

# Utilities said to back coal bill

**United Press International**  
CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Rep. Richard Cheney, R-Wyo., has accused two Texas congressmen of bowing to utility demands to introduce a bill severely limiting the ability of Western states to tax federal coal production.

Cheney said Friday the bill, introduced by Rep. J.J. Pickle, D-Texas and Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, would limit state taxes on federal coal production to 13 percent. Wyoming currently taxes federal coal production at 17 percent and other Western states impose even higher taxes, Cheney said.

"This is a very, very bad bill and we've got to make sure it never sees the light of day," Cheney said. "It has the potential to devastate the economies of Wyoming and other

Western states by drying up one of the main sources of revenue for essential citizen services by state and local governments."

Depending on how the bill is interpreted, it could cause the complete elimination of severance taxes in Wyoming and Montana, he said.

Wyoming income from coal taxes exceeded \$49 million in 1978, he said.

"We may ask why Sen. Bentsen and Rep. Pickle, who themselves represent an energy-producing state, would do this," Cheney said. "The answer is that the utilities wanted them to do it. Texas wants to use Wyoming coal, but it doesn't want to pay a reasonable price."

The Wyoming congressman, who previously was President Gerald Ford's chief of staff, said transporta-

tion costs, not state severance taxes, are behind increasing coal costs.

"The delivered price of Powder River coal to a Texas utility these days is about \$20-\$23 per ton and about half of that, or about \$10-\$11, is transportation cost," Cheney said. "Of the total cost of the coal, only about \$1 per ton is Wyoming severance tax."

The Powder River Basin is a major coal-producing area in northeastern Wyoming.

"At issue here is the right of the State of Wyoming, or any other state for that matter, to control energy development and to deal with the impact of that development," Cheney said.

"Wyoming residents are the ones who have to cope with the impact of increasing strip mining of coal in

this state. There are going to be schools and sewer systems and fire stations to build, and there are going to be more unit trains moving through Wyoming communities, causing problems for farmers and local residents."

"The issue is a simple one: should Texas consumers or Wyoming residents bear the burden of increased government expenditures for services and increased environmental protection costs? The answer is, if the Texans want the coal, let them pay the costs."

In a speech Friday night in Lander, Cheney said he would ask the Environmental Protection Agency to relax air pollution regulations so the U.S. Steel Geneva Works in Provo, Utah, will not have to \$178 million in pollution equipment.

# Balloon crew buffeted by winds

**United Press International**  
TOPEKA, Kan. — The DaVinci Transamerica balloon crew, attempting a record coast-to-coast flight, had a dizzying encounter early Sunday with powerful winds.

Low-level nocturnal winds gusting up to 80 mph spun the gondola carrying the one woman and three men. All four reported feeling dizzy as the gondola rotated four revolutions per minute.

But both crew and balloon — having set a distance record of 13,080 miles Friday — survived this latest unexpected turn and headed northeastward toward their destination of Norfolk, Va.

The balloonists, trying for the first non-stop balloon flight across the United States, took off Wednesday from Tillamook, Ore., hoping westerly winds would carry their craft to Norfolk in 6½ days.

Kansas is approximately the halfway point of the journey.

The crew released enough helium and ballast Sunday to lower its altitude from 8,000 feet to 5,000 feet to catch available eastward winds.

But the crew said the weather systems were "complex," and they could not be sure exactly where they would end up at the end of the day.

"There's a weather system coming down from the North and merging with another system in the Central Plains region, so it's difficult for them to be sure of their exact heading, but it's in a northeast direction so far," said Les Zuke at the balloon flight control in St. Louis.

"We want to get them further north because the westerlies are flowing better there. The winds over Topeka have a southerly pull.

# Horses kill 1, hurt 16 at parade

**United Press International**  
PENROSE, Colo. — A survivor said Sunday there was no time to react or run from two frightened horses that pulled a covered wagon over a crowd of parade spectators, killing a woman and injuring at least 16 others.

Five persons remained hospitalized with injuries ranging from a broken leg to deep lacerations. The horses bolted Saturday during a parade for the Apple Day celebration of the harvest in the Arkansas River valley of southern Colorado.

Dick Stovall of Pueblo, Colo.,

whose wife Myrtle, 56, suffered a broken leg and contusions and was listed in satisfactory condition at St. Mary Corwin Hospital in Pueblo, said his wife told him most of the victims were sitting on chairs at curbside watching the parade.

"They didn't see the horses coming," said Stovall. "They didn't have any time to react. The horses just turned into the crowd and ran right over the top of them."

Mrs. Stovall was one of four women who traveled the 40 miles from Pueblo to watch the parade. Two of her companions — Minnie

Andrews, 80, and Romella Martinez, 64 — were listed in serious condition at Parkview Hospital in Pueblo. The fourth woman was treated for minor cuts and lacerations.

Mrs. Stovall said the dead woman, identified as Sharon Louise Gillette, 32, of Colorado Springs, was seated in the same area when the horses careened into the crowd.

The horses were stopped about 200 yards away by John Evans, a guard at the Colorado State Penitentiary in Canon City, and William Cox, a Florence, Colo., minister.

Evans jumped on the back of one of the horses and worked his way between the horses to grab both animals by their manes. Cox jumped aboard the wagon a few seconds later and secured a hold on the reins.

A hospital spokeswoman said Andrews and Martinez were awake and alert but were listed in serious condition because they remained in a special neurological unit with head injuries.

Another 50-year-old woman was listed in satisfactory condition at the Ft. Carson Army Base Hospital.

# Tritium leak Radioactive gas escapes container at plant

**United Press International**  
FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — A small amount of radioactive tritium gas escaped from a 7.5-ton nuclear materials container conveyed by the National Guard Saturday and the leak was traced to a drum packed by employees of an atomic plant seized by the state.

Darrell Warren of the Arizona Atomic Energy Commission reported the leak after the convoy ended its 270-mile trip from Tucson, Ariz., to the Navajo Ordnance Depot, about 20 miles west of Flagstaff. Jostling over rough roads might have caused a crack or dent in the special Super Tiger container, which has 1-foot thick walls, he said.

The leaking drum had been packed by American Atomics Corp. workers, Warren said.

"About 10 to 30 micro-curies were vented into the atmosphere. That's just a rough estimation. It's just a minute amount," Warren said. He said a monitor could not detect radiation more than 3 inches from the container.

The container was leased by the state from the Nuclear Engineering Co. of Louisville, Ky., to haul the tritium from the American Atomics plant.

The firm used tritium to make glow-in-the-dark signs and luminous watch faces, but leakage of tritium last spring forced the state's largest school district to close a central kitchen that served 40,000 students at 99 schools.

The company closed its Tucson plant in July after the state launched a hearing into charges the firm

leaked excessive amounts of radiation.

Warren said officials knew one of the 38 drums inside the container had a small leak before the convoy left Tucson at 2 a.m., but he said the outside leak must have started after a final inspection at McGuireville, about 40 miles south of Flagstaff.

He added officials were inspecting the 8x8x20-foot steel container in an attempt to find the crack or bent place. The extent of the leak will not

be known until the Super Tiger is opened Sunday and the tritium is placed in a bunker guarded 24 hours a day, Warren said.


Warren said the container is shielded by an outer steel wall three-eighths of an inch thick and a one-third inch inner steel wall.

Lynn Fitzrandolph, supervisor of radioactive materials for the AEC, said it was plausible for a leak from a drum to be detected at the doors of the container. He said since the

radiation could not be monitored from beyond 3 inches, he was "gratified" that the leak was minor.

As the convoy moved through the gates of the Army installation, about 50 protesters chanted: "We don't want it here. We don't want it here."

A spokesman for the protesters, who lost an 11th-hour legal battle to prevent the move of the tritium, said they would go to federal court this week asking that the radioactive gas be moved from the Flagstaff area.




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