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June 1, 1982

First foreign train soon may be reality in U.S.

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — Government officials in the United States and Mexico say they are forging ahead in discussions to bring the first foreign-operated train to the United States.

Amtrak and San Antonio officials meet for the second time June 7 in Mexico City to discuss the feasibility of restoring luxury train service between south Texas and Mexico.

The discussions center on a proposed a luxury passenger line between San Antonio and

Mexico City operated by Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Mexico, the Mexican national railway. Operation of the route could mean an economic boost on both sides of the border.

Such a link "is a logical extension of our aim to expand tourism from the United States," said Francisco Zamarripa Mora, vice president of traffic and operations for Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Mexico.

San Antonio officials are equally positive. A study indicates their city could gain as

much as \$50 million a year. Mexican consumers who would ride the train north to shop

Mexican consumers currently have no easy way to bring large items, such as appliances, said councilman Bob Thomas.

Amtrak officials believe trains would run full at least weekends because of the traffic between San Antonio and Mexico City and the lure of attractions of Mexico City, Monterrey and Nuevo Laredo.

Fire ant damage costly for urban, rural Texas

United Press International
DALLAS — The imported fire ant, for 50 years the scourge of farmers in the South, is also an urban problem now.

No one can put any accurate dollar figure on the damage caused by the nasty pest, but it is in the millions, probably in the hundreds of millions.

If the spread isn't stopped soon, the damage figure may go into the billions. The imported fire ant is now dug solidly into private lawns and in municipal parks in the huge population centers of Texas — Houston, San Antonio and Dallas.

Consider this: the imported fire ant — so designated to distinguish it from domestic fire ants that cause relatively little damage — is a major problem in the citrus groves of Florida. A task force appointed by Texas House Speaker Bill Clements estimates that if the citrus-producing Rio Grande Valley in South Texas is infested, the cost might be half a billion dollars a year in decreased yield. Furthermore, fruit pickers likely will demand higher pay to work in an infested area. Imported fire ants now have spread as far south as Kingsville, 60 or 70 miles away from the valley.

So far they have not been re-

ported in California, the nation's leading agricultural state, but the warm climate of Southern California makes infestation of that state possible, perhaps likely.

Texas Agriculture Commis-

If the spread isn't stopped soon, the damage figure may go into the billions. The imported fire ant is now dug solidly into private lawns and in municipal parks in the huge population centers of Texas — Houston, San Antonio and Dallas.

sioner Reagan Brown told a group in Dallas last month that he had recently had been on an oil-well drilling site in West Texas.

"A Caterpillar (tractor) had been trucked in from Louisiana and I reached over and knocked some dried mud off the track.

Suddenly there were fire ants everywhere.

"That Caterpillar could easily have been trucked to California as to West Texas," he said. "Then they would have ants out there."

No agency has ever been to total up the damage caused by imported fire ants or even an educated guess because goes unreported.

But individual damage reports give indications that region-wide dollar total will be staggering.

Mark Trostle, imported fire ant specialist for the Texas Department of Agriculture, says the damage already might be half a billion dollars a year in Texas. He talked to one farmer recently who had bills totaling almost \$7,000 for repair equipment damaged by runts into imported fire ant mounds in his fields.

Other farmers report loss of livestock, especially what cow or sow gives birth near mound of imported fire ant. Fire ants are attracted to membrane surrounding the infant animal at birth.

Fire ants and their mounds averaging 50 to 80 per acre in the No. 1 problem in Texas parks.

Wed in chains, two convicts honeymoon in separate cells

United Press International
HOUSTON — The ushers carried guns and the groom was led to the altar in handcuffs, but

it was not your typical shotgun wedding.

The best man was a prosecutor, the bride was given away by

her defense attorney and the couple's honeymoon began Saturday in separate rooms behind bars.

Convicted forger Mark Young Weusi and convict robber Woodrow Williams were married Friday before State District Judge Charles Hearn of Houston.

"This is a very romantic story. I've been in love with him since he was 13," the bride said as she was chained to a bench before the ceremony.

Defense attorney Robert E. Hinton, who represents both the bride and groom, said both clients have agreed to plead guilty to forgery charges in return for 10-year sentences. Neither has been sentenced yet.

However, she has already served two prison terms for forgery, and he had a prior 10-year sentence for aggravated robbery.

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