

Justice Department to vote on districts

United Press International
AUSTIN — State elections officials said they expected to hear Tuesday whether the U.S. Justice Department had approved or rejected Texas' congressional redistricting plan.

Karen Gladney, an elections official with the Secretary of State's office, said the Justice Department could approve or reject the plan but also had the option of requesting more time to complete its deliberations.

The Justice Department must review the plan to ensure it complies with civil rights legislation.

In 1982, a three-judge federal panel agreed and redrew the districts along traditional boundaries. The result was a return to two predominately Democratic districts in Dallas.

Texas Republicans appealed that decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, which said the three-judge panel erred by changing the boundaries without first declaring them unconstitutional. The Dallas chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People also intervened in the suit.

Justice Department for approval under the Voting Rights Act.

The primary beneficiaries under the Legislature's plan were Democratic Rep. Martin Frost, whose traditional district would be preserved, and Rep. Tom Vandergriff of Arlington.

Under the plan, Vandergriff, a freshman representative, would lose about 25,000 voters in a Republican stronghold of Southwest Tarrant County and gain approximately 45,000 largely Democratic voters in East Arlington, his traditional power base.

GOP Rep. Phil Gramm's district also would be changed under the Legislature's plan. Gramm would pick up about 45,000 residents of Tarrant County.

Republican State Chairman George Strake and the NAACP both have indicated that even if the redistricting plan passed Justice Department muster, they would continue their suit.

The battle over the redrawing of Texas 27 congressional districts began in 1980 when the Legislature, under pressure from then-Gov. Bill Clements, approved a plan that created one minority district and two Republican districts in Dallas County.

Democratic opponents of that plan began a lawsuit to halt its use in 1982 elections, saying it violated the 1965 Voting Rights Act by packing Dallas minorities into one district.



staff photo by John Makely

Fast Wheels

Faster than the speed of light? No, just pan-action photography that keeps the biker

sharp and blurs the background. This bicycle rider was caught on film while racing from Bizzel toward the MSC.

Glasses obsolete?

Contacts improve, come in six-packs

United Press International
Contact lenses worn 30 days and nights in a row — or longer — are the cutting edge of a revolution that in 10 years may make glasses obsolete.

As the revolution advances, users may be able to purchase long-wearing soft contacts in six-packs. When a lens becomes discolored or dirty the user would throw it away and put in a new one. The practice will be more economical than having the soiled lens cleaned.

Dr. Oliver Dabezies, chairman of the contact lens committee of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, keyed those predictions to advances in contact lenses over the last decade, particularly the arrival of the long-wearing types.

The next major breakthrough will be better bifocal contacts.

One in two Americans needs glasses. Ten million of those use contacts, those small, tiny plastic disks that rest on the cornea and aim to correct errors of refraction — near-sightedness, far-sightedness and astigmatism.

Contacts adhere to the thin film of tears that covers the front of the eye. Each time an eyelid blinks, it covers the lens and causes it to move slightly. This allows tears to flow under the lens, providing lubrication and some oxygen.

About half the contacts in use are hard. The others are soft. Among users of soft lenses are those fitted with extended-wear types.

They are comfortable to wear and require a shorter period of adjustment.

They are less likely to dislodge during vigorous activity and can be worn for long periods and are easily interchangeable with glasses. Disadvantages: they may be more expensive than hard lenses, need more frequent replacement, are more difficult to care for, and may result in less clear vision.

Extended wear contacts first came into the mainstream in 1981 with federal Food and Drug Administration of the first ones for general use.

Study shows bad highways

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Texas Good Roads and Transportation Association, citing a study that said 15 percent of Texas auto accidents were caused by obsolete highways, called Tuesday for a 5-cent increase in the state gasoline tax to fund needed repairs.

The press conference called to release the study marked the fifth time in recent months the association has sought public support for greater highway funding and the tax increase needed to pay for it.

The study, which was conducted by The Road Information Program, a non-profit research group from Washington, D.C., said obsolete highway design was the second leading cause of traffic accidents in 1982.

current 5-cent gasoline tax to pay for renovations and repairs. Texas' motor fuels tax has not been increased since 1955.

The tax increase should be used to fund a 10-year, \$1.7 billion renovation program, said Charlie Kirkham, an association spokesman.

"Many of the roads were talking about today are unsafe at any speed," said Kirkham.

Kirkham credited the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation with doing the best job it could with limited resources.

However, he said the department was forced to switch 5 percent of its current budget from state to federal projects in order to qualify for federal matching funds.

As a result, he said, the department was unable to pick up litter and mow grass along right of ways on many roads.

Unlike hard contacts or ordinary soft ones, the very special soft contacts allow lots of oxygen to be delivered to the cornea, the clear covering of the eye.

"Any patient who can wear daily wear lenses can be considered an excellent candidate for cosmetic extended-wear contacts," Dr. Jack Hartstein, a St. Louis ophthalmologist, said at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

The results were based on a formula designed after a three-year study of accidents on Indiana roadways.

More than 10,000 miles of Texas highways and farm to market roads were found lacking, the study said. The primary flaws were narrow lanes and inadequate shoulders that were typical of roadways built in pre-war years.

The inadequate roads could be easily upgraded, the study said, if funding were available.

The Good Roads Association, as it has several times in the past, advocated doubling the current

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Bentsen introduces legislation to force farmers' drought aid

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, Tuesday introduced a bill to force the government to provide emergency feed assistance to drought-stricken ranchers, such as releasing over 17 million bushels of its damaged grain.

In introducing his bill aimed at helping ranchers suffering the worst drought in more than 30 years, Bentsen criticized the Department of Agriculture for failing to implement the discretionary emergency feed assistance program.

Secretary of Agriculture John Block has refused requests by state officials and the Texas congressional delegation to provide the emergency feed assistance, although 25 counties have been designated for federal disaster relief because of 18 months of severe drought.

The bill would force Block to provide the assistance, but would allow him to retain discretion in determining what form the assistance would take.

The measure also would allow him to release the the Commodity Credit Corporation-owned grain to feed livestock. Currently, the CCC-owned commodities can be released only through a presidential disaster declaration.

"The bill would also see to it that all farmers and ranchers suffering from a natural disaster could qualify for disaster assistance, whether or not their county has been declared a disaster area," said Bentsen.

Texas officials have been frustrated because over 17 million bushels of damaged, government-owned grain have been sitting in silos in the heart of drought-stricken West Texas since the Russian grain embargo, costing taxpayers \$5 million annually in storage costs.

"At Rankin, Texas, about 175 miles south of the elevators full of this damaged corn, there are ranches that have had only six-tenths of an inch of rain this year," said Bentsen. "These people, suffering through the worst drought in 30 years

could qualify for disaster assistance, whether or not their county has been declared a disaster area," said Bentsen.

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