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Nuclear panel meets here

by BECKY SWANSON

Battalion Staff

Agricultural and medical research in Texas will be greatly hampered or discontinued if the Legislature does not provide for handling and disposal of low-level nuclear waste. This was the message that university and medical representatives delivered to the Texas House Subcommittee on Low-Level Nuclear Waste Disposal at a public hearing held at Texas A&M University Tuesday.

The subcommittee of the House Environmental Affairs Committee was conducting a fact-finding session to determine the need for an in-state disposal site for low-level nuclear waste.

The subcommittee heard over two hours of testimony from Texas university and medical research officials and private citizens, most of whom urged the passage of a bill allowing for construction of a facility to dispose of low-level nuclear waste from Texas schools and medical facilities.

Rep. Ron Bird, D-San Antonio, chairman of the three-member subcommittee, said there has been talk that if Texas does not take action to dispose of the waste, the federal government may establish a nationwide dump site in Texas.

Bird told reporters that Texans have historically resisted any land mass regulation, such as strip mining regulation or hazardous (toxic) waste disposal regulation, until the threat of federal intervention arises.

Texas has been studied as a possible site for nuclear waste disposal because of the attractiveness of Gulf Coast and West Texas salt domes.

Dr. Robert Bernstein, commissioner of the Texas Department of Health, said that the threat of federal interven-

tion would be lessened if the Legislature takes steps to provide for handling and disposal of low-level nuclear wastes.

Scientists and educators expressed their concern during the hearing over the closing of Todd Shipyards in Galveston, a temporary storage facility for low-level nuclear waste, and the impending closing of the permanent disposal site in Washington state, one of three in the nation.

The researchers say this will make it difficult for research facilities to dispose of the large bulk of low-level radioactive waste created by research projects.

Most of the bulk consists of flammable liquids in small glass vials, syringes, gloves, animal carcasses and paper used to line counter tops.

The scientists stressed that although the bulk of the materials needing disposal was high, the amount of radiation was small.

Will Ivie, director of radiation safety at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center at Houston, said his facility created a total volume of 44,010 cubic feet of low-level radioactive waste last year, filling 600 55-gallon drums, and the total amount of radioactivity disposed of was 2.5 curies.

The Texas Department of Health has set the level of acceptability in its proposed legislation at five curies per gram of material.

Ivie said the cost of disposal of these wastes was about \$66,000 because of the increased cost of hauling them to out-of-state dump sites.

Dr. Richard Neff, professor of nuclear science and radiation safety officer at Texas A&M University, said the cost for disposal of low-level radioactive waste for the University was about \$27,000 last year, but it could reach \$60,000 this

year — provided disposal sources can be found.

"Texas A&M has temporarily curtailed the handling of radioactive waste from research laboratories. If commercial waste disposal is curtailed or discontinued, it will be necessary either to construct and operate a processing and storage facility to dispose of waste locally, or suspend all research involving radioactive materials," Neff said.

Suspension of research using radioactive tracers — radioactive materials that concentrate in specific tissues to aid in studying the organ or system — could cause serious setbacks in medical and agricultural research, the researchers emphasized.

Texas A&M spends nearly \$10 million annually on research using radioactive materials, representing about 14 percent of the University's total research expenditures and involving about 700 students, scientists and engineers, Neff said.

Some controversy over the definition of "low-level" nuclear waste arose during the hearing. The definition given in a draft legislation proposed by the Texas Department of Health provides that the radioactive material not have a half-life of more than 100 years or a concentration of five curies per gram of material.

A half-life is the length of time it takes for a specific radioactive material to lose half its radioactivity.

John Stiles, a former senior field construction engineer who said he had worked on nuclear power plant construction, said the definition would allow some materials that were highly radioactive, but which had short half-lives to be stored in the state.

Stiles said that the "or" in the definition allowed an escape of the intended regulation.

Judge rules Justice Dept. 'too late'

Suburban districts left out of suit

HOUSTON — A federal judge Tuesday denied a Justice Department motion to include 22 suburban school districts in the Houston desegregation lawsuit, saying it was too late for the department to throw the gauntlet down in the 23-year-old suit.

U.S. District Judge Robert O'Connor Jr. turned down the department's claim that there had not been sufficient desegregation since the original suit was filed two decades ago against the Houston Independent

School District.

O'Connor said the department had waited far too long to alter its case and he objected to the department's attempt to change its position "from a passive supplier of information to that of a warrior-litigant suing all who are close to the legal battle zone."

The Justice Department maintains that since the original suit was filed whites have fled to the suburbs to populate school districts not named in the suit, leaving HISD

with a more than 75 percent minority enrollment.

O'Connor said, however, additional defendants in the case now would only hinder progress that already has been made.

The government also had sought to include the Texas Education Agency, the Harris County Department of Education and the City of Houston as defendants.

"The addition of the proposed 26 defendants not only would inject as many more issues into an already complex case, but would also increase the discovery burdens upon all litigants," O'Connor said in a 12-page written ruling.

He added that "because the joinder of more defendants would introduce addi-

tional complicated issues into an already complicated case and because the additional investigation and litigation of the new issues would delay the resolution of the case," he ruled against it.

He said expanding the case at this point "conceivably could extend this litigation from 3 to 30 years."

The Justice Department filed the suit against the HISD in 1956 and with the latest motion filed May 15 said it was not happy with desegregation progress.

The Supreme Court earlier in May had rejected a Justice Department plan for an Atlanta busing plan that would have transported students across school district lines to achieve integration goals.

U.S. Senate releases staff payroll figures

WASHINGTON — Those silver-tongued orators in the Senate are paying their best assistants gold-plated wages.

Semi-annual payroll records released Monday show 161 Senate aides earn more than \$50,000 annually. The senators themselves earn slightly more than \$60,000.

Most of the increase was due to a 5.5 percent cost-of-living raise that took effect last Oct. 1, raising the maximum senatorial aide salary from \$49,970 to \$52,686.

The payroll records were for the six months between October 1979 and March 1980.

Forty-eight aides who work for the Senate or for its committees are paid more than the senatorial staff ceiling. Below the \$50,000 level are several hundred of the approximately 7,000 Senate employees who earn more than \$40,000.

The three highest paid officials, at \$55,386 a year, are Secretary of the Senate J. Stanley Kimmitt, Sergeant-at-arms F. Nordy Hoffmann and legal counsel Michael Davidson. Right behind them at \$54,860 are majority secretary J. Walter Stewart and minority secretary William Hildenbrand.

Among the others topping \$54,000 are Deputy Sergeant-at-arms Mello G. Fish, Senate Republican Leader Howard Baker's top aide, James Cannon; parliamentarian Murray Zweben; financial clerk Robert Malmstrom, who is in charge of the report; and five legal aides.

There were 32 committee aides and 26 senatorial assistants making more than \$52,000. Also at that level are four men and two women who take down every word of floor debate in shorthand or on stenographic machines.

Tenured positions vanishing, official says

AUSTIN — Texas' optional retirement system encourages college professors to hang onto their jobs as long as possible and makes it exceedingly difficult for new young teachers to win permanent posts on the state's college campuses, officials said Tuesday.

Rep. Gary Thompson, D-Abilene, said Texas needs to do something about the problem before declining enrollments force staff cutbacks and further complicate the situation.

Thompson heads a House subcommittee studying college faculty tenure that held a hearing Tuesday on how to encourage early retirement among professors.

"Most universities have leveling enrollments and in some cases declining enrollments," Thompson said. "This means fewer and fewer newly minted Ph.D.'s are finding tenured positions.

Thompson said some young teachers are forced to become "academic gypsies" moving from one campus to another because all permanent posts are taken by older professors.

Leonard Prewitt, executive director of the Teacher Retirement System, said the state's pension plan encourages early retirement for public school personnel and college professors who opt to participate in the plan.

Most professors, however, choose the Optional Retirement System and that plan discourages early retirement, Prewitt said. Prewitt suggested more school teachers and college professors would retire under both plans if the Legislature indexed benefits to adjust pensions for inflation.

"The greatest deterrent (to retirement) is the fear that the inflation trend in the economy will erode their purchasing power if they retire too early," Prewitt said.



Glis Koepline is one of the 550 local General Telephone workers on strike against the phone company since mid-May, who'll be going back to work soon. The Communications Workers of America and GTE reached a contract settlement Tuesday.

Staff photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

Local GTE strike ends on time

by CATHY SAATHOFF

Battalion Staff

Although plans are being made for all striking phone company workers to be back on the job by the start of next month, it will take two weeks before company officials know if their settlement offer has been accepted by the union.

Bill Erwin, division manager for GTE, said that details of the settlement have not been disclosed, but that workers will begin returning to work this weekend.

"They did reach a settlement," Erwin said Tuesday. "At this time that's all we know."

Talks began Friday with federal mediator Vincent Cuy, and after 15 hours of talks, a tentative agreement was reached.

"The union will now start the ratification process," Erwin said.

Ballots are being mailed to members, and it will take about two weeks for the results to be computed.

Meanwhile, local workers will begin returning to work Sunday.

"We will have an orderly return to work by seniority," Erwin said.

Workers must return to work in phases, he said, to allow work schedules to be set up. Otherwise, he said, all the workers would return and not know where they should be.

The strike officially ended at 12:01 a.m. this morning.

All workers should be back at work by Monday, June 30, Erwin said.

The strike, which was over salary demands and worker benefits, affected about 400 Bryan-College Station residents, and left the community with a squeeze in phone service. Erwin said GTE's main priority during the strike was emergency service. There were delays even in this, however, since many jobs were handled by management-level personnel during the strike.

The Weather

Yesterday

High 87

Low 66

Humidity 52%

Rain 0.00 inches

Today

High 90

Low 68

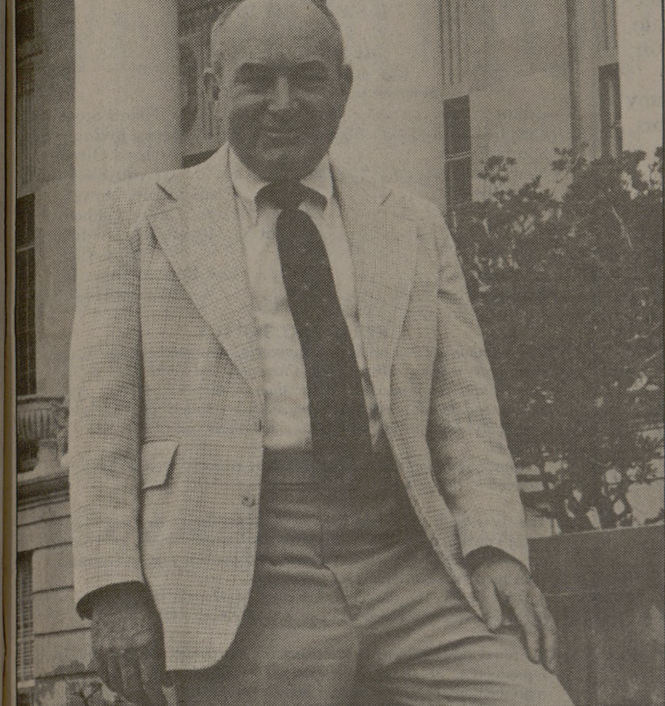
Humidity 60%

Chance of rain none

Pest control helps Adkisson reap crop of awards

by DEBBIE NELSON

Battalion Staff



Dr. Perry Adkisson

The man seems more than a little surprised by it all. Dr. Perry L. Adkisson, deputy chancellor for agriculture for the Texas A&M University System, was honored with three major scientific awards in one month's time.

Most recently, Adkisson won the 1980 Alexander von Humboldt Award for making the outstanding contribution to American agriculture during the past five years. The award, Adkisson's research in integrated pest management, included \$10,000 and a gold medal.

Research and extension work in entomology (the study of insects) have been Adkisson's specialty since he came to Texas A&M as an associate professor in 1958.

He is recognized as a major contributor to the development of integrated pest management, a method which employs the best features of chemical, biological and cultural control practices to protect crops.

Other honors recently bestowed on Adkisson are his induction into the National Academy of Sciences in April and his announcement as the recipient of Kansas State University's Distinguished Alumnus Award for Service to Agriculture in May.

Adkisson expressed surprise and pleasure in the awards, especially on election to the Academy, a highly selective advisory group to the President and Congress, which awards lifetime membership.

"I never dreamed I'd be elected to the National Academy of Sciences," Adkisson said. "There are very few agriculture scientists in the Academy — maybe half a dozen. Certainly no more than 12."

"So if you are in agriculture, your chances are slim. There has never been anyone elected from Texas A&M before."

Adkisson's induction ceremony took him to Washington, D.C. Slightly over 1,200 American scientists belong to the Academy, with a maximum of 60 new members inducted yearly.

Members of the academy serve on committees for the National Research Council. At government request, Adkisson had previously served on the committee for world food and nutrition and crop protection.

Adkisson said Texas A&M's pest management program, in which the Agriculture Extension Service has been more active, is "a highly effective program which serves as a model for the rest of the U.S."

In the late 1960's, Adkisson explained, the United States, including Texas, had severe problems with insects, which were becoming resistant to chemicals.

Interest groups were protesting the use of DDT or even working to legislate pesticides out of existence.

The integrated pest management research which followed saves U.S. farmers millions of dollars in yearly insecticides and involves:

- developing pest-resistant cotton varieties which resist or escape insect damage.
- conserving beneficials — insects not harmful to crops — by finding more selective chemical insecticides and the best time to apply them.
- reducing the vulnerability of crops to plant disease.
- utilizing better management of irrigation.

Although he has been termed a pioneer of integrated pest management, Adkisson said he was trained in the concept at the University of Arkansas, where he received both his bachelor's and master's degrees.

He applied these techniques in active entomological research when he came to Texas A&M 23 years ago.

From 1958-1967, Adkisson said, he was Texas A&M's project leader in cotton insect research. He worked with numerous graduate students and taught insect ecology.

In 1967, Adkisson was named head of Texas A&M's entomology department, where he directed funds and labor to pest management research.

With a 1978 promotion, Adkisson became vice president for agriculture for Texas A&M University. His title was changed to deputy chancellor of agriculture on April 1.

Travel, even international travel is common for Adkisson. As advisor for the United States Agency for International Development, he recently travelled to Kenya for an international conference on sorghum insects and to Italy for a conference sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation on future problems in crop protection.

Overseas universities frequently invite Adkisson to lecture on biological control of insects and proper use of pesticides.

Adkisson, who lives in Bryan with his wife, Frances, commented on the changes that have taken place in American agriculture since his birth. His grandfather had as many as 20 families picking and chopping cotton on the family farm in Arkansas that today is run by his brother and one other man.

"When I started college in 1946, 25-30 percent of Americans lived on farms. There is only about 4 percent on the farm now," Adkisson said.

Adkisson predicted, "The next generation will see drastic changes in American agriculture based on the need for cheap energy."

"Something's got to give," he said.

One member of the next generation who may come up with some answers to the growing problems of agriculture is Adkisson's daughter, Amanda, a second year graduate student in animal science at Texas A&M, with a bachelor's degree in entomology.