

State and Local

Climatologist: Drought conditions less severe than others this century

By Mercedes Salinas
Reporter

State Climatologist John F. Griffiths said the current drought in Texas is just a small dry spell compared to droughts in the 1950s.

Records of the National Weather Service show that at least one serious drought has plagued parts of Texas every decade this century.

The most costly and devastating drought to hit Texas in modern history was the massive drought that damaged every region of the state in the 1950s.

The 50s drought was the worst from the stand point of intensity, vast coverage and persistence, Griffiths, an A&M professor of meteorology, said.

Dr. William A. Dugas, whose research at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in Temple focuses on water used by crops and rangelands, also has helped track Texas droughts this century.

The intensity of droughts since the 1950s has not been as strong and they have been of shorter duration, Dugas said.

A massive searing heat wave in 1980 set in motion a severe drought that scorched most of the state. By 1984 the drought had brought severe problems to central and southern portions of the state.

Weather service records show

A&M study may help forecasters make more accurate predictions

By Gina Rumore
Reporter

A Texas A&M rainfall study may result in better forecasts of precipitation on a monthly basis, allowing for better planning during dry spells.

Dr. Steven Lyons, a forecasting specialist at A&M, said he hopes the study will provide much more reliable information, such as predicting a subsequent month's precipitation as above or below normal in Texas.

Lyons said such information could allow individuals to plan ahead.

"If it's already dry and farmers are hurting for water and they need to irrigate soon, the officials can tell them if it will be dry for another month," Lyons said. "Then the farmers know to go ahead and irrigate."

Lyons said the accuracy and reliability of the forecast is critical because if the officials cannot confidently predict rainfall conditions, the information will not help them.

Lyons said he had analyzed rainfall data from 50 sta-

tions around Texas from 1923 to 1984 and the data was put into a computer that gave the dominant rainfall patterns in the state.

"What I found was that there are no dominant cycles," Lyons said. "We may know the past rainfall patterns fairly readily for each season and we may know how they have changed in the past, but there is no systematic change to it."

Lyons said if prediction of rainfall cannot be obtained, the research could at least be used to show why there are wet and dry months.

"I don't think we'll ever be able to say, 'It looks like the next month will be 2.2 inches below or above normal,'" Lyons said. "And it doesn't look like we'll be able to predict many months in advance but the study does tell us that when March, April, May, June and the winter months are dry, such as this year, it is not common."

Lyons said the prediction of whether next month's rainfall will be above or below normal is well within reach, but trying to determine how wet or dry will be much harder.

the droughts of the 1950s first began in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in the late spring of 1949. They then plagued western portions of the state several months later and had become severe over the remainder of the state by 1956.

In the spring of 1957, the rains finally came and erased some of

the damage.

Even though there were some steady soaking rains between February and April 1957, there were many dead mesquite trees left standing as grim reminders of the state's most devastating drought of this century.

Perhaps because of media advancements and the publicity of

droughts during the summer months our judgment of drought has changed, Griffiths said.

"Texas has experienced droughts in the 80s but not anywhere near the intensity of those in the 50s, which we can only recall in our memory," Griffiths said. "As a state we are hurting this summer but we are not agonizing. We've been lucky."

Appeals court says murder defendants can't question jury

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Wednesday that capital murder defendants do not have a constitutional right to question prospective jurors about their understanding of Texas parole laws.

The full court ruled 11-3 against Leon Rutherford King, who contended that a Texas state court had violated his sixth and 14th amendment rights by refusing to allow him to question the jurors or educate them concerning their knowledge of Texas parole laws.

King and Allen Ray Carter kidnapped Michael Clayton Underwood and his girlfriend, who was not identified, at gunpoint 10 years ago in Houston. Court records show the men forced Underwood's girlfriend to watch while King beat Underwood's head with a shotgun butt until it looked like a "broken egg."

For nearly five hours after murdering Underwood, King and Carter repeatedly raped and sodomized their female hostage, threatened her life and laughed at having made her observe the execution of her "old man," according to court documents.

King told the jury during the punishment phase of his second trial that he wanted the death penalty.

In his petition to the 5th Circuit, King said that if the jury harbored misconceptions about Texas law, for

instance, an erroneous belief that a capital murder defendant may become eligible for parole in seven to 10 years, they will be biased toward imposing the death penalty.

The federal appeals court said King not only had no constitutional right to question the jurors before sentencing, but that in light of his crime and conduct during his trial, it would not have changed his sentence.

"King told the jury that he expected to receive the death penalty, admitted that he deserved it, and requested that it be imposed," Judge Edith H. Jones wrote in the majority opinion.

"Any subliminal effect of a juror's impressions concerning parole must surely be subordinated to the impact of this testimony.

"Add to this the determinedly sadistic nature of the crime and associated events, and we find it impossible to think that a jury would have somehow believed King less dangerous to society... in 20 years than he would be if paroled in seven to 10," Jones wrote.

In writing the dissenting opinion, Judge Alvin B. Rubin said that Leon Rutherford King had been proved beyond reasonable doubt to be a savage criminal, but that did not keep him from being entitled to due process in sentencing.

A&M regents award \$14 million in construction contracts

By Andrea Halbert
Reporter

The Texas A&M Board of Regents cleared the way for the construction of five new dormitories, a parking garage and other construction projects when it awarded contracts worth \$14 million earlier this month.

Construction will begin next month on five new modular dormitories provided for in a \$9.5 million contract.

These residence halls will house A&M students in Fall 1989, said General Wesley Peel, vice chancellor for Facilities Planning and Construction.

The new halls should be ready by Sep-

tember 1989, he said.

One of the halls will be next to the other modular halls near Sbsia, and four new halls will be built in the parking lot south of the Commons, Peel said.

He said a 2,000-space parking garage will be built near the Commons to provide parking spaces for the 1,000 new hall resi-

dents and to make up for 400 parking spaces in the Commons parking lot that will be lost as a result of the construction.

The regents awarded a contract for preliminary design work on a 2,000-space parking garage to be located adjacent to the Memorial Student Center. Peel said the parking garage is part of the MSC expansion planned for next year.

Other contracts awarded at the July 18 Board meeting include construction of fence segments on Texas Avenue to mark campus boundaries, purchase of equipment for a new satellite utility plant and purchase of furnishings for renovation of the Chemistry Building.

NEW! NEW!

PAN! PAN!™

BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE!

Thick, crispy crust loaded with cheese (and your choice of toppings).
All baked up fresh in a square deep dish pan.



Little Caesars® Pizza

Northgate Now Delivers to Campus After 5 p.m.

Delivery Charge \$1⁰⁰

FREE
BUY ONE PIZZA...
GET ONE FREE!

Buy any size pizza at regular price get identical pizza FREE!

B-Th-7-28-88
Expires: 8-25-88

2 Pizzas with cheese and 1 Item

Small \$5⁵⁵
Medium \$7⁷⁷
Large \$9⁹⁹ plus tax

ADDITIONAL ITEMS AND EXTRA CHEESE EXTRA

B-Th-7-28-88
Expires: 8-25-88

Late Night Snack

2 medium Pizzas With Cheese and 1 Items only

\$7⁰⁰ plus tax

Offer good after 8 p.m.

B-Th-7-28-88
Expires: 8-25-88

FREE
BUY ONE Sandwich
GET ONE FREE!

\$2⁶⁰ plus tax

OFFER GOOD WITH COUPON ONLY

B-Th-7-28-88
Expires: 8-25-88

Little Caesars

Little Caesars

Little Caesars

Little Caesars

NORTHGATE
268-0220

COLLEGE STATION
696-0191

BRYAN
776-7171

University & Stasney
Outdoor Seating Available

SW Parkway & Texas

E. 29th & Briarcrest

Little Caesars® Pizza

FREE CHECKING

- NO Service Charge
- NO Per Check Fees
- NO Minimum Balance
- NO Gimmicks

Our promise is simple: Take advantage of our **FREE** checking account program when you direct deposit your Texas A&M University payroll check with Commerce National Bank. We'll make available to you a personal checking account with **no service charge, no per check fee, and no minimum monthly balance** as long as you are a full-time TAMU employee and use direct deposit. This **FREE** checking account will also return all of your cancelled checks.

If you are considering a banking change, try out the best deal in town...the **FREE** checking account at Commerce National Bank. We are your home town, independent, community bank. Come in and see how easy it is to open your **FREE** checking account today.

Commerce National Bank

2405 Texas Avenue South College Station, TX 77840
(409) 693-6930

Member FDIC