

# Texas expertise a plus, pipeline spokesman says

## United Press International

AUSTIN — Texans' familiarity with pipelines should be a plus for an energy consortium hoping to gain right-of-way in Texas for an 1,800-mile Wyoming-to-Louisiana coal slurry pipeline, a company official said Tuesday.

"I don't think we'll get any major opposition from environmentalists because we've built a lot of pipelines," said Earl Evans, director of public affairs for Energy Transportation Systems, Inc.

The Houston-based com-

pany is expected to find out where its opposition will come from Wednesday at a pre-conference hearing scheduled before the Texas Railroad Commission.

The utility regulatory agency must rule on ETSI's request for a certificate of public convenience and necessity before the company can proceed with acquiring right-of-way for the 945-mile stretch of pipeline in Texas.

Evans said Texas' vast expanse of pipelines for the oil and

gas industry should help ETSI's permitting process.

"Texas has a lot of pipelines," he said. "They're familiar with pipeline construction and the way pipelines are laid."

The Railroad Commission is not expected to take any testimony at Wednesday's hearing, said spokesman Brian Schaible.

"We're simply going to be discussing who wants to participate (in hearings) and the number of hearings and location of hearings," he said. "We're mostly going to be working out procedural details."

The chief opponent of the pipeline is expected to be the railroads, who could knock out of a large source of the revenues they now receive to haul coal from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana to electric utilities in Kansas, Texas and Louisiana.

The railroads have indicated they will not permit right of way for pipelines under their tracks. The pipeline would be 30 to 36 inches in diameter and buried to a depth of about three feet.

## AT&T cash-flow crisis

# Phone rate hike requested

## United Press International

AUSTIN — Armed with a favorable report from a Public Utility Commission accountant, AT&T Communications pressed its case Tuesday for an emergency 10.9 percent increase in its Texas long-distance rates.

"Everyone knows our position," said AT&T lawyer Joyce Beasley. "We've shown both good cause and a negative cash flow."

AT&T's emergency case, filed a month ago, was bolstered by a PUC staff report that said the company could be entitled to an immediate

\$103.7 million annual increase.

The company also has a request pending for a permanent rate hike of \$304 million to offset the effects of the Jan. 1 divestiture of the Bell System.

Despite finding AT&T had a positive cash flow, PUC staff accountant Randy Klaus said the company's request for an emergency \$115.4 million increase grew out of the "most unusual of circumstances."

Klaus said even though there is no evidence AT&T is

losing money, the company could justify a rate hike if the commission decides conditions in the telecommunications industry are pushing the company toward a financial crisis.

AT&T says it has lost \$300,000 a day since the Jan. 1 divestiture when it was forced—under a PUC order—to pay Southwestern Bell Telephone and other local phone companies more than \$900 million in "access" charges.

An expert witness for the Office of Public Counsel submitted written testimony

saying AT&T does not deserve any rate increase because it has a positive annual cash flow of \$52 million.

James P. Jansen, a private utility consultant, said his view of AT&T's rate application showed that contrary to the company's claims its earnings in Texas amounted to \$326,589.

Access charges were levied against AT&T as part of the PUC order granting Bell \$653 million interim rate increase and covers expenses access to local telephone works in Texas.



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# Bower denied bond reduction; prosecution evidence sought

## United Press International

SHERMAN — Defense counsel for a man accused of shooting four people in an air-

plane hangar last fall said Tuesday he would press for a look at prosecution evidence in the case.

Meanwhile, an attorney for Lester Leroy Bower Jr., 36, of Arlington, Texas, was denied his request for a bond reduction in a Tuesday hearing. Bond remained at a total of \$400,000 for four charges of capital murder.

Bower is charged with capital murder in the Oct. 8, 1983, shooting deaths of four men whose bodies were found in a hangar for ultralight on a ranch belonging to one of the victims, building contractor Bob Tate, 51.

Among items seized in a search of Bower's home were

three tires with the name "Tate" inscribed inside the hubs, court papers show.

The Grayson County District Clerk's office reported Tuesday afternoon that an evidentiary hearing was scheduled Friday afternoon, but a spokeswoman said a county grand jury was to investigate the case Wednesday, and if an indictment was handed down, the hearing would probably be postponed.

Bower's lawyer, Jerry Buckner, said he wanted the evidentiary hearing to get a look at the evidence against his client.

Investigators said the victims were all killed with a silencer-equipped .22-caliber weapon. Court papers indicate the search

also turned up manuals for making gun silencers and .22-caliber ammunition, but no weapons that caliber.

Bower's attorney said he does not believe the evidence is sufficient to sustain a murder charge.

"I still haven't seen or heard anything to show that Lester Bower was ever in Grayson County," said Buckner.

Buckner described Bower as a leader at his church and has no past criminal record, as "a model citizen."

Investigators have refused to discuss evidence they have gathered against Bower, but court documents filed Monday indicated authorities recovered ammunition but no weapons during a search of Bower's house.

"We have physical evidence as a result of the search that makes us confident that we have the right man," Grayson County Sheriff L.E. "Jack" Driscoll said.

Bower, a native of Tulsa, Okla., is charged in the slaying of Tate; Grayson County District Attorney Phillip Good, 29; former Sherman policeman Ronald Moore, 37; and Jerry Mac Brown, a self-employed house painter from Sherman.

Authorities said they went to Bower because he answered an ad placed by one of the victims to sell an ultralight aircraft. One of the small planes valued at about \$4,000, was missing from the hangar where four men were found shot to death on Oct. 8.



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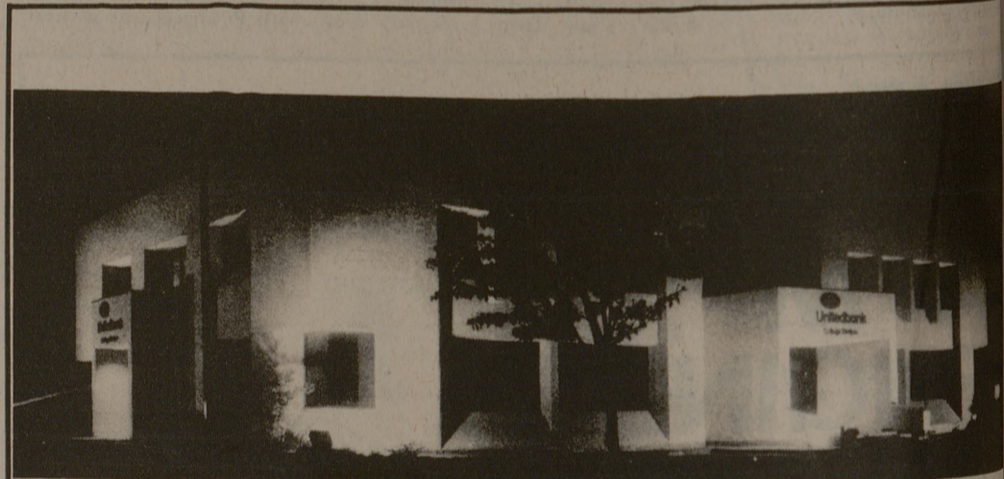
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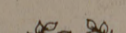
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