

Nuclear reactor gets OK for use by commission

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission unanimously authorized its staff on Tuesday to issue a full-power operating license for the second reactor at the South Texas Project nuclear plant 90 miles southwest of Houston.

The 5-0 vote virtually concluded a 14-year, \$5.5-billion effort by the Houston Lighting & Power Co. and three other owners, who were forced into several design modifications and replaced the original builder, Brown & Root, earlier this decade. Construction started on the twin-reactor plant in 1975.

The NRC issued a full-power license for the Unit 1 reactor last year, and commercial operation of that facility began last August. Each of the reactors is designed to produce 1,250 megawatts of electricity. Together, the two reactors will generate enough power to serve 500,000 homes, roughly the energy equivalent of 25 million barrels of oil or 8.3 million tons of coal each year.

Once in full operation, the plant, in Matagorda County, will employ 1,650 people.

Engineering and construction of the plant came under intensified NRC scrutiny in the wake of the Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania in 1979.

The owners eventually hired the Bechtel Energy Corp. and Ebasco Constructors to finish the job.

Official says relationship of speed, deaths unclear

By Ashley A. Bailey

STAFF WRITER

The number of serious accidents has increased 20 percent since the speed limit was raised to 65 mph on rural stretches of interstate highways about two years ago, but a Texas A&M research scientist said that the existence of a cause-and-effect relationship between the higher speed limit and the accident rate has not been proven.

Dr. Quinn Brackett, a researcher at the Texas Transportation Institute at A&M, in a 65-mph speed law study that was completed in September, said that there is not enough statistical evidence yet to prove that a cause and effect relationship exists between the number of serious accidents and the raised speed limit.

"What we can say is that corresponding to the increase in speeds there was an increase in serious accidents," Brackett said. "What we don't know is whether it's a fluctuation of the accident experience on these roadways or if it's the beginning of a trend. We need more information to establish that."

"In this case the increase in accidents could be due to an increase in traffic volume on the freeway, or it could be due to adverse weather conditions," he said. "There are a number of alternative explanations that can't be eliminated with the data we have."

The absolute number of fatalities increased this year, which is a reversal of the declining trend Texas has had for the past several years, Brackett said.

The number of Texas drivers is also important, he said.

"If you're introducing more drivers and more vehicles, or if the drivers are driving more miles this year than they were last year, then you'd expect accidents and fatalities to increase in absolute numbers," Brackett said. "To assess that, we use another figure known as the accident or fatal accident rate (the number of deaths per 100 million vehicle miles)."

The fatal accident rate for 1988 was 2.2 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles, he said. And, even though Texas had an increase in the absolute number of fatalities

this year, the accident rate remained the same, he said.

"The increase of fatalities and the number of fatalities is a tragedy and one to be averted, but from an objective standpoint the system hasn't gotten any worse overall," he said. "And, when you're talking about the roadways which have experienced the 65 mph change, you're talking about a subset of the roadways within the overall accident experience of the state."

The 65 mph speed limit is only one contributing factor to the problem, he said.

Brackett had predicted the rise, and also had predicted that more drivers would violate the new 65 mph limit.

"There's nothing mystical about that prediction because if you have vehicles going faster and the accident frequency remains the same, then the energy has to be dissipated somehow," he said. "It's being translated into more severe accidents."

Brackett said people always tend to want to drive a little faster than the speed limit authorizes them to, and more Texas drivers also are driving faster than the new speed limit in rural areas, Brackett said.

"We've had an increase of motorists exceeding the speed limit from 24 percent at the 55 mph limit to 44 percent at the 65 mph limit," he said. "Most of the people exceeding the 65 mph speed limit are doing it by less than 5 mph."

It would not be practical in any sense, Brackett said, to lower the speed limit back to 55 mph.

"I think what we need to do is investigate this situation further," he said. "If there seems to be an increase in trend or a strong relationship between the speed law and the accident experience, then we'll need to examine where and why those accidents are occurring."

"It could be possible that we picked the wrong population cut off for establishing the 65 mph zones. Right now if you have a rural interstate and the population for that area is less than 50,000, then you can raise the speed limit to 65 mph. So, it would be more practical to lower the speed limit in selected areas."

'Gleaners' provide aid to needy border residents

MONAHANS (AP) — What began more than five years ago with a woman helping a man in need has mushroomed into an organization that has donated tons of clothing and supplies to the needy on both sides of the Mexican border.

"We've had more fun the last five years than we've had our entire lives," said H.B. "Jack" Moore, 71, whose wife, Maxine, helped that first needy man in 1983.

"Once you light up someone's eyes by giving them something they had little hope of ever receiving, well, you're hooked," he said. "And we've been doing it ever since."

A large shipment of clothing and school supplies collected by the Gleaners of Monahans recently were trucked to Ojinaga, Mexico, for distribution to poverty-stricken areas in the Mexican state of Chihuahua by the Ojinaga Lions Club, Moore said.

The efforts of the Gleaners, who took their name from the biblical story of Ruth, no longer are limited to the small town, located 36 miles southwest of Odessa. Others are joining in, including a newly elected Texas lawmaker who helped trans-

port the goods to Mexico.

"I would like to see this kind of neighbor-helping-neighbor attitude spread to the rest of West Texas," he said. "I was very impressed with the commitment the people of Monahans made in a project such as this, and I would like to see other communities pick up this project and carry it all the way. This is the type of thing that will pull West Texas together."

Miguel Torres, a past president and member for six years of the Ojinaga Lions Club, said most of the clothing gathered by the organization was separated according to adult and children's sizes. Most of the children's clothes were for an orphanage in Hidalgo del Parral, a city in southern Chihuahua, where 500 children live, he said.

"We have a lot of poor people here," Torres said. "There's not much to do in the way of work. Those who are lucky enough to have a year-round job earn the equivalent of about \$3 for eight hours work. "They're making a living, but nothing else. We try to help as much as we can."

Some of the donated goods, including school supplies, were for about 1,000 Tarahumara Indians who live in the Sierra Madres in western Chihuahua.

Lucia Rede Madrid of Redford, a

"Once you light up someone's eyes by giving them something they had little hope of ever receiving, you're hooked"

— H.B. Moore, "Gleaners" founder

retired school teacher who has been collecting and distributing goods to the poor since she moved to Redford in 1945, said the Tarahumara are the "poorest of the poor" in Mexico. She now works with Moore and Torres with their projects.

"Over the years I've collected and given away tons and tons of clothing and food that has come from everywhere from New York to Cincinnati

to Texas," Madrid said. The collections are distributed to communities on both sides of the border.

Moore said 231 families in the Monahans area were helped in 1986-87 when the group distributed nearly 400,000 pounds of food. In 1988, the number of needy families dropped to between 50 and 60. But Moore said this year the number has climbed back to between 100 and 110 families.

"The number of families fluctuates. I think a lot of times some of the people move away, but there always seems to be more to replace them," he said.

The effort started when Moore, who retired from the Texas Youth Commission nearly 10 years ago, and his wife went grocery shopping in September 1983 and saw a man getting food from the garbage.

"He looked at her and said, 'Will you help me? I won't hurt you.' So she took the man to the Salvation Army for help," Moore said.

She asked the store manager if she could pick up the outdated food before it was thrown away, and the Gleaners got its start and its name.

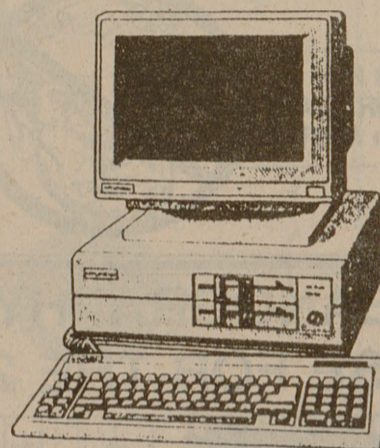
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\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME STUDY										
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
\$100	Wanted: Symptomatic patients with physician diagnosed Irritable Bowel Syndrome to participate in a short study.									
\$100	Incentive for those chosen to participate.									

\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
ASTHMA STUDY										
\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
\$200	Wanted: Individuals ages 12-70 with asthma to participate in a research study to evaluate asthma medications. \$200 incentive for those chosen to participate.									

\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
ACUTE BRONCHITIS/PNEUMONIA										
\$100	Do you have any of the following? 1. Productive cough 2. Fever 3. Rattle in chest. Call for information about a three week antibiotic research study with close MD supervision. \$100 incentive for those who qualify.									

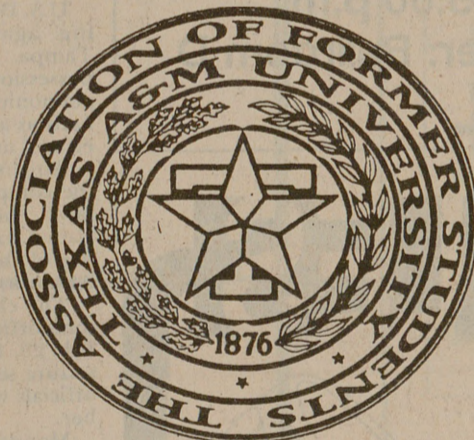
\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75
PEDIATRIC SORE THROAT STUDY										
\$75	Children 3 to 12 years with sore throat pain to participate in a currently available over-the-counter pain relief medication study. No blood drawn. Free strep test. \$75 for those who qualify. Evenings & weekends call 361-1500.									

\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE STUDY										
\$300	Individuals with high blood pressure medication daily to participate in a high blood pressure study. \$300 incentive for those chosen to participate.									

\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
SPRING ALLERGY STUDY										
\$100	Looking for individuals (12 years and older) with spring tree and grass allergies to participate in a short study. Monetary incentive for those chosen to participate. Free skin testing to determine eligibility.									

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The Association of Former Students



Spring Senior Induction Banquet

Tuesday & Wednesday, April 4 & 5, 1989

6:30 p.m.

MSC

All May and Aug. graduates are invited to attend. Free tickets will be available as long as they last, Tues. March 28, Wed. March 29 and Thurs. March 30 in the MSC, near the Flag Room.

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