

Breakaway utility poles set for tryouts on roads

The experimental wooden poles should get their first highway tests within a year in three states, said Dr.

Administration, which will conduct the tests, has not yet decided which states will take part. The target states should be selected within a few months, he said.

"We hope the demonstration projects will set a precedent in the field so that utility companies will be aware of a safety treatment for selected poles in critical areas." Iventical areas.

United Press International

Hundreds of people were evac-

were told to be prepared for possible

Montana Gov. Ted Schwinden

called it the "worst fire situation in a

Conditions deteriorated Tuesday,

Schwinden said, adding that Mon-

tana urgently needed trained fire-

fighters from other states. The Fed-

eral Emergency Management Agency agreed late Monday to direct

more firefighters from outside Mon-

About 200 National Guard mem-

bers were assigned to support duties at various fires, Schwinden said, with

up to 90 military vehicles also in use

Winds gusting to 30-40 mph pro-

pelled flames across treetops and

inder-dry grass while preventing, in

in the firefighting effort.

authorities said

tana to the state

relocation.

When hit, the pole slippes free at its base, rotates about the knee or hinge connection to the electric lines and settles to the ground after the

About 100 of the utility poles, designed to prevent deaths and injuries when hit by vehicles, will be

But crash tests conducted at Texas A&M last week already showed that the breakaway pole performed as designed when struck by a develop the popular breakaway signposts for highways and freeways.

tain blazes the Goulding Creek and Hawk Creek fires. They had

timber and grass before they became

of Helena, the state capital, threat

ened rural residential areas and led

to home evacuations Monday.
Officials in northwest Montana

evacuated two fire areas, setting up

Red Cross evacuation centers in Ka-

lispell and at a rural school in the

Swan Valley, not far from Glacier National Park.

An 8,000-acre fire 20 miles north

seeing breakaway wooden utility poles everywhere, Ivey said. "It wouldn't be economically feasi-

ble to do this to every utility pole," he said. "With the use of cost effectiveness and accident frequency techniques, a company can deter-mine which areas should have a safety treatment such as this.'

ings for the utility company using breakaway poles. The savings would come from the reuse of the pole and

To reinstall the pole, a company would have to lift it up with a crane and remove the knee brace straps. The transmission lines are still intact, so the pole can simply be set back into place and rebolted to the base plate. Then, the upper knee brace straps would be replaced and the pole restored.

by Jeff MacNelly Van Horn toots its own horn

United Press International

VAN HORN — With 17 hotels, a good underground water supply and a proposed \$300,000 civic cen-ter, residents of this West Texas town of about 2,800 residents, are embarking on a program to advertise their town, about 120 miles east of El Paso, as the home of good fresh air, wide open spaces and an "out-to-lunch lifestyle."

Van Horn's assets also include rail and truck transportation and a steady supply of labor, said Dr. Hank Shaffer, president of the Van Horn Chamber of Commerce.

"But aside from the economic aspects of Van Horn, this town is just a good place to raise children," he said. "We have a school system with 900 children and just about anything here anyone could want, without all the distractions and disadvantages of

The Van Horn City Council recently gave the green light to construction of a 6,000-square-foot civic center with two meeting rooms, of-fices for the Chamber of Commerce and a dining facility to accommodate

"We've got a great future here," Schaffer said, "I came here from Dallas two years ago because I wanted to live where the air is pure. There's no pollution in Van Horn, and I go for the laid-back, out-to-

Tourism, ranching and mining are the main industries in Van Horn, Schaffer said. The area boasts the largest talc deposits in the world. come from the reuse of the pole and the ease of restoring a pole that has adds to the economy, he said.

> "We're excited about this civic center," he said. "We know it's not very big, but we figure we can attract meetings from surrounding towns in West Texas. We're on a major eastwest highway, Interstate 10, and I can see nothing but growth and progress for our town.

> The new center will be financed by the Van Horn City Council's Mo-tel Tax Committee, he said. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of 1985.

Editor Larry Simpson of the weekly Van Horn Advocate praised City Council for approving the civic center construction project, noting the building will be paid for with no bonds or tax increases.

We will have a useful facility that can be used by the entire community and which will attract additional visitors to our community," Simpson wrote in a front page column.

Farmers and ranchers who come into Van Horn from ranches in Culberson County to buy supplies complain of drought conditions for the past several years which has caused some ranchers to sell their herds and move out, Schaffer said

"We had good rains this spring and the range around here is green again," he said. "We may be over the worst of the drought.'

Van Horn ranchers have another reason to be optimistic this year, area promoters said.

The Texas Game and Wildlife Commission is replenishing the wild herds of nearly extinct Big Horn Sheep which once abounded in the nearby mountains.

"A favorite of big game hunters, the clusive sheep may be so plentiful in a few years, the commission may permit a limited hunting season for the animals," officials said.

Hunting is one of the city's wintertime attractions. Deer and antelope are plentiful in the area. Ranchers pick up extra cash by allowing hunters to use their property.

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COLLEGE STATION — About 2,000 people die each year from injuries they receive when their vehides hit utility poles, but preliminary tests show that breakaway poles may save some of those lives, a researcher

Don Ivey of the Texas Transporta-tion Institute, which is headquar-tered at Texas A&M.

Timber, range fires

HELENA, Mont. — Gusting bombers and helicopters.

aggravated by winds

used from their homes and others were told to be prepared for possible scorched 20,000 and 30,000 acres of

automobile passes underneath, leaving the utility lines intact.

Ivey said the breakaway poles should perform safely when hit by cars or trucks going from 20 to 60

demonstrated in the test states, Ivey

On the other side of Glacier Park, along its eastern edge, more than 1,000 firefighters worked to control the Napi Peak Fire on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. That blaze de-stroyed at least one mountain cabin while blackening 3,500 acres of heavy timber in extremely rugged

HELENA, Mont. — Gusting winds pushed range and timber fires out of control in at least 20 locations across Montana Tuesday, destroying 30 homes and threatening hundreds of others in what the governor described as the worst such disaster in 10 years.

"It's up again today," said John Gibson of the Interagency Fire Center in Billings, referring to the wind.

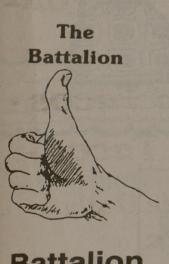
The two largest fires became one Tuesday, mushrooming to 50,000 acres in the Bull Mountains between Roundup and Billings, in south-center in 10 years. No injuries were reported, although at least 107,000 acres had been blackened in 16 separate fires, authorities said.

Trail Montana. It was near Roundup that 30 ranch-type homes, scattered in the rugged hills, were destroyed. Officials dubbed the Bull Moun-"We can't stand to have any more fire up here," said Bill Bishop of the Bureau of Land Management.

Other major fires getting attention from several state and federal agencies included the Mount Centennial Fire, which had consumed 12.800 acres in north-central Montana; the 11,500-acre Murray Ranch Fire, in the Pine Hills of southeast Montana, and the 3,000-acre Kirby Fire, south of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, also in the

southeastern part of the state.
"We're tracking 16 major fires,"
said spokesman Gibson from the Billings fire center. He said that although crews have lines around two or three fires, "No one is being opti-mistic" enough to call any of them contained or controlled.

About 400 to 500 people were told to leave their homes because of the 12,000-acre Houghton Creek Fire west of Kalispell and the 2,000-A storm blowing down from Can-ada was pushing high winds into the state for the third day today and auacre Red Owl Fire southeast of Kalisthorities, hampered by equipment U.S. Highway 2, between Kalispell and manpower shortages, feared the perilous situation would grow worse. and Libby, was closed because of the Houghton fire.



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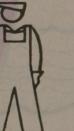
















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