhart is involved with the company at another interesting time, as PacifiCorp takes on an international role. For example, the week before this interview was taped, Lockhart traveled to Australia to check on one of the company's holdings. He notes that utilities worldwide face many of the same challenges found here; they also have the same generally good people to try to resolve those challenges.

Lockhart takes pride in his firm's community focus.

Though Lockhart has always been interested in the communities and the customers, he says, "It's fun to be part of a quality corporation."

As a leader of hundreds of employees around the western U.S., Lockhart describes his management philosophy as a "hands-off" approach.

"I put it (the organization) in place," he says. "Then if they can figure out what the job is, I help them through those problems — a little like a blockader or a football team."

Three of Lockhart's four children are electrical engineers, two of them, and a son-in-law, are graduate electrical engineers at UW. It's also worthy of note that three of the four Lockhart children have master's degrees, and the fourth is working toward one. That most of his offspring followed him into electrical engineering is flattering and probably reflective of the fact the younger Lockharts saw the lifestyle their parents led and wanted it for themselves.

That each went on to not only get a bachelor's degree but also a graduate degree is attributed by their father to the role modeling both parents set. When Lockhart was in his mid-50s, he returned to school and earned a master's degree from Portland State University. Lynn recently returned to school and earned her master's degree, too.

"When they (the children) were in school, I was also in school," Lockhart says. "They watched me study and thought studying was okay."

"It was by example... They saw that and it just became part of their plans, too."

Despite assuming assignments that take him around the world, Lockhart has always found time to serve the University of Wyoming. His UW volunteer resume is extensive:

- H.T. Penson Endowment Fund raising committee member, 1997-present
- UW Engineering Steering Committee, 1993-present

- MS Alumni Advisory Committee member, School of Environment and Natural Resources, 1993-present

- CASPER board member, UW Institute of Environment and Natural Resources, 1992-present

- Life member, UW Alumni Association

- Past member, UW Board of Directors, executive committee member

- Cowboy Joe Club member

- UW Foundation President's Council

- UW Scholarship Club

- Founding member, Order of the Engineer

"The university did so much for me," he says of his contributions of time and talent. "It's kind of payback time."

Lockhart is currently involved in work with the Environment and Natural Resources Institute, which is attempting to deal with "one of the very highest issues in the country — the environment and the development of natural resources."

"Because of that importance to the world, people need to get involved."

"Frequently, people and groups who have a vested interest in environmental issues assume polarized positions. UW's program hopes to transcend that."

"This organization is trying to work towards common solutions that balance the values of both," Lockhart says. Achieving that balance would create "a much better system."

Tom Lockhart holds dear his love for his home state and its people.

"I think the people in Wyoming have the same values that my wife and I have," he says. "It's sure fun to be around people who have those values."

"People look you in the eye, and they tell you what they're thinking," Lockhart adds. He calls that quality "fairly unique but prominent in Wyoming."

Biographical Information

Tom and his wife, Lynn Anselmi Lockhart, have four grown children: Frances Brinkman, Tom Jr., Theodore and Virginia. (Frances, Tom Jr., Theodore, and Frances' husband, Matthew Brinkman, are alums of the University of Wyoming.)

His civic and philanthropic activities over the years include: Key Bank board of directors, Wyoming Race for the Cure Casper organizing committee, West Coast Chamber Orchestra board of directors; Black Hills Area Council, Boy Scouts of America, League of Women Voters of Laramie; Thermopolis, Wyo.; City Council; Thermopolis Chamber of Commerce, Laramie Area Chamber of Commerce; United Way; Rotary Club; Kiwanis Club; and Jaycees. He currently is vice president of the Casper Community College Board of Trustees.

At UW, he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity.