



Jason James takes his bike through its paces at Bee Creek Park. James is a fifth grader at South Knoll Elementary School.

staff photo by Barry Papke

Houston plans Hispanic market, built Mexican-style

United Press International
HOUSTON — Mayor Kathy Whitmire and a Dallas development company have announced plans for a \$16.6 million Mexican-style market on the city's east side.

The "mercado" project was proposed years ago and has languished ever since. But Encore Development Corp of Dallas said its new plans will create 500

new jobs in the predominantly Hispanic neighborhood.

The mayor said the project would be initiated through a proposed \$3 million federal Urban Development Action Grant. The city also would provide \$500,000 in Community Development funds.

The project would be built on a 407,000 square-foot site near downtown Houston bounded by

Buffalo Bayou, Jensen Drive, Runnels Street and the Houston Belt and Terminal Railway tracks.

The market would be designed around a renovated 80-year-old warehouse and manufacturing site. It would include specialty boutiques, three restaurants, bakeries, candy stores, a produce market, three Spanish-language cinemas and

meeting and exhibition space.

"We're working very hard to make it authentic," said W. Arnold of Encore.

Arnold, who said the project is to reach the first, other Houstonians and tourists third, said construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in November with completion expected a year later.

Cranston pledges 'jobs for all'

United Press International
DALLAS — Sen. Alan Cranston says he added the nation's employment situation to his presidential campaign platform, which so far has emphasized nuclear disarmament, because the two are linked.

"Under Ronald Reagan's budget we will spend \$3 trillion on the military. It's hard to strengthen the economy with that much going to military spending," the California Democrat said Monday at a news conference.

"Twenty million people unemployed or underemployed and several others homeless and hungry is a national disgrace," he said.

Cranston defeated other contenders in a Young Democrats straw poll in Alabama.

Cranston arrived Sunday at the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport.

He stressed both his desire that there be "a job for every American who needs one" and the need to negotiate with the Soviet Union to achieve a nuclear freeze.

"We are in a vulnerable position because of our dependence on Arab oil," the liberal Democrat said, "and we will be in serious jeopardy if we must import more strategic materials for defense."

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second in the fourth. But it gets to a vote in Texas, will be narrowed down to candidates."

Joining Cranston at the conference were wealthy insurance executive Rapoport and veteran labor organizer Pandorano.

Cranston said he was in Texas to raise money and supporters for his campaign to replace Reagan. He is getting commitments totaling about \$20,000.

Energy attorney views regulations

United Press International
TULSA, Okla. — An Oklahoma City energy industry attorney says the federal government should get out of the oil and gas business and let the industry take care of itself.

"The solution, in my opinion, does not lie with the Legislature at the federal level," attorney Barth Walker said Monday, "or the state level. The solution lies in the private sector."

Walker's comments came during a Regulatory Practices Committee meeting at the Interstate Oil Compact Commission's three-day meeting in Tulsa. The committee focused on a current natural gas glut and its effect on the energy industry.

"There is no supply and demand problem," Walker said. "We have the supply. The problem involved is a contract problem."

On the federal level, Walker said, the subject of natural gas regulation "is too darn political."

On the state level, he said, legislation cannot address a problem that involves other states.

"I think state legislatures have to recognize it is not a problem they can solve; they should stay out of it," he said. "The states cannot direct a solution at an interstate purchaser."

Government regulators should "step aside," he said and let free enterprise take over.

"Congress does not have the guts it takes to work out a prob-

lem from the standpoint of a solution," he said. "This is not a time for pillow talk."

Walker's comments followed a presentation by Jack E. Earnest, senior vice president and general counsel for Texas Eastern Corp. of Houston concerning the current natural gas surplus.

Earnest said the natural gas industry is faced with a surplus of 2 to 3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas per year and the glut could continue for two to three years.

"I don't think anybody really knows where the future demand is," Earnest said. "Hopefully the bubble is going to be gone in two to three years, and off our backs."

Earnest said "what we do in the regulatory arena" is crucial to the industry's future.

"I'm a pessimist when it comes to thinking we are going to have meaningful (federal) legislation," he said.

A major controversy is take-or-pay contracts — long-term contracts in which producers promise a determined amount of gas to one purchaser in exchange for the purchaser's promise to buy a determined minimum amount on a regular basis.

With the drop in demand for natural gas, some purchasers have protested the contracts, attempting to get out of the deals.

Help possible for dry West Texas

United Press International
AUSTIN, Texas — State agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower said Tuesday his office is seeking federal disaster assistance for a 27-county area of West Texas that has been hard hit by a drought.

Hightower called the 1-month drought "an economic and ecological disaster that no longer can be ignored."

Governor Mark White's office was asked to initiate the action by seeking a formal "disaster declaration" for the area from President Reagan.

"What we've got out in West Texas is the makings of a new Dust Bowl," Hightower told a news conference. "Overall, the area is in the fourth year of below-normal rainfall, and this

year it's powder dry out there."

Hightower said the affected area is larger than the state of Pennsylvania, and the drought is wrecking an agricultural economy that produces sales of \$500 million in a normal year.

Hightower said because the dry conditions have left ranges with little or no grass to feed livestock, many ranchers have been forced to sell their herds or move them into New Mexico or Colorado.

The affected counties are Dawson, Andrews, Martin, Howard, Mitchell, Nolan, Loving, Wikler, Ector, Midland, Glasscock, Coke, Ward, Crane, Upton, Reagan, Irion, Crockett, Schleicher, Sutton, Terrell, Pecos, Reeves, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Brewster and Presidio.

Free speech suit filed against mall

United Press International
AUSTIN — An anti-nuclear group Tuesday filed suit against an Austin shopping mall, claiming its members have been denied access to public areas of the mall to hand out leaflets and solicit petitioners.

The complaint said members of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign had been thwarted in their efforts at the Barton Creek Square mall.

The suit, filed by the American Civil Liberties Foundation, claimed the mall's policy violates the Texas Bill of Rights.

"As far as we know, it is one of the first such suits under the

Texas Constitution," said Jim Harrington, a lawyer for the ACLF.

Harrington said state courts in California, New Jersey, Washington, New York and Massachusetts have interpreted their state constitutions to prohibit mall owners from limiting free speech.

Bob Weeman, manager of Barton Creek Square, said the denial of the anti-nuclear group's request to solicit signatures was consistent with mall policy that bans any political or religious activities at the shopping center, which is private property.

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