

Local / State

Water rights battle heats up

United Press International
LAS CRUCES, N.M. — An El Paso utility executive has testified in federal court that the cheapest way for the city to obtain water for its future needs is to have access to underground basins in neighboring New Mexico.

water, was expected to end its case Tuesday. New Mexico officials have said their presentation will take about a week.

A study of water sources available to the fast-growing Texas city showed that obtaining water rights in two southern New Mexico basins would be twice as cheap as any other source, Hickerson said.

If the New Mexico law was upheld, the city would have to turn to such options as treating sewage and brackish water and importing Texas water from much greater

distances, he said. Another witness, Lee Wilson, the head of the Santa Fe, N.M., firm that prepared the water sources report for El Paso, said the alternatives presented other problems besides cost.

Piping water for distances up to 150 miles in Texas involves right-of-way difficulties and an increase in energy requirements, Wilson said. The technology for desalination was not reliable, he said.

Under cross-examination, Hickerson said the city has wells drilled into both underground basins with the Texas border and

said no new wells have been drilled in either area for two years.

He also said no wells were planned for a possible water source near Canutillo.

El Paso has argued that the New Mexico law against water exports is an unconstitutional barrier to interstate commerce, while New Mexico said the groundwater embargo is directly related to the welfare of the state's citizens.

No matter how U.S. District Judge Howard Bratton rules, the losing side is expected to appeal to a higher court.



Drug traffic focus of crime program

Texas drug traffickers make more than \$5 billion in illegal profits every year and must be stopped, says the Crime Stoppers Advisory Council.

The council, created by Gov. William Clements and the state legislature, was formed to assist local Crime Stoppers programs, like the one in Brazos County, and to encourage citizens to provide crime information anonymously.

Each month, the council plans to spotlight a certain type of crime;

for January, that crime is drug trafficking. The council says drugs are destroying Texans both young and old and that the drug problem in Texas is almost out of control.

The 1981 Texas Legislature apparently agreed, and passed stiff new laws for the prosecution of drug dealers. It also established the statewide Crime Stoppers program in the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office to encourage citizen participation in crime control efforts.

The Texas Crime Stoppers Council is paying cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of drug traffickers.

The council guarantees callers' anonymity; citizens need not reveal their names but will be given a unique code number for identification purposes.

The council asks that anyone having information about major drug dealing call their toll-free number: 1-800-252-TIPS.

A&M flu research to start

The flu season may be late this year, but it will come, says a Texas A&M medical researcher preparing to test influenza treatments on 50 student volunteers after the spring semester begins.

Only 10 cases of flu had been reported by the end of December in Houston, where the first evidence of statewide outbreaks usually shows up.

Dr. John Quarles, a Texas A&M microbiologist, said the tardiness of flu season this year is unusual, but that it is rare when an entire year goes by without at least one heavy outbreak of the flu.

Quarles downplayed the South's previously mild winter — which quickly ended this week as some of the century's coldest weather hit the nation — as a factor. Germs, not weather, cause illness, he said.

Researchers with the Baylor College of Medicine Influenza Research Center in Houston and the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta suspect an outbreak of flu this year may be of the B-strain variety, the mild form that causes fever, cough, aches and a runny nose.

However, other strains of A-type viruses also might surface this year, researchers said.

Quarles said the Texas A&M study, latest in a string of major flu research projects carried out on campus, is prepared for almost any outbreak.

If the dominant flu virus this year is A-strain, student volunteers will test the drug amantadine in pill form. If the virus is A or B, the scientists will test ribavirin in a mist form in a continuation of last year's successful trials against the Russian-A-strain.

If this year's flu is A-virus only, researchers will do follow-up studies on as many as 400 of the 640 students who received vaccines against the Bangkok flu last year.

Quarles said it is unusual in flu research to have such a long-term follow-up with so many people, but that the close-knit university atmosphere allowed researchers to keep in touch with most of the volunteers from previous studies.

The amantadine and vaccine studies are funded by influenza research grants from the National Institutes of Health, Quarles said.

The ribavirin project is funded by Viratek, the California drug company that made national headlines in November by announcing that ribavirin administered as a mist could all but cure a bad case of flu within two days. Viratek manufacturers the drug under the name brand Virazole.

The study noted that by the second day of treatment, ribavirin had significantly reduced temperatures of randomly selected flu victims while temperatures among student volunteers in a control group remained higher.

Caperton seeks re-election bid in senatorial race

State Senator Kent A. Caperton, D-Bryan, has announced his candidacy for re-election as the state senator representing the Fifth Senatorial District of Texas.

Caperton stressed his effectiveness in passing legislation and his conservative voting record in areas of fiscal restraint and limiting the growth of bureaucracy as reasons for being re-elected.

"During my first campaign two years ago, I listed education and law enforcement as the top two priorities on the state's agenda," Caperton said. "While (the 67th Legislature) did much to help in these areas, we still have far to go, and I remain committed to these goals."

During his first term in the Senate, Caperton served on the State Affairs, Jurisprudence and Hu-

man Resources committees. Caperton attended Caldwell public schools, and is a 1971 cum

laude graduate of Texas A&M University, where he served as student body president during his

senior year. In 1975, he received his law degree from the University of Texas.

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Campus Names

E.C.A. Runge

Dr. E.C.A. (Ed) Runge, professor and head of the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M, was appointed to the State Seed and Plant Board for a two-year term. Runge, 47, was reappointed to the board. His term extends to Oct. 6, 1983.

Randall D. Wood

Dr. Randall D. Wood, professor of biochemistry and biophysics at Texas A&M University has been designated as the "Distinguished Scientist of the Year" for 1981-82, by the Texas A&M University Chapter of Sigma Xi, the National Honorary Science Society.

Wood obtained his Ph.D. in biochemistry from Texas A&M in 1965. He was an AEC Postdoctorate Fellow at Oak Ridge Associated Universities, and taught at the Loyola University Medical School and at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. He joined the University biochemistry and biophysics department in 1976.

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