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# HL&P refuses to accept blame for cost overruns

DALLAS (AP) — Houston Lighting & Power, the major partner in the South Texas Nuclear Plant, refused to take the blame Tuesday for cost overruns that the city of Austin is trying to recover.

HL&P attorneys presented closing arguments in the four-month civil trial in which Austin contends the utility owes it at least \$419 million, less than half what the city spent on its 16 percent share in the plant near Bay City.

Austin says the utility mismanaged construction of the 2,500-megawatt plant and deceived the city about construction problems to keep Austin as a partner.

Austin contends the plant would have cost \$3.2 billion instead of the approximately \$6 billion if the utility had managed construction more effectively. Austin says that if HL&P had notified it earlier about delays and problems at the plant, the city could have backed out of its ownership commitment and would not have had to pay millions of dollars in cost overruns.

The jury, which will begin deliberations at 9 a.m. Wednesday, must decide whether HL&P withheld information from Austin and, if so, how much it cost the city.

HL&P argued it kept former Austin utility director R.L. Hancock informed of delays in the project.

"You have been told to decide on the preponderance

of the evidence," attorney Greg Copeland told the jury. "Austin's got no evidence. They haven't proved to you anything about how the costs would have been different" had Hancock been paying attention to construction progress.

HL&P lead attorney Roy Minton, acting out little dramas between utility and city officials, told the jury he believed Austin would not have pulled out of its commitment to the power plant anyway.

"For the Austin City Council to send R.L. Hancock down to HL&P as their eyes and ears, then to sue HL&P for not getting that information, is unconscionable," utility attorney Robert Hearon said.

Austin contended HL&P went wrong by hiring Houston-based contractor Brown & Root to build the plant, the company's first such project. In the early 1980s, HL&P fired Brown & Root as the project architect, and a few months later Brown & Root walked off the construction job.

HL&P sued Brown & Root and got a \$750 million settlement, and Austin will eventually collect \$120 million of that.

Austin, represented by lead attorney John Hill, former chief justice of Texas, presented five hours of closing arguments Monday and saved one hour for the last word Tuesday.

## Victims

(Continued from page 1)

"Once we went into a school to talk about sexual and mental abuse, and I just stuck the AIDS education in," he said.

Tony uses scenerio-scare tactics and facts when he explains AIDS to the students. (AIDS can only be transmitted through contact with infected blood semen, vaginal secretions, feces or urine with blood.)

Tony said he tells the children the best method of prevention from the disease is abstinence from sex.

"But that's like preaching to a drug user and telling him not to use needles," he said. "It's not going to happen. We tell drug users how to clean their needles with bleach, because we know they'll keep using the stuff. But most won't even listen to that advice — they have no respect for themselves."

"We also tell the children how to avoid getting AIDS through sex," Tony said. "Once when I was teaching a class about condoms, this kid yelled out that he had one in his wallet, I said fine, now let me tell you what to do with it."

Tony said when talking to a group of girls about sex and AIDS he sometimes has to be harsh.

"I'll say to them, 'What is your boyfriend telling you? Why won't he use a condom?'" Then I have to tell them it's because he doesn't care enough. It's just as much responsibility of the girls as it is of the guys."

Tony knows a great deal about responsibility and admits he had none in the late 70s.

"I had just gotten a divorce and was going out partying every night — getting drunk and smoking marijuana," he said. "I was sexually promiscuous, and this is why I have AIDS. I am not a homosexual nor a drug user. I put sex first in my life back then, and it was a mistake that I've paid for with my life."

By 1982, Tony and Jody had married and were dealing with AIDS without even knowing it.

Jody said it was in 1982 that she became sick, and she has never fully recovered.

"I had swollen glands, lost my hair, felt terrible all the time and my weight shot down to 85 pounds," she said. "We didn't know what we were dealing with. At that time AIDS was the 'homosexual cancer,' and something we knew very little about."

It wasn't until six years later when Tony went to the hospital with flu symptoms that it hit them — AIDS is what Jody had been dealing with all those years.

"When I first went into the hospital I thought it was the flu that I couldn't shake," Tony said. "But after tests, they told me I had AIDS. It was one month later that Jody's test results came back."

Jody has AIDS-Related Complex (ARC), which includes some symptoms of infection with causative agents of AIDS, but does not meet the Center for Disease Control's definition of AIDS.

Many other people who seem healthy are infected with Human T-lymphotropic Virus type III (HTLV-III), which is the virus that causes AIDS. Some of the people who have HTLV-III are infectious carriers who can transmit the disorder while others are not. Most of these people don't even know they are carriers and that they can infect others.

That's what happened in Tony's case.

But a year after he was diagnosed, an opportunistic infection infiltrated his system. This infection involves microorganisms which don't usually cause AIDS in a healthy person but will cause the disease in those whose immune systems have failed due to HTLV-III.

"I wanted to commit suicide," Tony said. "I'm an aggressive, positive person and had never dealt with such an emotion. I had dealt with a lot in my life and just didn't think I could deal with this one. But I came to my senses. I had to live and fight the disease for my wife and three boys (from another marriage)."

Jody, who has two daughters from another marriage, said the hardest thing was telling the children that their parents were going to die.

Hesitating in his speech, Tony spoke of a letter his 10-year-old son wrote.

"He asked why God chose Jody and me," he said. "He was blaming God."

"But it's not God's fault," Tony said. "We as a society created the disease, and we as a society must fight it."

Neither Jody nor Tony work — Jody is physically unable and Tony chooses not to.

He said, "I figure I can do a lot more good educating people and helping to fight the disease with the time I have left."

# Report calls for study of safety at Pantex nuclear weapons sites

AMARILLO (AP) — Although the Department of Energy maintains that toxic materials found at three sites at the Pantex nuclear weapons plant pose no threat to residents, a recent report says further study of the sites is needed.

The report, filed with the Texas Water Commission, shows that solvents and gasoline components have contaminated subsurface areas at Pantex, but the level has not reached down to the depths of the Ogallala Aquifer, DOE spokesman Tom Walton said.

DOE has been studying the contamination sites for more than a year by drilling bore holes, Walton said. The agency is studying gasoline leaks from underground storage tanks and a former solvent burning pit.

A December DOE report on the department's facilities across the country listed the Pantex sites as being among the most potentially hazardous to the environment.

The report, "tells us what we know to date and what further characterization of the sites is needed," Walton said.

In the next year or two, he said, the DOE plans to study the precise extent of the contamination and use the data gathered to form a plan to

deal with and clean up the spills.

"Although the complete chemical composition of the contamination has not been characterized, some contaminants associated with gasoline, and other contaminants not associated with gasoline, have been detected in the soils and perched ground water," the report said.

"Further characterization of the nature and extent of contamination required before complete quantification of the human health and environmental risk can be performed."

Perched ground water, when some contamination has been detected, is ground water trapped in sand formations normally located above water tables.

# Pizza delivery person saves life of 2-year-old

AUSTIN (AP) — There was nothing special about Juliet Maurer's Saturday night, and the tips that the pre-med student was getting for delivering pizzas were nothing to cheer about.

Then she saved a life. As Maurer was making a delivery, screams from a nearby home attracted the University of Texas student's attention.

Maurer, 19, said, "a screaming woman ran into the street."

The woman, 26-year-old Linda Sanchez, was clutching her

unconscious son, 2-year-old Eduardo.

"He's here, he's not breathing," Sanchez screamed.

As neighbors gathered, Maurer placed Juan Eduardo on the ground and blew twice into his mouth. Neighbors summoned the Emergency Medical Services ambulance.

"Then I looked up and said, 'He's breathing — he's gonna be right,'" Maurer said.

On Monday, a teary-eyed Sanchez gave Mauro some red roses and an ant red balloon saying, "Thanks."

# Legislators say debate on workers' comp reform will go on in private

AUSTIN (AP) — Key legislators said Tuesday they will continue meeting in private for the next several days in an attempt to reach a compromise on reforming the state workers' compensation system.

Lawmakers failed to approve an overhaul of the system of compensating workers injured in on-the-job accidents during the 140-day regular legislative session and now are meeting in a special session that began last week.

Kent Caperton, one of the au-

thors of a Senate workers' comp plan, said private meetings with House leaders so far have been general in nature.

"We're really just talking philosophy and approach," Caperton, D-Bryan, said.

While most lawmakers will be going home for the long July 4 holiday weekend, Caperton said negotiations at the Capitol will continue.

Sens. Caperton, John Montford, D-Lubbock, Cyndi Taylor Krier, R-San Antonio, and Rep.


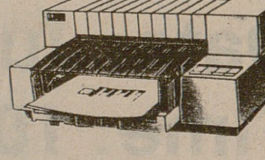
Richard Smith in addition to a member from Gov. Bill Clements' staff will be meeting, Caperton said.

The House and Senate have been at odds over how to resolve disputed workers' comp claims and calculate benefits.

The Senate retained the right for a dispute to be appealed to jury trial in its bill, while the House proposed eliminating jury trials in favor of an administrative process.

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