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Offshore oil hard to reach

United Press International HOUSTON — Corporations wanting to tap the more than 750 billion barrels worth of proven oil reserves in 600 petroleum basins worldwide will need vast amounts of money and technology to retrieve the fossil fuels, energy experts said.

Many of the areas where the fuels are located have not yet been explored, and are in places where either the politics or rough weather make it difficult to research.

"I firmly believe that in the future we will find as much oil and more gas than we have found to date," geologist Michel Halbouty said Wednesday.

Halbouty, a presidential adviser on petroleum matters, and other energy experts, made their statements at the Offshore Technology Conference being held in Houston.

More than half — or about 393 billion barrels — of the untapped reserves are under oceans or land controlled by Middle Eastern countries. About 62 percent of the world's reserves — or about 469 billion barrels — are under the jurisdiction of OPEC nations. Eastern Europe, including

the Soviet Union, and Latin America, each account for about 12 percent, or 91 billion barrels, of the reserves. The United States has about 31 billion barrels of proven crude oil still not drilled, or 4 percent of the world's total.

But T. Don Stacy, production manager for Amoco Production Co., said three problems stand in the way of retrieving those reserves — money, technical development and politics.

And Stacy said political pressure by environmental groups makes it impossible to drill onshore in the more than 1.17 billion acres of U.S. government-owned land.

"Congress and certain people exclude these lands from exploration to be used only for backpacking and hiking," Stacy said.

Internationally, he said, expensive and unnecessary regulations hamper the drilling industry and cost millions annually.

Halbouty said at today's prices much of the untapped reserves are not financially feasible.

"These are tough times. At today's prices, no. But in the future, yes, they can be productive areas," Halbouty said.

GTE to request rate increase

by Kimberly Hix
Battalion Reporter

Phone bills for residential customers may increase by \$1 a month under a \$32.5 million rate increase to be presented to the Public Utilities Commission May 19 for approval.

General Telephone originally sought an \$85.5 million rate increase. Under this rate, residential customer bills would increase about \$4 a month, a 24 percent increase.

The settlement was reached at a PUC hearing April 27. The decrease in the rate requested was a result of changes in the Federal Communications Commission depreciation requirements.

GTE has filed for rate increases annually since 1980, John Wallace, GTE Public

Affairs manager, Wednesday.

"We will make the increase as far as it will go, but the original rate requested undoubtedly have an effect when a new request will be sent," Wallace said.

greater the portion received, an effect on how frequently have to come back.

"In order to continue to modernize and improve services, rates must be offset with additional revenue."

The proposed rate decrease includes local rate increases for residential and business. Extended area rate increases include a 30 percent increase for business and a 15 percent increase for residential.

Currently, the monthly rate in Bryan-College Station is \$9.10.

State obscenity law unconstitutional

United Press International AUSTIN — The State Court of Criminal Appeals cited the First Amendment in throwing out a section of the state's obscenity law Wednesday.

The ruling came in a decision overturning the conviction of a Houston man for promoting obscenity because the state failed to prove he knew a film was obscene.

The decision deemed unconstitutional a provision of state law declaring that a person who promotes obscene material is presumed to do so with the knowledge of its content and character.

Carl Lee Davis was convicted and sentenced to three days in jail and fined \$750 for promoting obscenity to an undercover Houston vice officer who viewed a film in a peep show booth at an adult book store where Davis worked.

The appeals court said that though it determined the film

was obscene, it found no evidence Davis actually exhibited the movie to the officer.

made change for the film, which was used to view the film. Declaring state law unconstitutional, the court assumed a person who promotes obscene materials knows he or she is promoting obscenity because "it infringes upon the freedom of expression protected by the First Amendment."

"Freedom of expression is an important right to allow seriously impeded or inhibited by a presumption such as one implicated in this case," the court said.

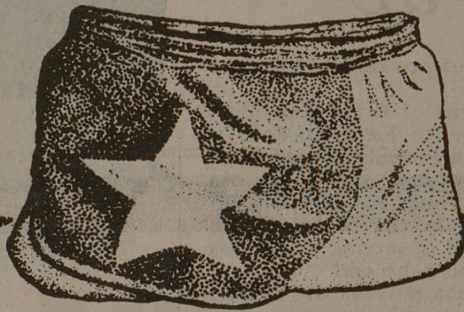
The ruling, however, does not promote obscenity, promoters of obscene materials are not above the law.

"All this opinion holds is that law enforcement officials may not rely upon sufficient inference of guilt to obtain and sustain conviction for promoting obscene material," the court stated.

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Senate approves water control bill

United Press International AUSTIN — One of several bills comprising a proposed state water plan won final approval in the Texas Senate.

The controversial measure, which orders state water authorities to protect marine life in Gulf Coast bays and estuaries by regulating the inflow of fresh water, won final approval Wednesday.

The measure garnered tentative approval in the Senate Tuesday but stalled after one lawmaker claimed it would halt future construction of dams and reservoirs on Texas rivers.

The measure orders the Texas Department of Water Resources to preserve the historic productivity of the ecologically

delicate bays and estuaries. To do that, water authorities would determine if the taking of fresh water from a river would adversely affect marine life in the bays downstream.

If it decided the damage would be significant, it could require the applicant to compensate for the loss.

Sen. John Traeger, D-Seguin, opposed the bill when it came to the Senate floor.

He gave it his support Wednesday after an amendment was added specifying only the water resources department could determine whether or not a permit to divert water upstream would damage bays and estuaries.

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