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NEW ORLEANS AP - The news and editorial operations of the Times-Picayune and States-Item have been divided into separate, autonomous divisions, it was announced Monday by Ashton Phelps, president and publisher of the Times-Picayune Publishing Corp.

In a front-page story Monday the States-Item said the action represents the official implementation of a policy aimed at totally separating the news and editorial operations of the two newspapers. The policy was NEW ORLEANS AP - The

editorial operations of the two newspapers. The policy was first announced by Phelps at the dedication of the new newspaper plant Jan. 18, 1968.

Walter G. Cowan, managing editor of the States-Item since 1964, was named editor in the realignment. Charles A. Ferguson, associate editor of the editorial page since 1966, was named associate editor.

As editor, Cowan will be in charge of the States'Item's overall nonbusiness operation, and Ferguson will be in charge of developing and executing editorial policy.

George W. Healy Jr., formerly listed as executive editor of the two newspapers, was named editor of the Times-Picawine.

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The T i m e s - Picayune is a morning newspaper and publishes seven days a week. The States-Item publishes six after noons a week. RM512pcd June