

LEAD INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION, INC.

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ELECTRIC TRUCK ROUND-UP

AT UNION ELECTRIC'S ALL-ELECTRIC RANCH*

C. T. Heston

Manager, Sales Promotion and Development
Division, Union Electric Co.

It is a real pleasure to be with you gentlemen this morning to talk about the Electric Truck Round-Up held by our Company in cooperation with the distributors of electric truck and battery equipment.

We all like to talk about our successful programs, and the Electric Truck Round-Up fits this classification.

At Union Electric our one product is electricity - electricity to serve many needs in the residential, commercial, and industrial markets. We know from past experience, that whenever special emphasis or promotion is given to an application that uses electricity, more of the product is sold and placed in use in our customer's premises.

In formulating this electric truck program, we had to consider a number of factors:

1. Some of our large commercial and industrial customers had never seen an electric truck in operation, and few if any, had seen more than two trucks at any one time.
2. Some customers were not aware of the capabilities of electric trucks.
3. Some customers were unaware of the long life of the truck and batteries.
4. Some customers did not know that their particular job could be handled by electric trucks.
5. Most customers felt that the costs were high, and providing wiring capacity for battery charging might be an expensive proposition. However, we knew that some customers were building new facilities, and the time to install the wiring was when the building was being built.

*Presented at the 36th Annual Meeting of the
Lead Industries Association, Inc., Chase Park
Plaza Hotel, St. Louis, Mo., April 21-22, 1964



Look Ahead with Lead

C. T. Heaton

-2-

Manager, Sales Promotion and Development
Division, Union Electric Co.

6. We felt that in general, the customers and our own sales people did not have enough detailed knowledge concerning electric trucks and their operation.

And last, but certainly not least,

7. We felt that a customer meeting at our new Dorsett All Electric Warehouse would provide another opportunity for our industrial customers to see many fine applications of electric space heating, process heating, and quality lighting of all types.

Although, this promotion was planned in our 1963 Budget, a letter from Mr. Ziegfeld of the Lead Industries Association asking how our Company was promoting the electric truck, encouraged us to finalize and execute our plans.

We considered many ideas relative to the promotion of electric trucks. We felt that we could not get customers to come to this meeting if we said to them "Come out to our warehouse, way out in the country (if you're lucky you'll find it), and look at some electric trucks." Since we had some good results with other meetings by dramatizing the program....We decided upon a Wild West theme, which included exhibitors and our sales people being dressed in cowboy and cowgirl costumes, complete with 10 gallon hats. Our program invitations featured a Rodeo theme. We invited our customers to visit us at the Dorsett All Electric Ranch, eat with us at the "chuck wagon", and see an exhibition of the finest electric trucks in any corral.

After formulating preliminary plans, we contacted the distributors of electric truck and battery equipment in the St. Louis area, and asked their participation in the "Round-Up". The response was enthusiastic from 13 electric truck representatives and 5 battery companies. Union Electric agreed to furnish the location, the customers and the dinner. The exhibitors would decorate and man their own booths, equip them with trucks and batteries and be prepared to demonstrate one of their vehicles for a two minute period in a highlighted center ring.

Invitations were mailed out, and we waited for our guests to arrive for the first of the two meetings.

While chow was being served in our temporary dining area, songs of the old west were played over the loud speaker system to add color to the meeting. Afterward a 15 minute talk on the overall merits, advantages, and capabilities of the electric trucks was given by one of our Industrial Supervisors. The group then moved to the corral area, where the guests were able to stand on a platform raised 6 feet above the level of the corral. With appropriate comments from the head wrangler, each truck went through a two minute series of intricate maneuvers in the spotlighted corral, to accent the comparison between electric and gasoline engine powered trucks.

Following the center ring activities, the customers were encouraged to visit each of the exhibitor's booths, to get a closer view of the equipment, and talk to the salesmen about their electric truck needs. Each visitor was also given an opportunity to tour the All Electric Warehouse with our Engineers as guides.

C. T. Henton

-3-

Manager, Sales Promotion and Development
Division, Union Electric Co.

Our objectives in this promotion were two fold:

1. To show, demonstrate, and sell customers on the merits of the electric trucks.
2. To expose customers to the many applications of electricity found in Dorsett All Electric Warehouse.

St. Louis at this time had been suffering through a 40 day period of drought. The first meeting was highlighted with flashes of lightning, but amazingly enough no rain. On the second night, however, we had a deluge. It rained so hard, that we had to ferry our customers in automobiles from the parking lot to the warehouse area, otherwise, they would have been completely drenched. Unfortunately these slides I'm going to show you were taken during this second performance.

(Slide 1) The first slide shows the tables set up in the middle of the warehouse area. Notice some of our personnel in western clothes.

(Slide 2) The second slide taken just before the rain and before the meeting, shows some of the trucks lined up in the exhibit areas. The occasion was made even more festive by strings of lights mounted directly over the trucks.

(Slide 3) The next slide shows the L shaped area where the corral was set up on the first night. Incidentally, the battery exhibitors had their displays located under a roof overhang which you cannot see in this slide.

(Slide 4) This next slide shows the trucks after they were hastily moved into the warehouse. It was little crowded, but with a great deal of cooperation, all trucks were moved and displayed so that the visitors could view them.

(Slide 5) This slide shows a demonstration of the trucks, incidentally we had about 60 vehicles exhibited. The guests were restrained with ropes strung along each side of the viewing area. That funny looking object being carried by the electric truck is a large metal box. On the front of it is a painted bulls head and a set of horns. This particular exhibitor went through a very humorous and interesting demonstration of the mobility of the vehicle as a bull pitted against a matador. In this case the bull won out.

(Slide 6) To add further interest to the show, two of our girls dressed up in a horse costume and went through some very interesting and humorous antics of horsepower of yesterday.

(Slide 7) Here's another truck being demonstrated.

(Slide 8) The next view shows part of the crowd talking with the exhibitors in their respective booths.

(Slide 9) The last slide shows the end of the evening, with a few customers remaining to talk with the exhibitors and to get a final ride on the little scooter shown in the background.

C. T. Heston

-4- Manager, Sales Promotion and Development
Division, Union Electric Co.

Now, what were the results of this meeting? Well, in two nights more than 750 persons attended these meetings. The 13 electric truck and 5 battery exhibitors reported that sales were made right at the meetings. A follow-up sent to the exhibitors indicated that everyone expected that their sales would grow in 1964 as a result of this exhibition of electric trucks and the demonstration of its many advantages. Some conservative exhibitors estimated that their sales would rise 25%. Many predicted a 100% increase over the '63 sales, and some predicted 500% increase over the '63 sales.

Here are some of the comments of the exhibitors:

1. "This show was excellent. Were able to demonstrate trucks to our customers and sold three of them as a direct result of the show. We would be most happy to participate in future shows of this nature."
2. "Philadelphia management thought this was the best they had ever seen. We are for it, and thank you."
3. "Because of the interest shown, you should have another show in 12 to 18 months."
4. "Best show I was ever in, hope you have more."
5. "We received several orders as direct result of the show, plus helping our standing with many more companies, including Union Electric."
6. "As a member of the battery industry, I would say that your Truck Round-Up program stimulated interest in electric trucks. I can think of at least six electric trucks that were purchased that could have gone either gas or electric, and went electric because of the equipment displayed at your show."

Gentlemen, from our standpoint, we feel that this show was a great success. We, the exhibitors, and the customers gained a great deal from it, and had fun at the same time. We feel that as a result of this show, more customers are aware of the capabilities of electric trucks, and will buy them. Secondly, more customers are aware of the many advantages of an all electric building, and will consider this concept in the new buildings that are being built today.

Thank you Gentlemen for allowing me to tell you about what I think was a successful promotion.