

## CEO talks on virtual reality

Sometimes what's there really isn't.

That's what Robert Jacobson, president and chief executive officer of WORLDESIGN, is adept at explaining. He deals in the world of virtual reality, a place which exists with the help of computers.

The Oakland University School of Engineering has invited Jacobson to deliver the sixth annual William Hammerle Lecture at 3:30 p.m. today in Meadow Brook Theatre. Jacobson will speak on "Designing in Virtual Space: Crafting 3-D Information to Better Understand the World We Live In." The lecture and parking are free.

Jacobson's Seattle firm designs and implements information-design solutions for industrial clients using "virtual worlds" technology.

Jacobson sees virtual reality used in practical applications: A surgeon could wield a simulated scalpel on a three-dimensional

electronic body before attempting to try innovative techniques on a living person. Two people could meet in a telecommunication-supported virtual world. Together they could explore a restored Aztec pyramid, complete with Aztec priests and nobles, without ever leaving their office. Corporate executives using a corporate visualizer could break down and then rebuild a manufacturing process with the help of their managers and workers.

Scientists could simulate and experience the Big Bang and Big Collapse theories.

Jacobson predicts that within the decade, many of these experiences will be common.

"Our ability to design information will determine how we as a society and as individuals come to know and understand the world we live in," Jacobson says.

Prior to creating WORLDESIGN, Jacobson was associate director of the Human Interface

Technology Laboratory at the University of Washington. The HIT lab has become North America's premier public industrial research and development laboratory working on virtual worlds technology.

Jacobson holds a doctorate in urban planning from UCLA and master's degrees in television studies and communications management, respectively, from UCLA and the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California.

The Hammerle Lecture Series is held in memory of the late William G. Hammerle, a founding professor of the School of Engineering and Computer Science, who died in 1986. The series brings lectures to Oakland who reflect Hammerle's approaches to solving challenging problems.

The lecture is supported by the William G. Hammerle Endowment, the School of Engineering and Computer Science and the school's alumni affiliate.

## Firms want to shop for electric power

A business group is proposing that the Michigan Public Service Commission allow companies to shop for competitive electric prices.

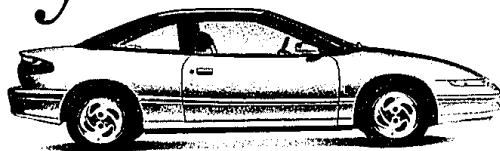
The proposal was submitted by the Association of Businesses Advocating Tariff Equity. If approved, it would apply to customers of Consumers Power Co. and Detroit Edison Co.

It would allow experimental "wheeling" — in which a utility customer could purchase power from a third party and use the utility's transmission lines to

transport it to their facility for a fee.

"Transmission was thought to be a monopoly just a few years ago," said Joseph Dudak, ABATE chairman. "Now Michigan is on the cutting edge of opening it up to competition."

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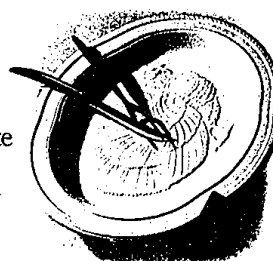
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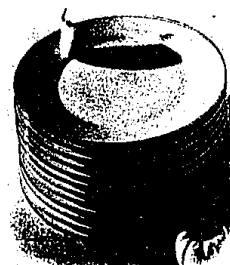
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