

'That number in Detroit, Walter, is ...'

Story and photos:
GARY CASKEY

The world is coming to Detroit. Preparations for the Republican National Convention are well under way and Michigan Bell Telephone is undertaking the single largest assignment in its history — providing all of the communication needs and services of convention participants.

Because the gathering is one of the most intensive media events in the world, Bell started its plans shortly after site selection in January 1979.

Bell expects to have all personnel associated with the convention assembled in Detroit by the end of this week. By now more than 75 percent of the work has been completed.

"The organization is functioning," is the status description given by Burke Campbell of Birmingham, coordinator of sales and service for Michigan Bell.

Bell's task has been to design, engineer, and build a phone company within a phone company — large enough to serve a population of 25,000.

Television demands alone require Bell to do in four days the volume of business normally done in one year.

After the Winter Olympics, Bell bought its television equipment and shipped it to a site adjacent to Cobo Hall. A trailer known as a Television Operations Center now houses the sophisticated machinery.

ALL TELEVISION signals from the Joe Louis Arena will be received, monitored and transmitted from the Television Operations Center.

The three major networks are expected to spend between \$6 million to \$8 million for their convention coverage. The Joe Louis Arena television booths now being assembled will cost about \$300,000.



each and will be torn down immediately after the last gavel sounds.

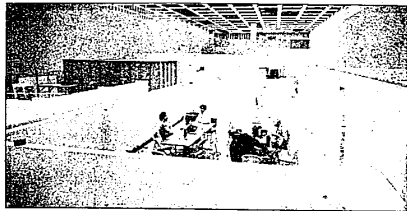
With a task force of almost 500 people, Michigan Bell will install, maintain and then remove some 10,000 telephones and 6,000 lines for candidates, state delegations, and media.

About 25,000 miles of telephone cable and wires have been installed to serve the convention — enough, if stretched end to end, to encircle the earth.

Michigan Bell predicts it will spend \$1.2 million on the convention and will not make a profit.

Rates approved by the Michigan Public Service Commission were designed to recover the costs of specialized services and facilities to be provided. Much of what Bell installs will be re-used, however, after the convention.

TOP: In just less than a month, Joe Louis Arena will swell with Republicans from across the country. Preparations now are underway to install the cables linking Detroit to the world. BELOW LEFT: In the operating room is Raymond Norton, who said some equipment comes via Lake Placid Winter Olympics. CENTER RIGHT: All-encompassing electronic switching system is in the basement. BELOW RIGHT: Workers break for lunch in Cobo.



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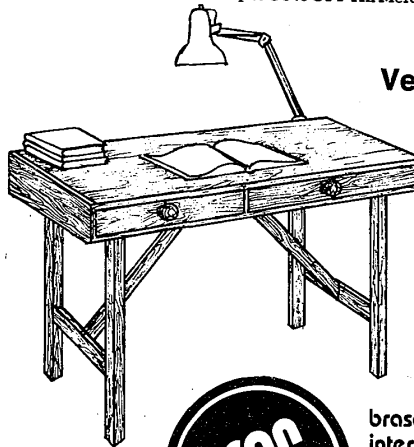
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