

State and Local

Students to test new flu vaccine as part of study

By Theresa Emmert
Reporter

This fall about 1,000 Texas A&M students will get it through the nose as part of a four-year immunization study on a new nose drop form of influenza vaccine.

The students will be observed to determine the length of the immunization period and the effectiveness of the nose drop vaccines. A&M virologist Dr. John Quarles said.

For the past 11 years, A&M students have been invited to participate in field studies to determine the effectiveness and safety of drugs for curing and preventing influenza.

Quarles, who conducts the studies, said the influenza virus is still a public health problem.

Flu outbreaks, he said, are usually caused by a different strain of influenza virus.

People are not immune to the different strain, therefore they get sick again the following year.

The students will be vaccinated in the fall and a follow up will be done in the winter to determine the percentage of those who get sick.

The number of sick students who were vaccinated will be compared to students in a control group who have not been vaccinated.

The values obtained from the nose drop vaccines will be compared to studies done on the more commonly used vaccine that contains a form of killed virus.

When a person goes to the doctor to get a preventive flu shot, the vaccine is usually some form of a killed virus, he said.

The nose drop vaccines, which are approved by the National Institute of Health, are an attenuated, or weakened strain, of the virus.

The vaccines with killed or inactive viruses immunize for a specific virus.

The attenuated strain of vaccine works better, Quarles said, because it gives a broader range of immunization.

It stimulates the overall body defense mechanism instead of working on one kind of virus or response like the killed virus.

The attenuated virus vaccine has been used for immunization of diseases such as polio, rubella and mumps, and it generally is administered orally.

The nose drop form of the vaccine, Quarles said, is good for older people and children because it is easier to administer and decreases the chance of injury.

"We figured nose drops would be more accepted," Quarles said, "but I was surprised to see people don't mind shots."

Blood samples and swabs are taken from participants to isolate and identify the strain of virus infecting them.

The strains will be recorded, observed and cultured in a laboratory to determine their behavior, which will help increase the researchers' understanding of viruses.

Texas A&M sponsors competition to redesign freeway into 'art form'

By Jackie Feldman
Reporter

Motorists on future Texas freeways may be in store for an artistic experience instead of the conventional concrete and steel.

A national competition, sponsored by Texas A&M, to redesign the intersection of Loop 610 and Interstate 45 in Houston, wants contestants to veiw the freeway as an art form, not as a strip of concrete.

"The Freeway as Urban Art" contest is based on the idea that freeways are such large structures that

they should be used to make an artistic statement.

Dr. Harlow Landphair, director of the contest and an A&M landscape architect, said no space is seen by more people in a single day than the freeway and architects should enhance the area and the landscape.

"Since we have to have freeways in order to get around," said Karen Richardson, a research assistant to the competition, "we need to see if there is a better way to make traveling them (the freeways) a more meaningful experience."

In addition to planting trees and

flowers on the roadside, freeways can be transformed into art forms by painting the levels different colors or painting scenes on the lanes or shoulders, she said.

The contest officially will begin Sept. 1.

Landphair and his associates will send competition information to design firms and architecture and engineering journals.

A team of three, including some type of artist, is necessary to enter. Students may enter the contest if

they are supervised by design or visual arts professionals.

The teams need to send a letter stating that they want to register. A \$45 fee must be paid to receive the base materials packet, which includes aerial photographs of the freeway area and a copy of the highway design guidelines.

Entries must be received by January 1989. The winning team's design will be used in redesigning the highway. Companies will bid on the design contract in November 1989, and changes on the Houston interchange will begin in 1990.

Texas delegate unprepared for convention confusion

ATLANTA (AP) — Rookie delegate John Welton of Texas said Thursday his 30 years in the military did not prepare him for what he has found at his first Democratic National Convention.

"I have found apparent confusion," the 66-year-old retiree said as he dutifully showed up for a morning meeting of Michael Dukakis delegates.

But Welton, who lives in Arlington, said he knows enough to realize things are not always what they seem.

"A lot of it is undercover," he said of the place where the real decisions are made. "But you can find out what's going on."

Welton retired from the Air Force in 1966 and then worked in private industry until 1974. His grandfather and father had been delegates to Democratic National Conventions, so he thought he would give it a shot.

Welton made it through his precinct and county convention and wound up in Atlanta.

"It's interesting. It's not really anything like I expected," he said.

Welton is fascinated by the convention-floor phenomenon in which lots of people go to the microphone to speak, but few people listen.

"Why are those people up there standing there? People never listen to anything. We're too busy circulating around and talking to you people," he told a reporter.

Welton took several political science courses in college many years ago, and said they did nothing to prepare him for the world of a big-time convention delegate. He said he feels more like a spectator than a participant, but viewed the convention as a "learning experience."

"It's pretty much cut and dried," he said, noting there were no close, crucial votes on the floor this week.

For all the apparent confusion, Welton said he enjoyed the convention. He said he might have come here with unrealistically high expectations for more organization.

"I spent 30 years in the military. I don't know why in the world I shouldn't expect some order," he said.

Dallas' leading Hispanic officer relieved of duty

DALLAS (AP) — Saying he had "no choice" in the matter, the city manager has fired Dallas' highest-ranking Hispanic employee in the wake of an embezzlement ruling against him.

A federal bankruptcy judge recently ruled that Assistant City Manager Samuel Moreno embezzled funds from his former company before filing for bankruptcy five years ago.

Dallas City Manager Richard Knight told City Council members Wednesday he had to fire Moreno, even though the move is criticized by some of the city's Hispanic leaders.

"As employees of the city, we hold positions of trust, and the citizens have a right to expect the highest standards of conduct from us," Knight wrote in a letter to council members.

"When this standard of conduct comes under a cloud, it casts a shadow upon the organization and inhibits our ability to do our job. I feel that such a shadow exists."

Knight said the dismissal came after U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Harold Abrahamson ordered Moreno to repay \$131,164 obtained through "embezzlement" and "fraud" from his former oil-field supply company.

Abrahamson also ruled that Moreno, who at one point had about \$2.5 million in personal and corporate debts, improperly changed corporate records and took out illegal loans.

The 60-year-old Moreno, who was hired as one of four assistant city managers in April 1986, declined to comment on his firing, but said he understood Knight's position.

"I'm not going to second-guess his decision," Moreno said. "He's sits in the hot seat."

He will not appeal his dismissal as allowed under civil service rules because, "We (assistant city managers) serve at the pleasure of the city manager," Moreno said.

Moreno's company, Petroleum Energy Equipment Co., filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in May 1983, citing \$2 million in debts tied to the downturn in the oil economy.

On May 25, Judge Abrahamson ruled that about two weeks before Petroleum Energy filed for bankruptcy, Moreno unlawfully altered company records to show that he owed the company only \$46,775 instead of \$186,779.

Moreno violated the Texas Business Corporation Act, which bars corporate officials from taking loans from their corporations, the judge said.

A&M recognized for reducing operating costs

By Victoria Larroca
Reporter

For the sixth time in eight years, Texas A&M has been recognized for its innovative approach to reducing campus operating costs by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO).

In its annual competition held jointly with the U.S. Steel Foundation earlier this month in St. Louis, NACUBO recognized and rewarded those colleges and universities that reduced their operating costs.

Texas A&M received a \$2,500 re-

ward for its negotiation of campus-wide computer hardware and software maintenance contracts, which reduced the University's operating costs by 38 percent.

These contracts, developed by Loreita Rouse, a senior buyer in the Purchasing Department, resulted in reductions of about \$725,000 in 1987.

"The award we received was not specifically for the dollar amount of money we saved, but for our use of the computer contracts," Rouse said. "The dollar amount is secondary to the fact that we have really tied our

computer community together. We (the University departments) are all working as one to reduce the costs for the University."

The contracts include features such as no charge for exploration of problems resulting in third-party equipment failure, terms and conditions that allow for new technology to be covered under the contract and a comprehensive end-user contract monitoring system.

"One of the outstanding aspects of our computer contracts is that they are systems contracts and they apply to any of our branches, not

just the University itself," Rouse said.

Innovations cited in previous NACUBO/USSF competitions were the University's utilization of international remailers, use of modular dormitory construction, the development and implementation of a radio-controlled sprinkler system, utilization of movable room dividers in student apartments and a waste disposal project involving an incinerator at the College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Texas A&M is always pleased to

be recognized in this national competition," Texas A&M's Vice President for Finance and Operations Robert Smith said.

"Through the years the University has had conscientious, innovative people in nearly every department looking for ways to improve services and increase efficiency, which is our mandate from the people of Texas."

"This year's major award from NACUBO is an indication that we are succeeding at that goal."

Natural gas exporters look to U.S. for production outlet

HOUSTON (AP) — The liquefied natural gas business is enjoying a revival thanks to growing interest from natural gas exporters looking for an outlet for their production.

Algeria was the first. Sonatrach, the Algerian national oil company, acquired an 11.7 percent stake in Panhandle Eastern Corp. of Houston in 1986 and agreed to supply large volumes of liquefied natural gas to the company for up to 20 years as part of the settlement of an earlier LNG supply dispute.

Now, Nigeria and Norway are talking with owners of other LNG facilities about supplying the product, purchasing an interest in the operations or both. Algeria also is looking for additional markets and investments.

"It is a trend that is gaining momentum," said Robert D. Hunsucker, chairman of Panhandle Eastern. "This is another example of

downstream integration by producing nations."

Recently, Columbia Gas Systems Inc. said it was negotiating with Shell Oil Co. for the sale of a half interest in Columbia's mothballed LNG terminal at Cove Point, Md. Nigeria is expected to provide a portion of the LNG supply for Shell's share of the venture.

Statoil North America Inc., the U.S. trading arm of the Norwegian national oil company, has been talking with the owners of all four U.S. LNG terminals, said Kjell Stautland, Statoil's manager of natural gas. Norway expects to have substantial LNG export capability by the mid-1990s, when Statoil sees the United States as needing additional gas supplies.

"The two terminals we are most interested in are at Cove Point and at Elba Island, Georgia," he said. "We also are talking to local

distribution companies about supplying part of their needs."

The Elba Island terminal is owned by a subsidiary of Sonat Inc., headquartered in Birmingham, Ala. Thomas W. Barker Jr., vice president for finance, said the company has met recently with Norwegian, Algerian and Nigerian representatives about restarting its plant.

"The discussions are very preliminary at this point," Barker said, "but we are interested in doing a deal on Elba on the right terms."

In the mid-1970s, when supplies of natural gas in the United States were thought to be in short supply, imported LNG was viewed as a solution to the problem. Ample LNG supplies could be obtained from major oil exporting countries that were flaring natural gas pro-



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