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Strikers at nuclear site defend tests, want raise

MERCURY, Nev. (AP) — The striker paced a road leading to the entrance of the nation's nuclear testing grounds, tugged a jacket around her to ward off the crisp morning air and bristled at the idea that her cause was anti-nuclear.

"We don't want their support," Loraine Faulkner said, referring to anti-nuclear protesters who have tried for a decade to halt testing at the sprawling Nevada Test Site.

"We're not here to cut off nuclear testing," he said.

Test site workers had become vocal counter-demonstrators at anti-nuclear protests here in recent months, singing "God Bless America," jeering peace activists and carrying signs reading "Keep Testing" and "Remember Pearl Harbor."

But, on this recent morning, the strikers were jeering those who entered the site to continue work on the testing program.

Striking Culinary Union workers and bus drivers say they've been able to achieve what the protesters have failed to do — sidetrack the testing program. Energy Department officials, charged with conducting that program, disagree.

They plan to prove that point this morning with the detonation of a

nuclear weapon with up to 12 times the explosive punch of the Hiroshima bomb.

Such tests are scheduled months in advance.

The strikers believe their efforts have met with some success.

John Pernice, a line captain for the Culinary Union, says there were two tests scheduled for September. There are reports one of them, a tunnel shot code-named Mission Cyber, was postponed this week because of the strike.

Tunnel tests often are carried out for the Defense Nuclear Agency and often are related to research for President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative program.

Energy Department spokesman Chris West has refused to confirm whether a test was postponed, saying only that "We've had some schedule changes" because of the strike.

Only major events, such as today's shot, are announced in advance.

Striking bus drivers who transport workers to the desert site set up picket lines in mid-August. The 617 Culinary workers who provide food services at the site followed Sept. 15.

Some 2,800 union workers have honored Culinary picket lines since the union, Nevada's largest, walked

out after failing to negotiate a contract with the site's largest tractor, Reynolds Electrical and Engineering Co. Contracts expire nine other unions Oct. 1.

The strikers are losing \$30 a day in pay, the DOE reports.

The union workers are 8,300 Southern Nevada workers at the site.

They include steelworkers, workers, Teamsters and others involved in preparing vertical shafts and mines in which nuclear tests are conducted.

Culinary workers are seeking an hour raise this year and a 5 percent increase each of the next years.

Steve Leon, a spokesman for REECo, said Culinary workers currently earn \$8 to \$11 an hour.

Talks between REECo and Culinary workers resume Sunday.

No talks are scheduled between REECo and the Amalgamated Society of Workers in the bus strike.

The 121 bus drivers refuse to offer to cut their work week and their salaries from \$560 a week.

The company has since hired permanent replacement drivers

3 brothers exposed to AIDS find welcome in new town

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP) — Three brothers whose exposure to AIDS made them pariahs in their rural hometown enrolled in a new school Wednesday without incident and with a hesitant welcome from schoolmates and parents.

Deputies patrolled the grounds at Gocio Elementary School. And officials reported that 120 of the 615 pupils stayed home. Up to a dozen pupils were withdrawn. The usual absentee rate is about 3 percent.

But the day had encouraging moments for the Rays — 10-year-old Ricky, Robert, 9, and Randy, 8.

Ricky found welcome cards on his desk, said Clifford Ray, the boys' father.

After school, acting Principal Lee Coose said: "We had a super day, A-OK across the board."

The boys' mother, Louise said, "Everything was positive. One of (the boys) said they had to assign seats in the lunchroom because everyone wanted to sit next to them."

The boys attended school in Arcadia for a week under federal court order. A boycott that emptied classes and telephone threats were made against the school and family. They left Arcadia after an Aug. 28 fire gutted their home. The DeSoto County sheriff's department said Tuesday that the fire was arson but said it was "definitely not related" to the community furor.

The Ray family moved to Sarasota because school board policy allows children exposed to AIDS to attend school if they pose no threat to children and are undergoing medical treatment.

Charles Fowler, Sarasota County Schools superintendent, said he has asked the state Legislature for a statewide policy, "so you don't end up with parents being shuttled from county to county, looking for a policy."

The Ray boys are "still a little gun shy of school because of what's hap-

pened," and will receive counseling, Ray said.

The boys gave a shy wave to reporters outside the school Wednesday but waved off questions.

School officials had been concerned about reaction from parents in Sarasota, but the enrollment place without incident.

At school, some parents protested the Rays' move to Sarasota school.

"The Rays are hollering their civil rights," said Tim worth, who didn't let his children go to school.

"But they are violating their rights by showing their faces down our throats," he said. "It will turn violent. They'll end up in another Arcadia if they're not careful."

Others disagreed.

Rosa Lamphier said, "I don't see any problem with it at all. My son has eczema and asthma and he could also be afraid of him."

Town residents protest move of post office from historical square

HOLLY SPRINGS, Miss. (AP) — For the first time since the civil rights era, there is social upheaval in this northern Mississippi community, and sign-toting residents are again demonstrating angrily in the historical town square.

Officials, it seems, want to move the post office.

Many of the protesters, from the ranks of the Garden Club and the Bells and Books Club, say they've never participated in such activities before. But the proposal to build a new post office on a two-lane highway on the outskirts of this farming community "needs a drastic response," said Nadine Callicutt, 80.

"We're not going to give up," said Callicutt, who helped gather 2,000 signatures on a petition against the move and formed a placard-carrying picket line outside the office Sept. 11.

Others, however, complain of traffic problems near the 51-year-old white postal building, which is on the Register of National Historic Places, and say it needs more space.

Alderman Bart Tomlinson, whose mother-in-law owns a 3-acre site being considered by the postal service, said he has collected 500 signatures in favor of the move.

Junior Mitchell, who owns a laundromat, video rental shop and package liquor store near the new site and supports the move, said, "Progress is something people have been trying to fight here ever since there was a Holly Springs."

Bryan Pease of the U.S. Postal Service's real estate division in Memphis, Tenn., said the service needs a building about twice as large as the present one, which is about 250 square feet, and a site about six times as large for postal trucks and on-site parking.

He said the present building could not be renovated without damaging its original architecture.

But postal officials are considering keeping "some postal function" on the square, Pease said.

The town square was also the scene of civil rights demonstrations in 1964 and 1965, local officials said.

Prices rise 0.5 percent in August

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumer prices rose 0.5 percent in August, their biggest increase in eight months, as still-rising energy costs and higher grocery prices swamped a drop in reported Wednesday.

The increase in the Labor Department's consumer price index — equivalent to an annual inflation of 5.8 percent — followed a modest 0.2 percent rise in July.

Many economists say that the August jump was rare and overstated the annual inflation rate.

Analysts generally had earlier predictions of a 4.4 percent to 4.5 percent rise for the year.

The August increase was the sharpest since a 0.7 percent rise in December, was partly due to increases in energy prices, including a 3.1 percent rise in gasoline prices, up from a 1.5 percent rise the month before.

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