

## **MACI News & Views**

### **How MACI got its start-and its name**

By BILL NELSON

Three persons, Mark Giddings, Randy Schneider, and myself, were attending the 1991 Red River Trade Summit and discussing the difficulties of breaking into the international consulting game. A vision was developed based on a broad-based partnership of private sector and university-based consultants coming together to form consulting teams with the expertise to address significant and complex issues. It was intended to be a vehicle through which professionals in this region could share their unique abilities and experience of working in the Northern Plains with others in the world.

This paper was shared with a number of persons participating in the Regional International Trade Association (RITA) and received a positive response. A steering committee was formed by interested persons and the formal organizational process was underway. Substantial time and effort was devoted to deciding the legal form of the organization resulting in incorporation as a cooperative. The key factor leading to this decision was the continuing vision of a broad-based, open organization intended to provide a vehicle for persons in this region to share their expertise. It was hoped that this organizational form would allow persons with their primary association to other companies and organizations to participate at a secondary level with the cooperative.

A second, time-consuming task was naming the organization. Various names were tried, rejected, and tried again prior to arriving at the name, Mid-America Consultants International or MACI. The name properly identifies who we are and what we do.

A formal informational and invitational meeting was held at the Radian Hotel in the Spring of 1993 with 50 people attending. This was soon followed by the formal organizational meeting and an election of the first board of directors. Twenty persons were charter members.

Many of the present board members were involved in the steering committee and have persisted with much determination and voluntary effort to see MACI move from a vision and San experiment to a successful organization. MACI continues to be an open membership organization for persons who are interested in consulting opportunities in the region and internationally. Additional information about MACI can be obtained by mail request or contacting any of the directors or members. An application for membership is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors prior to the required purchase of stock by the prospective member.