

Annexing of offshore oil well off Port Arthur upheld again

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Texas Supreme Court upheld without comment Wednesday Port Arthur's annexation of a drilling platform, 10 miles out in the Gulf of Mexico, that is among the most productive along the Texas coast.

The lease on state lands in the gulf and of the drilling platform, had challenged the city's annexation of a one-mile-wide strip of land into the gulf on grounds it violated the company's rights of due process and equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The state earlier had filed suit challenging Port Arthur's annexation of the submerged land that includes the well, but a Port Arthur court ruled outright in favor of the annexation. The Superior suit had been consolidated with the state case for that ruling. But since the state attorney general failed to appeal within the required time after the ruling, the prospect of an appellate court overturning the decision was voided.

Port Arthur, which is not on the coast, first annexed land along the Sabine River to the gulf, then in three separate ordinances annexed the strip into the gulf that included the Superior oil and gas lease.

City taxes on the lease for 1980 amounted to \$774,430, which Superior paid under protest.

The Legal Foundation of America issued a friend-of-the-court brief, supporting Superior's arguments, that said: "There has never been a case such as the case at bar, in which an inland city has taxed by annexation down to the coast, southwesterly along the coast, and then, in three steps, outward 10 miles into the ocean."

"This case is that rare, outlandish situation in which even the oldest taxing power has reached its limits."

Superior had appealed on its own, alleging violation of its constitutional rights, but the courts rejected that argument. The Beaumont Court of Civil Appeals said Port Arthur's three-step annexation of the gulf lands complied with state annexation laws, and Superior could not challenge that annexation on constitutional grounds.



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Shuttle test ruined by freezer thaw

United Press International
HOUSTON — A relatively simple freezer failed at Johnson Space Center and destroyed nearly all the data from one of the experiments flown aboard space shuttle Columbia last month.

JSC spokesman Brian Welch said Tuesday that a freezer canister lost its cooling power over the weekend and thawed human cell samples electrically purified in orbit. The cells were purified between March 22 and 30 in a process called electrophoresis.

One experimenter, who sent up visible red blood cells, hoped to obtain useful information by studying film of the electrophoresis unit in operation. Another experimenter, who sent up invisible kidney cells, lost everything.

The freezing was important not only because it immobilized the samples for later study, but also because it kept

the cells alive in a frozen suspended animation. When they thawed, they died.

It was the third major failure among 14 pure science experiments on Columbia's third mission. In orbit, a sun sensor failed and a balky television camera on the shuttle cargo bay arm prevented deployment of a contamination monitor.

Welch said the latest failure occurred on the ground. The samples were transferred into a freezer canister after Columbia landed at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., March 30.

The freezer used in orbit had no problems. The ground freezer apparently worked for four or five days after landing, while experimenters prepared to remove the samples for study, Welch said.

This type of freezer, which looks a bit like an ice cream churn, has been used frequently. Such freezers have

kept samples frozen for two weeks.

The canister has no moving parts and relies solely on liquid nitrogen for cooling. Nitrogen apparently leaked off through a leak over the weekend while no one was watching, Welch said.

Dr. Stuart Nachreiner said: "Of all the things that could have gone wrong, a freezer is the last piece of equipment we would expect to have trouble with."

The electrophoresis process used on Columbia's flight involved passing electric charge through 7-inch-long clear tubes filled with cells. The process divides cells with different electrical properties.

Officials said the failure will not affect plans for a continuous-flow electrophoresis experiment scheduled aboard the fourth shuttle mission in June.

Latino pastors end 'mission in reverse'

United Press International
EULESS — Thirteen Latin American church officials returned to their homelands this week from what one of them called a "mission in reverse" to the United States.

During their visit, three of the officials urged their north Texas counterparts to consider how U.S. multinational corporations with investments in El Salvador and Latin America prey on the poor.

Sponsored by both U.S. and Latin American Methodists, the 19-member mission challenged North Americans to resist what they called unethical corporate behavior and join an ecumenical movement based on struggle against oppression.

A Panamanian bishop, a Costa Rican seminary professor and a Chilean pastor, now at a Massachusetts church, came on a mission the Chilean compared to that of the Old Testament prophet Amos.

Amos is remembered as the Jewish herdsman who also traveled north to denounce Israel because it had sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes.

Bishop Secundino Morales of Panama, the Rev. Ulises Torres of Chile and Yolanda de Flores of Latin American Biblical Seminary in Costa Rica denounced an economic system they said impoverished 150 million Latin Americans.

"When (the U.S. economic

system works best, it works worst for us," Torres said Saturday at the First United Methodist Church of Euless.

While they criticized U.S. military involvement in El Salvador, the three repeatedly emphasized the role of U.S. corporations in that country's problems.

"They did essentially assert that the system of capitalism has produced some policies that have caused people to be exploited and that's a fairly common theme among people of socialistic inclinations," said the Rev. DeForrest Wiksten of Dallas' 550-member Northaven United Methodist Church.

Approximately 40 participants heard the four-hour presentation, which included an Ed Asner-narrated film on the history of U.S. military and corporate moves in Latin America.

Bishop Morales saved his harshest words for a final question period.

"There is a kind of mission (in the U.S.) to regain the

nance of the 50's," he said. "The U.S. would like to see it is the Boy Scout of the world."

Morales was also blunt in support of Nicaragua's junta.

"We are looking to Nicaragua with great expectation," he said. "But not only that, we see Nicaragua."

Despite the occasional talk, the three mostly used Biblical imagery and symbolism to influence people who heard them.

"We have been in Latin America to remember the suffering Christ," Torres said. "We remember that the people of Salvador have been in a social, and cultural, Lent for years."

Morales declared that the people must identify with the poor and that the task is to accompany the people in their search for a life that is more human.

GM interest plan OK'd for Texas

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Texas Motor Vehicle Commission has revised its rule prohibiting rebate programs requiring dealer participation, apparently clearing the

way for General Motors to offer its 12.8 percent financing plan in Texas.

GM earlier announced it would not offer the program in Texas because of the Vehicle Commission's rule prohibiting any rebate or rate programs requiring dealer participation by the auto dealer because of a suit by Alan General Mark White to stop earlier GM rebate programs.

The commission's new rule permits General Motors to offer its 12.8 percent interest program in Texas if dealer participation is "clearly and completely disclosed" in any advertisement.

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Thursday, April 8 8 p.m.
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University Lecture Series

Recent discoveries concerning the composition of some primitive meteorites suggest that a nearby supernova exploded just before the solar system formed. This violent event may have stimulated the collapse of a cloud fragment that eventually condensed into the sun, planets and other members of the solar system. Dr. Schramm, a theoretical astrophysicist from the University of Chicago, will discuss the interplay between current ideas about the origin of chemical elements in the stars and ideas about the origin of the solar system. Dr. Schramm is an authority on the origins of chemical elements, stellar and galactic evolution, the consequences of gravitational collapse that may form neutron stars and black holes, and the link between cosmology and the physics of atomic nuclei and high energy particles.

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United Press International

OAKLAND — A line jacking and flames inside a highway tunnel today, killing seven.

The accident occurred after midnight connecting Oakland urban Contra Costa. The California Highway Patrol said the identities were not immediately known.

Witnesses said cars were caught in bound lanes of the Tunnel on the San Francisco Bay. A truck apparently avoided a transit block.

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