

El Paso is drying up, needs help from West

United Press International
EL PASO — Without water from nearby New Mexico, the El Paso area will eventually dry up and its residents will be forced to move away, a water expert said Thursday.

Attorney Ellis Mayfield, a member of the El Paso public service board that governs water here, said the West Texas city has only enough water to meet peak demands of consumers until about 1995.

"If we don't find other sources of water, our grandchildren will have to leave El Paso, just as the Indians did in prehistoric civilizations when the water supply dried up," he said.

Mayfield contradicted the statement of Colorado water engineer, Leo Eisel, who told a Las Cruces gathering Wednesday that El Paso was too worried about the distant future.

"If we don't find other source, our grandchildren will have to leave El Paso, just as the Indians did in previous civilizations when the water supply dried up."

Eisel said that if the 326 wells El Paso wants are drilled, El Paso will have a glut of water.

The wells are planned for the western side of the Franklin Mountains and into the Hueco

Bolson on the mountains' east side, Eisel said. Taking water from this area, he said, will harm the water supply for residents of Las Cruces and for farmers in the Elephant Butte Irrigation District north of Las Cruces.

The Las Cruces meeting was sponsored by the Concerned Citizens for New Mexico Water Resources. Eisel's involvement began in 1981 when he was hired by a Las Cruces pecan farmer to study the ongoing water dispute.

Eisel also was a key witness for New Mexico in a lawsuit that El Paso filed against that state in 1980 for the right to use its water.

In January, U.S. District Court Judge Howard Bratton ruled that El Paso could use some of the millions of gallons of underground water within the borders of both states. An appeal of the ruling is expected.

Eisel said El Paso plans for water usage should focus on the next 40 years.

Mayfield disagreed, saying the citizens of El Paso must plan for the long range.

"We would be absolutely stupid and derelict if we did not begin now to plan for the next 100 years," Mayfield said.



Jumping the bench

photo by Fatimah E. Lita

John Rogers, a sophomore mechanical engineering major, started skate boarding when he was eight. He now is one of twenty skate boarders that have recently

organized and are attempting to raise funds to replace an old skate board ramp that was torn down. John is practicing jumping on and off the bench near Harrington Tower.

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Falcons rest on Texas coast

United Press International
PADRE ISLAND — Scientists from the United States and Canada took blood samples Thursday from migrating arctic falcons, an endangered species of birds that make brief semi-annual rest stops on the Texas Gulf Coast.

The birds landed on Padre Island Wednesday and are expected to stay only a few days before continuing their winter migration to Central America.

"The birds get together and ride a cold wave south much as surfers ride a wave," said Bob

Whistler, chief naturalist at the Padre Island National Seashore.

An unusually large number of the arctic perigrine falcons arrived this year, Whistler said. He declined to disclose the number or the location of the birds because of illegal hunters.

Canadian and American scientific teams tagged the birds and took blood samples to determine levels of pesticides they had picked up during their summer stay in northern Canada.

The pesticide levels will be compared to readings taken last spring, when the birds were migrating north.

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Deported refugees subject of lawsuit

United Press International
BROWNSVILLE — Many Salvadorans and Guatemalans have been forced to return to their countries because the Immigration and Naturalization Service never advised them of their rights, a San Antonio lawyer said Thursday.

In an opening statement, Lee Teran told U.S. District Judge Ricardo Hinojosa she would show that the INS was not living up to Immigration and Nationality Act requirements until a federal court order was issued two years ago.

A large influx of Salvadorans and Guatemalans into the United States began in 1980, Teran said. Since then, she said, un-

known numbers have signed "voluntary departures" in which they waived their rights to hearings and applications for political asylum.

Her class action suit, on behalf of all Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees, seeks to make the temporary injunction issued in November 1981 permanent. That order has forced INS officers to inform illegal aliens from the two countries that they have a right to request political asylum.

INS spokesman Duke Austin said that requests for asylum for Salvadorans alone have increased from 5,000 to 25,000 total since the temporary injunction was issued.

Austin said the INS position is that the Salvadorans are "economic refugees" who come to the United States looking for jobs and who do not have valid claims for asylum.

Harlingen attorney Lisa Brodyaga, who will appear as a witness, said she would present affidavits that show many Central Americans were "pressured, coerced and intimidated" into signing away their rights.

Attorney Linda Yanez, co-counsel with Teran, said evidence would also be introduced to show that Salvadorans' lives are jeopardized when they are sent back to the war-torn country.

Alicia's damage won't cause massive tax loss

United Press International
AUSTIN — Losses resulting from Hurricane Alicia for members of the Catastrophe Property Insurance Pool will be less than half the \$300 million previously expected.

The reduced estimate was good news for state budget watchers, who feared that tax credits resulting from insurance payments due to Alicia could mean a tax loss to the state of nearly \$110 million in the current two-year budget period.

The fears arose because of recent changes to a law which give insurance companies tax credits if they pay large property claims in the wake of a natural disaster, such as Alicia.

Under the 1971 law, the 600 insurance companies in the pool will receive tax credits on their state premium taxes for storm losses paid in excess of \$100 million.

The loss to pool members from Alicia initially was placed at \$300 million, meaning the com-

panies would have been able to reduce premium taxes by roughly \$200 million over the next five years.

But Don J. Manthe, chairman of the Texas Catastrophe Property Insurance Association, told the state Board of Insurance Thursday that new estimates of losses to pool members are at less than \$150 million. This means the state will lose only about \$50 million in premium taxes over the next five years.

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