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# Oil fields open to earthquakes

**United Press International**  
AUSTIN — University of Texas scientists believe they have put together the first documentation that active oil and gas fields may be susceptible to minor earthquakes.

Dr. Wayne Pennington of UT's Institute for Geophysics and Department of Geological Sciences said recent earthquakes in South Texas probably were caused by activity related to oil and gas production.

The UT team focused on oil and gas fields near the towns of Fashing and Pleasanton in Atascosa County, where earthquakes within the past year reached magnitudes of 3.2 and 3.9 on the Richter scale.

Pennington says the oil and gas fields appear to have undergone large-scale depressurization because of the fluid being withdrawn.

So far, the earthquakes have caused no appreciable damage and can be expected to pose only minor hazards to the communities involved, he said.

"The earthquakes all appear to originate on known faults where those faults form boundaries of an oil or gas field," said Pennington.

The two major oil and gas fields that are seismically active were discovered in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Geologists have confirmed evidence of some earthquakes near Pleasanton in the late 1960s, and an earthquake was felt near Fashing in 1973.

Pennington said production of oil and gas causes the lowering of fluid pressure in the reservoir rock. This, in turn, affects the strength of the rock.

In some places, such as Houston, removal of water causes compaction of the rock and a lowering of the

land occurs, sometimes accompanied by small earthquakes.

Because the fields of South Texas are made of limestone, Pennington said there is little lowering of the land.

"What we think is happening is that the faults that are present have been moving naturally but without earthquakes until fluid pressure along them was decreased to a point where the faults would stick and slip in jerky motions, producing earthquakes," said Pennington.

For this to take place, he said, an odd arrangement of faults, gas or oil fields and state of stress must all exist.

"There may be other fields in South Texas or elsewhere that have the potential to become seismically active," said Pennington. "Certainly, most fields do not meet these criteria."

Pennington said it is difficult to estimate whether all the energy available to produce earthquakes has been depleted.

"There are reasons to expect that the earthquakes could never get very much larger than they have already been," he said.

During the last 11 years, about 15 earthquakes have been recorded in the Pleasanton-Fashing area. The most recent activity occurred at a depth of 1.5 miles to 2.5 miles, the same depth of oil fields.

An earthquake near Fashing on July 23, 1983, occurred at a depth of about 2.5 miles, while the earthquake near Pleasanton last March 2 occurred at about 1.5 miles.

## SHOE



# Reagan orders automakers to install air bags by 1989

**United Press International**

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration Wednesday ordered automakers to install air bags or other automatic passenger protections in cars by 1989 but promised to lift the regulation if states pass mandatory seat belt laws.

The announcement by Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole marked the latest twist in a 14-year struggle between a divided auto industry, consumer groups and what has been an indecisive government.

Her decision drew immediate criticism — and praise.

"I am requiring automatic occupant protection in all cars based on a phased-in schedule," said Dole. "The plan I am announcing today will save as many lives as possible as soon as possible."

But Dole said the only way the mandate would be lifted is if states representing two-thirds of the U.S. population enact mandatory seat

belt usage laws within five years.

New York is the only state to have passed a mandatory seat belt law, which is awaiting the signature of Gov. Mario Cuomo.

Air bags are designed to inflate automatically in car crashes and protect occupants.

Ralph Nader, whose Center for Auto Safety has been among the leading consumer groups pushing for air bags, said: "This rule is an illusion. It is tricky. It looks good, but when you study it you see what it really is."

Nader said, "The decision is not only too little too late, but has the seeds of its own destruction built into it."

He said the decision could be unlawful because the federal government cannot condition a federal automobile safety standard on state government actions.

"It would certainly be challenging in court, which of course the Reaganites at all levels are aware of their purpose is to keep delaying installation of air bags in cars," Nader said.

Sen. John Danforth, R-Mo., chairman of the Senate subcommittee that handles highway safety legislation and a longtime advocate of air bags, praised the decision, saying it was "a step in the right direction, but not the one I expected a whimper. This is a baby."

The American Automobile Association praised the decision, saying "it gives both auto manufacturers and the public a choice of technology and a reasonable amount of time to decide how best to reduce needless highway fatalities."

Dole had been involved in the matter with the White House over the administration's position in response to a Supreme Court ruling that the administration's repeal of a bag rule favored by Jimmy Carter

# Reagan pushes for 'moment of silence'

**United Press International**

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration, pushing one of the president's favorite campaign issues, urged the Supreme Court Wednesday to approve a "moment of silence" for quiet prayer or meditation in public classrooms.

Justice Department officials argued that the nation's high court should approve "one minute of silence" each day for public school stu-

dents whether they use the time to pray or to "think about yesterday's football game or tonight's date."

The Supreme Court during their 1984-85 session, which begins in October, plans to review the constitutionality of Alabama's law allowing a daily moment of silence in schools. A ruling, which is expected in 1985, will affect 23 states which have laws similar to Alabama's.

President Reagan has campaigned

vigorously for a return to prayer in schools. And, school prayer advocates have been lobbying in Congress to make prayer part of the school day.

In 1962, the Supreme Court banned public school teachers from leading students in classroom prayer.

In legal papers filed Wednesday, the Justice Department said a moment of silence is "a legitimate way

for the government to provide an opportunity for both religious and nonreligious introspection in a setting where, experience has shown, many desire it."

U.S. Solicitor General Rex Lee, who advocates the government's views before the Supreme Court, said a silent moment is "an instrument of toleration and pluralism, not of coercion or indoctrination." It allows the student who "might well

be the brunt of jokes and intimidation" to be free to pray.

"If all are silent, then all are free to pray or meditate as they choose without having to appear different," Lee said.

The silent moment simply allows a pupil a chance to meditate or pray, but no one can know who prays and how he does it.

## Police Beat

The following incidents were reported to the University Police Department through Wednesday.

**ASSAULT:**  
• A student reported that while she was walking between the A.P. Beutel Health Center and Leggett Hall, an oriental man rode up behind her on a bicycle and grabbed her.

**MISDEMANOR THEFT:**  
• A maroon Murray ten-speed bicycle was stolen from the patio of #1079 Ball Street Apartments.

# Newspaper won't prosecute Jacksons' guard

**United Press International**

DALLAS — Officials of The Dallas Morning News Wednesday said they will not press theft charges, having made their point by lodging a complaint against a security guard who confronted a reporter at Michael Jackson's hotel and took away her notes.

The notes — which detailed interviews with guests and employees of the Loews Anatole hotel — were returned to reporter Donna O'Neal

about 8½ hours after Tuesday morning's incident.

"Having gotten our backs up and having made the point — which is that we didn't like it very much — we have decided we will not pursue the charges," said Burl Osborne, vice president-editor of the newspaper.

"Our property was stolen. It was very clear from the manager of the Jacksons that they think they didn't do anything wrong. We do," Osborne said.

"The point is that the laws against theft and other constitutional guarantees were not suspended for the Jacksons," he said.

The newspaper filed the theft complaint against Ray Grady, a 6-foot, 200-pound, security man employed by the Jacksons.

Michael Jackson and his brothers, who began their tour last week, have concerts scheduled in Dallas on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

O'Neal, 24, said she had inter-

viewed several maids on the hotel where the Jacksons are staying.

"A person asked to see my notebook," O'Neal said. "He didn't identify himself ... and I didn't know who he was with Jackson security."

O'Neal said the notes were returned several hours later.

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