

Bell to cut 800 jobs by year's end

Michigan Bell Telephone Co. will reduce its 19,000-employee work force by at least 800 before the end of the year.

The action "must be taken to respond to economic and competitive marketplace pressures of today and those expected in the future," said Michael J. Fridus, Bell vice president for personnel and support services.

Separation incentives will range up to 75 percent of a year's salary plus outplacement counseling and educational assistance, Fridus said.

They will be offered to administrative and supervisory employees beginning this week in an effort to trim at least 500 white-collar workers from the company's payroll.

Extended leaves of absence also will be offered and transfers to other units of Ameritech — Michigan Bell's parent company — will be expedited, he said.

IF TOO few supervisory and administrative employees elect to participate in the program, Fridus said, some will be separated involuntarily.

Separation incentives also will be offered to operators, technicians and other non-management employees in selected locations throughout the state to reduce that segment of the work force by at least 300, Fridus said.

Michigan Bell faces stiff competition for the vast majority of its services, Fridus said.

The company's growth, he said, is hindered by federal restrictions that prevent Michigan Bell from offering customers certain long-distance and information services, and from manufacturing telecommunications equipment, he said.

Bell has more than 3 million customers, Fridus said.

"We're taking these steps to ensure we can continue to offer quality service and remain financially healthy in 1989 and beyond," he said.

Handlers wrap real candidates

WILL the real candidate please stand up?

Unfortunately, the answer to such a question cannot be readily given by any of the major office seekers. There is an ingredient in the political process which is having more and more influence on the minds of the voters and, therefore, on election day outcomes.

Although this ingredient has flavored the political pie for quite some time, its name has come out of the closet, and its influence has become more blatant.

THE MEDIA refer to it as the handlers. Their job is to package the candidate.

One commentator recently bypassed the candidates and ran the handlers. Such comments, sad to say, probably hit more at the eventual outcome than the real qualifications of either candidate.

The question is not so much who will lead our nation and influence the world in the most humane way and prudent manner. It is not about which one will most surely choose



Rev. Robert Schaden

the way to peace rather than settle for the temporary absence of war.

How best to maintain the good values we do have and adopt those which have eluded us has also taken a back seat. The matter at hand has more to do with which group of handlers can package the more marketable product.

HANDLERS know it's the sizzle that sells the steak, not the cow. So they instruct and coach not only candidates, but anyone in the inner circle

whose comments, dress or demeanor may become a part of the package. It would seem that ventriloquist Edgar Bergen might have learned something from these folks on how to present Charlie McCarthy puppet.

The packaging of candidates is not relegated to the top of the political spectrum. While the video cameras focus more heavily on the major candidates, the game is played all the way down the line. The real candidate is to be found somewhere behind the glitz.

Regardless of the office sought, the flashing smiles or stern decorum substitute for substance. What the voters want to hear becomes the slogan for the week.

The handlers seem to know that for some of us a picture with the family cocker spaniel will be enough to pull the desired lever or punch the

proper card.

WHERE DOES that leave us?

The way we answer indicates whether we have simply been confused by the handlers or whether we have been so taken in that we have allowed them to disenfranchise us from our sacred right to cast an intellectual vote.

When students are confused and don't know it, they fail courses. When voters are confused and don't know it, they buy packages in lieu of voting for people.

WHEN THE game is called by the handlers, all would-be voters must become students. Homework requires effort, but it pays off.

The Rev. Robert Schaden is with the Neuman Association at Schoolcraft Community College in Livonia.

Genealogists will meet

"Military Records: How to Use Them" will be the topic when the Oakland County Genealogical Society meets at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 1. Carolyn L. Griffin, the speaker, will be heard in the Rotary Room of Birmingham's Baldwin Public Library, 300 W. Merrill, south of Maple and east of Southfield roads.

The meeting is open to the public. Information on the group is available from Lois Ellis at 751-5204.

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