

Panhandle may get nuclear waste site

United Press International
AUSTIN — Texas environmentalist Ken Kramer says the state should take action to keep the federal government from placing the first permanent nuclear waste storage site in the Panhandle.

By next summer the Department of Energy will recommend three sites in different kinds of rock formations for construction of permanent depositories for nuclear waste that will remain radioactive for millions of years.

The DOE is trying to decide whether salt bed formations in Texas or Utah would be better. Utah residents opposed to the plan may make Texas the winner by default.

Two federal reservations — a basalt area in Washington state

and a tuff area in Nevada — already have been picked, officials said. The DOE also is considering two salt-bed sites in the Panhandle — the Dalhart and Palo Duro basins — and one in Utah's Paradox Basin as possible repositories for the nuclear waste.

Kramer said Texas is not doing enough to keep the site out of the Panhandle.

Kramer said a number of public statements from Gov. Bill Clements indicate nuclear waste from other states will not come to Texas, but not much concrete action has been taken to preclude a site being located here.

"In other states, you are having a lot of political action, and when there is a state like Texas that is not taking such action, the reality is that DOE will look

more closely at that state," he said.

This summer Utah Gov. Scott Mathieson ordered state agencies not to issue the necessary exploration permits to DOE officials until the state had studied earlier findings. A Mathieson aide said the delays in Utah would give the government time to catch up on its scouting efforts in Texas.

However, DOE spokesman Phil Garon in Washington, D.C., said it is too early to tell whether Texas or Utah will be selected for a salt-bed exploratory shaft to be drilled next year.

"It is a very emotional, political issue, and the Energy Department understands that," he said. "Our problem is everybody wants to do something with nuclear waste, but nobody wants to do it in their state."

Bumper grain crops face storage shortage

United Press International
ABERNATHY — Grain elevators are already brimming and newly approved emergency storage facilities will do little to help West Texas producers this fall, an agriculture spokesman said.

Eibert Harp, president of the Grain Sorghum Producers Association, said this year's bumper wheat crop and 1980 corn sold, but not delivered, to Russia will create massive storage problems.

Last week Agriculture Secretary John Block approved emergency storage of grain in surplus barges, rail cars and other facilities not normally qualified to store harvested crops, but Harp said they will barely make a dent in the impending storage problem.

"We had a surplus of all grains. Then, an all-time record wheat crop was piled on top of that. There's just so much stor-

age available," Harp said. "A lot of elevators are full."

The High Plains region produced about 64 million bushels of wheat this year, with large carry-overs remaining from the record 1981 harvest of about 71 million bushels.

Harp said this year's corn-sorghum crop carry-over will be more than can be used in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Kansas and two-thirds of Nebraska.

"Much too much was grown this year for next," he said. "And that will add to the surplus we're already carrying."

Harp said that since the corn and milo harvest has begun, producers in the Texas Panhandle and elsewhere will have massive storage problems this fall.

"An area from Plainview to Muleshoe north will have problems," he said.

Harp said some of the 200 storage elevators in the High Plains region of Texas have

been full of corn since 1980, when the USDA purchased crops that had been sold to Russia, but then embargoed by then-President Jimmy Carter.

About 40 million bushels of corn shipped from Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa have remained in Texas elevators since the embargo. About 40 million more bushels are stored outside of Texas, he said.

"Without the embargoes of the past several years, we would not have the supply or storage problems," Harp said, adding that such problems will continue until the government makes long-term grain agreements with other countries, especially Russia.

"A few years ago, the government encouraged us to produce more for the Russians," Harp said. "All of that grain is still left. With that and the surplus grain, we're going to have problems nationwide."

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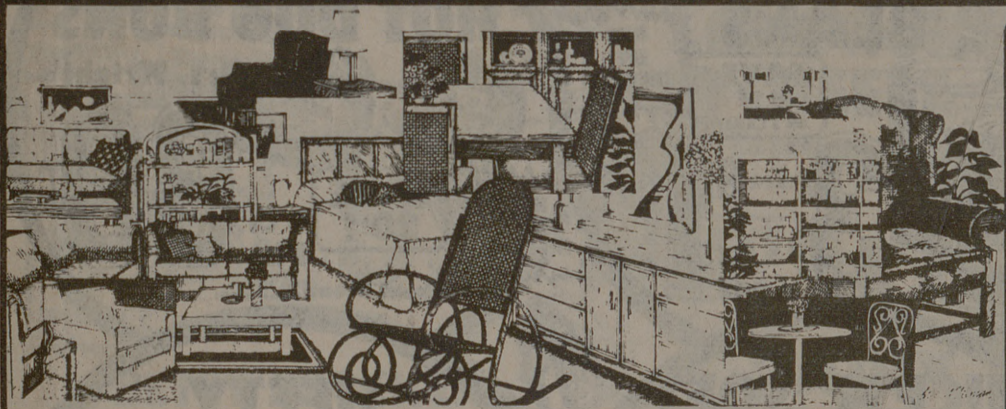
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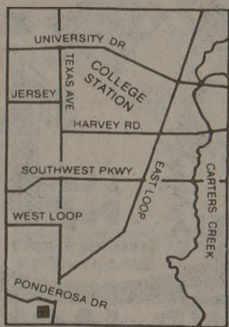


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