

# TDC director Estelle's resignation confirmed

United Press International  
HOUSTON — Longtime Texas Department of Corrections Director W.J. Estelle is resigning the post he has held for the past 11 years, TDC Chairman Bob Gunn confirmed Thursday.

Gunn said Estelle informed the TDC board of his decision Sunday and agreed to remain in his post until a successor is named. Estelle was to make a public announcement later today.

"We're naturally shocked," Gunn said. "We kept it in confidence until he had a chance to tell his wardens."

"He's going to stay and help us find a successor and make a smooth transition. This is important in anything as volatile as a prison system."

Gunn said he would not discuss Estelle's reasons for resigning. "That's his business," he said. Estelle has been at the center of controversy in recent years with the prison reforms ordered by U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice of Tyler, and has been criticized. But he is widely respected in corrections circles.

Estelle, 52, has run the 21-unit Texas prison system through some of its most turbulent times. For a time this year, TDC was the nation's most populous prison system with more than 36,000 inmates.

Known for wearing his cowboy hat and boots almost everywhere and dipping snuff, Estelle started his career as a prison guard in California and moved up to warden in Montana before becoming TDC director in 1972.

Estelle had a reputation as a tough prison master but often expressed fatherly concern for his inmates.

He had not been in office long before in 1974 inmate Federico Gomez Carrasco, known as a South Texas drug kingpin, led other inmates in taking hostages in the Huntsville prison library and demanding an escort to freedom. Four people, including Carrasco and a fellow inmate, died in TDC's aggressive breakup of that escape attempt.

More recently, Estelle, who as TDC director was named defendant in more than 10,000 lawsuits, has been a focus of one of the nation's most sweeping attempts at prison reform.

# Congressman against flood insurance hike

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Rep. Lindy Boggs, D-La., said Thursday she fears the National Flood Insurance program serving 1.86 million Americans in flood-prone communities will be undermined by continued rate increases.

Boggs told a House subcommittee that rate increases already have prompted some policyholders in 17,400 flood-prone communities to let their insurance lapse, including several in her home state recently devastated by 100-year spring flooding.

"I question the wisdom of another substantial rate increase when three major premium increases have been implemented since January 1981,"

said Boggs. "There had been no increases at all prior to that time."

"I question the rate increase — not because I am opposed to the government saving money — but because I support the federal flood insurance program and I am deeply concerned about its ability to meet its objectives and remain viable if premium rates are not kept affordable," she said.

An average \$18 rate increase is scheduled Oct. 1 in the 15-year-old National Flood Insurance Program, which allows residents in flood-prone areas to obtain insurance at a reduced rate if their community enacts adequate flood plain management regulations.

That will put average pre-

miums at \$174 annually for the insurance carrying a \$500 deductible, officials said, although the House has passed a bill barring any rate increases next October. The Senate has not passed such restrictions.

Also appearing before the panel was Jeffrey Bragg, administrator of the program, who said he is trying to make the program self-supporting by 1988.

"Rates in the program had never been raised prior to 1981," said Bragg, "and in fact in the early 1970s, rates were lowered to encourage participation."

He said the rate increase scheduled Oct. 1 would generate \$27 million in extra income for the program.

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# Waste of money called careless

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — The failure to exercise lease options in several states, including New Mexico, costing taxpayers more than \$30 million in higher rent, was due in part to human error and/or carelessness by the regional offices, the General Accounting Office said.

Taxpayers in the Southwest will pay \$40,000 in higher rent during a five-year renewal period because the General Service Administration failed to exercise an option of a lease for a building in Cuba, N.M.

GSA officials told the GAO, Congress' investigative arm, the option was not exercised because "transfer of personnel resulted in management oversight," a GAO report said Wednesday.

GSA officials in Fort Worth said the Cuba oversight occurred in November 1981 on the lease option for 3,750 square feet of house offices for the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service.

The New Mexico case was one of seven missed options nationwide that were cited in the report showing taxpayers could foot the bill for more than \$30 million in higher rent because of government mistakes during the past four years.

However, the GAO said the Cuba, N.M. case was the only missed option by the GSA region

involving Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The GSA oversees record supplies and space for government agencies in the region.

"The management of renewal options has been a continuous problem for GSA officials," the report said.

The GAO said it found errors nationwide occurred because of human error and/or carelessness, erroneous data and a program of inefficiency in the informational system the GSA uses to keep track of leases and non-standard procedures.

"GSA officials have made a concerted effort to minimize recurrence of the problem," the report said.

A lease renewal option gives the government the right to continue tenancy for a specified term at rental at the expiration of the initial lease if the government provides written notice within a certain period.

"At the time of lease renewal, the market rental rate is often more costly than the option rate," the GAO said. "Therefore, it is generally in the government's interest to exercise the lease option and obtain the lower rent when it has a continued need of the space."

As of March 1983, the government had 635 leases totaling \$55 million in the five-state southwestern region.

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