

STATE AND LOCAL

Slouch By Jim Earle



"I guess after all the times I changed my schedule, they were pretty glad to see me go."

Citrus

Texas growers fear proposed lift of Florida quarantine

Associated Press
McALLEN — Rio Grande Valley citrus growers, trying to rebound from a devastating freeze, said Wednesday they are opposed to a proposal that would allow possibly-contaminated Florida citrus to enter other states.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is considering lifting a quarantine on Florida citrus, which has been affected by canker.

Valley citrus growers told USDA officials on Wednesday that it has not been determined if citrus canker has been eradicated in Florida. They said the Valley citrus industry is beginning to improve and do not want it endangered.

"Don't count us out," said Ray Prewett, executive vice president of Texas Citrus Mutual. "This industry has been through a lot of problems before."

"We intend to come back. We will come back but the very worst thing I think that could happen to us, both from an economic standpoint and from a psychological standpoint, is if we got canker. It would be devastating to even the intentions that growers have about replanting and rebuilding."

In December 1983, a week of sub-freezing temperatures wiped out more than 60 percent of the citrus acreage, costing growers some \$100 million. More than 9,000 farmworkers lost their jobs.

Earlier this year, growers said the freeze helped to make the industry more lean and that they expected some citrus this fall. They also said,

however, that it would be at least five years before the Valley citrus industry would recover.

On Wednesday, about 50 people packed a hotel room to hear growers tell USDA officials they do not want to jeopardize their livelihood.

"Is USDA of the opinion that the economic benefits to Florida are worth the risk that other growing areas are being asked to take?" said Dennis Holbrook, a board member of Texas Citrus Mutual.

"The citrus industry and the economy of the Rio Grande Valley has tried to get up off its knees and we cannot be subjected to another possible disaster," Holbrook said.

The public hearing in McAllen is the second of three being held across the country. The next hearing is scheduled for Friday in Los Angeles.

The quarantine in Florida was imposed last year after citrus canker was found in several groves. The bacteria affects the leaves, branches and the fruit.

Texas citrus growers said they do not want Florida citrus imported to other citrus-producing states.

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower was unable to make the public hearing.

Les Whitlock, manager of the Texas Valley Citrus Committee, said the lifting of the ban would surely mean canker would find its way into the Valley.

CS officials: McCaw violating statute

By JERRY OSLIN
Staff Writer

McCaw Cablevision is not complying with College Station's cable television franchise ordinance, members of College Station's City Affairs Council Committee said Wednesday.

The Committee met to discuss McCaw's progress in complying with the city's ordinance.

Steve Parker, a committee member, said McCaw is not complying with the ordinance because it offers service packages with less than 12 channels and offers a package that does not include an NBC station.

According to section 7 of the ordinance: "The Company currently furnishes and shall continue to furnish to users a minimum of 12 signals or channels."

The minimum or basic selection will include at least one station from each of the major networks

(subject to availability) and all full power, local stations including the PBS station at Texas A&M."

McCaw currently offers the Basic package, consisting of five stations, and the Broadcast Pac, consisting of eight stations. Also, the Basic package does not include an NBC station.

Joseph DiBacco, McCaw's regional vice president, told the committee that McCaw did offer a 12 channel package and that the company offered the smaller packages because of the demand for a less expensive service.

DiBacco also said McCaw could not at present offer an NBC station with its Basic package because of the interference from KBTX-TV, Channel 3 in Bryan.

McCaw uses channels 2-6 for its Basic package because they are in a low frequency band and rel-

atively inexpensive to broadcast, DiBacco said. A move to a higher range would add cost to the package.

The Basic consists of Channel 2, Dallas independent KTVT; Channel 3, the Electronic Program Guide; Channel 4, College Station's KAMU; Channel 5, Bryan's KBTX; and Temple's KCEN.

McCaw is bound by Federal Communications Regulations to continue broadcasting KTVT and bound by the College Station ordinance to continue broadcasting KAMU, DiBacco said.

KBTX's original, non-cable broadcast on Channel 3 interferes with a regular, network broadcast on McCaw's Channel 3, he said. But McCaw is adding new equipment that will enable it to broadcast an NBC station on its cable Channel 3 in the future.

Mary Kay's neighbors don't like pink

Associated Press

DALLAS — Cosmetics queen Mary Kay Ash, whose passion for pink ranges from a fleet of company Cadillacs to a new \$5 million pink mansion, has her neighbors seeing red over her plan to build a matching pink guard house.

Ash, founder and chairwoman of Mary Kay Cosmetics Inc., says she needs a 24-hour manned security post positioned at the entry to her north Dallas estate to protect her property and keep the steady flow of curiosity seekers on the move.

But some of her wealthy neighbors — less than thrilled with the idea of a pink mansion on the block — aren't welcoming the little glass and stucco booth.

On Tuesday, the Dallas Board of Adjustments, armed with letters of opposition from 11 well-to-do neighbors, turned down the millionaire's

request to build the structure, 6 feet long and 6 feet wide, just 14 feet from the street.

Ordinance in the neighborhood, which includes a house owned by billionaire H. Ross Perot, requires that all structures be set back at least 40 feet from the road.

Neighbors in less-colorful mansions complained that the guard house would be too visible and would call more attention to the area if built close to the roadway.

"The making of a tourist attraction out of our neighborhood is not a very happy prospect for any of us who live there," neighbor Walter N. Kuntz III wrote. "Guard houses or other unusual and visible security devices increase, as opposed to decrease, the curiosity of passersby."

The cosmetics mogul appeared before the zoning board Tuesday to defend her appeal of the ordinance.

"The structure will blend, aesthetically, with my home and will maintain the high standards of quality in my neighborhood," she told the board.

Ash also said that she needed the guard house close to the street because she had been "robbed twice at my front door" in her old house. She recently moved into the new house, the first done in pink, where crews are still completing the landscaping.

In both incidents — which occurred in 1965 and 1974 — she was hit, bound and robbed of thousands of dollars in jewelry, she said.

But the board, known for its tough stance on zoning issues, ruled only slightly and ruled that 33 feet back was as close to the street as the little pink house could get.

Ash said she hasn't finished with the zoning board and might return for another appeal after discussing the matter with her architect.

Neighbors declined to comment

after the meeting.

The powder pink mansion was bought for \$3.8 million in November, and Ash estimated it would cost \$5 million by the time it is completed in the next few weeks.

The 19,000-square-foot mediterranean-style dwelling has seven bedrooms, 12 baths, two cabanas, two pantries and a wine cellar, said Diana Hanson, real estate executive from Preston Creek Homes, who sold the house.

Many rooms — including the kitchen — are done in pink, as is the exterior, Hanson said.

Hanson said the architect designed the house after the Hearst castle in San Simeon, Calif.

Hanson said she has received numerous phone calls from people in the area criticizing the color as "atrocious" or "tacky" and complaining that the new pink kid on the block disrupts the neighborhood decor.

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