

Utilities problem examined

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Public Utility Commission Tuesday released an interim report on electric rate designs. It recommended that utilities and consumers study ways to stabilize the soaring costs of electricity.

The report culminated more than six months of study by the PUC, including three weeks of hearings where utilities and consumers presented possible solutions to curbing high utility costs.

The PUC said its staff would continue to develop and refine its cost of service computer program in order to make rational decisions when approving rate increases to utilities.

"We believe in the concept of cost-rate," said Bill Avera, director of research for the PUC. "To make rationally economic decisions, we have to know what the cost is."

Avera said utilities should be encouraged to slow their expansion of generation capacity - a reason why rates have increased so dramatically under the marginal cost system.

Under the marginal cost system, anticipated expansion by a utility is a factor in determining rate increases. Avera said the marginal cost method could be made less expensive to utility users by cogeneration - producing heat and electricity from one single industrial plant.

"There is greater potential in Texas for cogeneration than any other state," Avera said.

Melanie McCoy, director of special projects, said the PUC had not included alternative energy sources as a topic of discussion during hearings but she said several persons had contributed information and suggestions on the subject.

She said the sun and wind are the primary sources of alternative energy sources. McCoy said the PUC has already asked for funds to make a detailed study of how these two sources could be better utilized to provide energy.

"Texas, perhaps more than any other state, is well suited to provide alternative sources," she said. "The Panhandle and the Gulf Coast, especially, are great areas for wind supplied energy."

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Newest cop on the beat

Debbie Howell, soon to be the newest woman member of the Texas A&M University Police Department, has completed the state police training school and will be joining the A&M force full-time in two weeks. She is the fourth woman to join the force. Here, Howell is directing traffic before the Memphis State Game Saturday.

Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

Italian group asks autopsy

Pope's death questioned

United Press International
VATICAN CITY — A Roman Catholic traditionalist movement said Tuesday it has asked a Vatican prosecutor to investigate "the true causes" of the death of Pope John Paul I.

The Civiltà Cristiana movement, an Italian group that has been close to rebellious French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, said it sent a copy of its request to the college of cardinals so they may decide on possible "urgent" action.

The step by Civiltà Cristiana was the first concrete action taken by any person or group since news media began discussing the pros and cons of performing an autopsy on the pope's body. The Vatican said last week that laws governing vacancies of the papacy do not contemplate autopsies, but otherwise ignored the media suggestions.

Civiltà Cristiana did not say why it felt an autopsy was required. "Civiltà Cristiana, through its legal representatives, has submitted a formal request to the promoter of justice (prosecutor) at the tribunal of the Vatican City State that the prosecutor's office open a judicial inquiry to ascertain the true causes of the death of the supreme pontiff John Paul I," the group said in a press release.

Rail emergency board action could let strike resume at Thanksgiving

United Press International
WASHINGTON — A presidential rail emergency board hopes to send President Carter — before an Oct. 28 deadline — its recommendation for settling a dispute which led to the nationwide strike of railroad unions.

The action, however, could allow a resumption of the strike during the Thanksgiving holiday period.

The board, created by Carter last Thursday, has 30 days to determine the facts in the dispute between Norfolk & Western Railway and the Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks, and report to the president.

Board Chairman Paul Hanlon told reporters during a break on the first day of its proceedings, "We hope to get it out before that."

When the 3-member board reports to the president, another 30-day "cooling off" period automatically goes into effect before workers legally can resume the strike under a restraining order issued by U.S. District Judge Aubrey Robinson.

If the two full 30-day periods are used and expire without agreement, the clerks' union could resume its strike just at the end of the Thanksgiving weekend. But if the board goes to Carter ahead of time, a strike could hit right in the middle of the holiday period.

Robinson's order expires next Tuesday and a hearing is scheduled that day on a further injunction against the walkout.

Pickets had shut down more than two-thirds of the nation's passenger and freight rail traffic, and caused some layoffs in the auto industry.

Officials of both the N&W and the union were optimistic as they arrived to meet with the board for the first time.

"There has to be optimism," N&W Vice President Joseph Nejkirk said. "We certainly want to resolve it and intend to cooperate fully."

Clarence Robinson, BRAC director of industry relations, said, "I'm sure the parties will be able to resolve it at this stage."

Hanlon also said he hoped the recommendation would be accepted. "In almost all (past) cases . . . the administration has been successful in selling it to both parties," he said.

The meetings are closed to the public and the report will go directly to Carter. On the board with Hanlon are Jerry Williams of Austin, Texas, and Jacob Seidenberg of Falls Church, Va.

Ex-GI says Army tested LSD on him

United Press International
WASHINGTON — James Thornwell says that 17 years ago he unwittingly was used as a guinea pig for an LSD experiment by the Army.

Now the former private is suing the U.S. government for \$10 million.

Thornwell filed suit Monday, claiming the Army gave him LSD without his knowledge or permission and tortured him as part of "Operation Third Chance," a secret Army project studying the use of LSD as an interrogation aid.

The case is in U.S. District Court, before Judge John Sirica.

LSD is a hallucinogenic drug made illegal in the 1960s.

Thornwell, who is unemployed and lives in California, said in a statement the drug left him a "social and emotional cripple whose psychiatric disorders have prevented him from working except for short periods since his discharge from the Army in 1961."

The suit says Thornwell did not find out about the LSD test until 1977, when he received Army documents detailing the experiments through the Freedom of Information Act.

He sought the documents after being informed by the Internal Revenue Service that his address had been given to the Army so they could perform follow-up tests. The Privacy Act forced IRS to reveal to Thornwell that his address had been furnished.

Thornwell, a black, said he was the only American used in the testing program. The suit said the only other persons involved were foreigners.

The suit also alleges that for months before the drug was administered in June 1961, Thornwell was subjected to "severe forms of physical and sensory deprivation as well as beating and verbal abuse" which included racial slurs.

The suit said Thornwell experienced "extraordinarily severe physical and psychological trauma when the LSD took effect," but he was again interrogated by the same "inhumane techniques."

After the test was completed, the officials in charge "failed even to inform Thornwell that he had received LSD or to alert him of the need for follow-up care."

"To the contrary," the suit said, "defendants deliberately concealed the facts and circumstances of the drug experiment performed on Thornwell and the damage and danger resulting to him therefrom."

A&M medical students to practice in Temple

TEMPLE - When the first Texas A&M University medical students come here next year for clinical training, they will find an array of renovated facilities.

Six buildings at the Veterans Administration Hospital complex here have undergone major or partial remodeling to serve as the Temple campus of the Texas A&M College of Medicine.

Texas A&M has arranged for its medical students to undergo two years of clinical training at the VA and Scott and White hospitals here.

Similar agreements have been made for future training at VA facilities in Waco and Marlin.

Renovation of the structures is part of the overall \$17 million VA grant make in 1976 to the Texas A&M College of Medicine.

Among facilities that will greet the first clinical trainees are one- and two-bedroom apartments that can house 44 persons. Each unit is completely furnished and contains a stove, refrigerator and garbage disposal.

Across the courtyard from the apartments, a 5,400 square-foot student canteen, converted from a former mess hall, includes two classrooms, a lounge, recreation area, study hall complete with audiovisual aids and carrels, and six offices.

Plans also include relocation of the medical library within the main hospital building. Size of the library increased a one-third to 2,700 square feet and more carrels were added.

The existing auditorium in the main building will be converted an amphitheater which will hold 100 people for lectures, demonstrations or presentations of patients.

Across the VA complex, almost 4,200 square feet of another building are being refurbished into a laboratory for faculty and students. This includes renovation of eight labs, eight offices, three instrument rooms and storage and wash areas.

Expansion of existing closed circuit television equipment and installation of a microwave link between here and College Station will help to counteract the geographic distances between campuses.

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