

Exxon, Houston bank start payment system

United Press International
HOUSTON — Exxon Co., U.S.A. plans to initiate a program later this month that would allow customers to pay for gasoline by electronic transfer rather than cash or credit card.

"We call it an advanced electronic payment system," said K.R. Fink, Exxon business development manager.

"It's something like writing a check, only you're doing it electronically rather than by paper," said Lorraine Peterson, spokeswoman for First City National Bank of Houston, Exxon's partner in the experiment.

Under the system, customers who have bank cards from First City can use those cards to electronically transfer money from their checking account to one of 10 Exxon service stations in the Houston area involved in the six month experiment.

"A person goes in and puts their card into a machine, and they have to put their special number into the machine, their personal access number, and that is transferred to the bank, which will authorize the purchase. Actual authorization from the bank could take only seconds," she said.

"Our objective with the test is to reduce the transaction cost while providing customers with an alternative method of payment," Fink said.

Fink made no predictions about the test, which is slated to begin in mid-July.

"At the conclusion of the six months, we will determine where we will go at that point," he said. "We've made no predictions whatsoever. We're running the test to see what happens."

Peterson said if the experiment is successful, the bank might try electronic transfers in other situations.

"It's planned to expand this system beyond the Exxon system if it works, if consumers accept it," she said. "There are certainly applications to other retail areas."

"Just think about any retail establishments that you normally use, like grocery stores for example," Peterson said. "There are a lot of benefits to the consumer where he doesn't have to have cash or write a check."

"This is strictly a First City-Exxon project," she said, "so it will only be First City cards that will be usable in this case," and Peterson said that customers could not obtain cash through the system.

Warped



by Scott McCullar

Shelter demand declining

United Press International
DALLAS — Charlie Grubbs says selling fallout shelters is a boom or bust business.

Even with the nuclear arms race in the headlines and survivalism on the rise, Grubbs says it is a battle to sell the shelters.

"We have to fight and claw every year to make it," says Grubbs. "I hope we're here next year. Most of our business is tornado shelters. You couldn't sur-

live selling fallout shelters alone."

Grubbs' Stormaster fallout shelter line has gotten rave reviews from survivalists. "Survive" magazine last year called the Stormaster "the finest blast shelter in the free world."

The top of the line Stormaster costs about \$14,000, complete with air vents, fallout filters, and a 90-degree turn in the entrance "because radiation can't go around corners,"

Grubbs' wife Sharon said. And they double as wine cellars, tool sheds, game rooms, or just quiet retreats.

"One lady in Garland has hers all decked out with Dallas Cowboys banners and pictures and stuff," Grubbs said. "She does her sewing down there."

The shelters feature foot-thick seamless concrete walls with galvanized steel doors and 2 feet of overhead cover. Grubbs

says they have to be stronger than his tornado shelters, because you have to stay in them longer.

But business is boom and bust, according to the level of anxiety in the world.

"It was pretty good when the Bay of Pigs was going on," says Mrs. Grubbs. "Now people will buy a swimming pool, but they won't spend money on something that will save their lives."

Memorial motorcade re-enactment planned

United Press International
AUSTIN — Members of the American Legion, elected officials and other interested citizens plan to re-enact a 1935 motorcade through Texas as a way of honoring the state's war casualties.

Former Gov. Jimmy Allred launched the first such motorcade 48 years ago when he designated Texas Highway 66 a memorial roadway and opened it to a caravan that drove nearly 600 miles south in honor of the

state's World War I casualties.

Although the roadway has been renamed U.S. 281, it still carries the designation of "American Legion Memorial Highway."

John Sanders, director of the Texas Legion's "Memorial Highway Tour," said Monday that a caravan of Legionnaires, Legion Auxiliary members, elected officials and any other citizens who wanted to take part would re-enact the tour July 18-21.

The first tour began in the

North Texas city of Byers and ended in the Rio Grande Valley city of Hidalgo. However, the re-enactment, which will honor casualties from both world wars, Korea and Vietnam, will originate in Burkburnett and end in McAllen, where the Legion's 1983 convention will be held.

Sanders said he expected anywhere up to 200 vehicles to join the motorcade. Several stops will be made, most of them the same as on the original tour.

Rio Grande aid funds run dry

United Press International
RIO GRANDE CITY — About 400 residents of the poorest county in Texas were turned away by county officials who said they ran out of money for federal assistance.

The crowd began gathering before dawn Monday and a line snaked out the door of the Starr County Courthouse. Authorities were able to maintain order, but some seeking assistance

were angered.

"They told us to come here today to get help, and we're not leaving until we get it," said Nelda Garza, an unemployed mother of two.

Starr County, located in far south Texas where the devaluation of the Mexican peso has devastated the economy, was one of 16 Texas counties awarded a portion of \$100 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Of the \$30,867 given the county, about \$8,000 was turned over to the local Salvation Army last week.

Jose D. Villarreal, chairman of local Salvation Army, advertised that his organization would provide assistance to the needy last week, but he said funds ran out Friday.

"There's no money, but they won't believe it. They said they want to call Washington for an investigation," Villarreal said.

Starr County chief deputy sheriff J.C. Gomez said needy people who gathered at the courthouse Friday were given \$100 each.

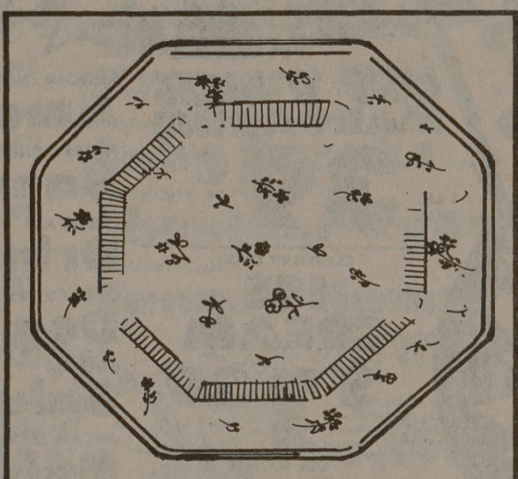
County officials closed the courthouse at noon to keep order.

"We decided to let them say their piece, and they left during the noon hour," Gomez said. "Everything's operating normally again."

china, stoneware and stemware!

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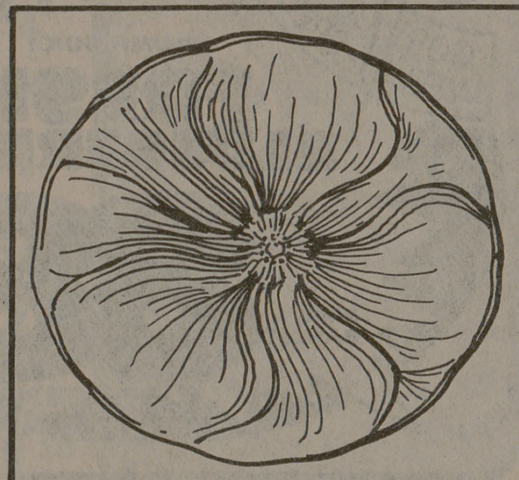
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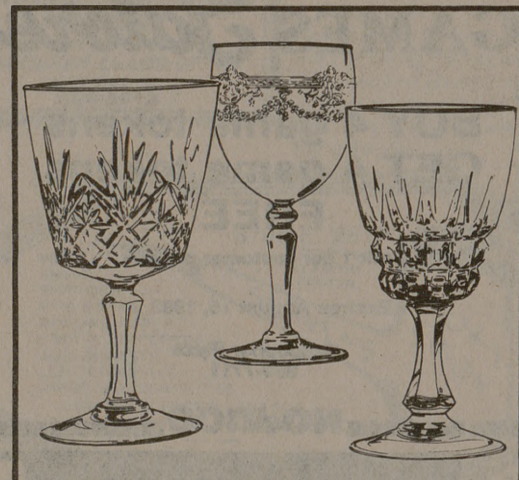
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