

Friday, June 8, 1990

Super collider passes spending recommendation hurdle

Associated Press

The superconducting super collider leaped over its first 1991 funding hurdle when a House subcommittee Thursday unanimously accepted the White House's spending recommendation of \$318 million.

"We are fully funded," Rep. Jim Chapman said, emerging from a closed session where the energy and water development panel of the House appropriations committee took the action.

The step marks the first time a spending request for the collider has been met in full at the subcommittee level, Chapman, D-Sulphur Springs, said.

The recommendation will be taken up next week by the full appropriations committee and will likely reach the House floor later this month.

The measure includes \$168.9 million for construction, \$116 million for research and development and \$33 million for capital equipment.

The super collider is part of a bill appropriating \$20.9 billion for energy and water projects in 1991. The measure includes about 25 new projects, Chapman said.

With the backing of a five-year authorization plan approved by the House last month, super collider proponents are confident it will receive full funding by the time it leaves Congress.

But Chapman cautioned, "The budget summit may come in and change some of these numbers."

"Whether this holds all the way from here to the White House, that's what the legislative process is all about," he said.

The collider, to be built south of Dallas, is a 54-mile underground ring where protons directed by superconducting magnets will be smashed together by scientists studying the fundamentals of matter. It will be the largest scientific instrument ever built.

Rep. Joe Barton, whose district will be the collider's home, arrived to congratulate Chapman as the panel broke up.

"This is phenomenal," Barton said. "To come right at the mark in this budgetary environment is just amazing."

The collider, a Department of Energy project, is now estimated to cost about \$8 billion. But the department is expected to provide another estimate by the end of the summer.

After several hours of floor debate May 2, the House passed a five-year authorization bill capping federal spending on the collider at \$5 billion. Texas has pledged \$1 billion and \$2 billion is expected to come from foreign countries and other investors.

A delegation of government officials led by Deputy Energy Secretary Henson Moore is nearing the end of a two-week trip to Japan, South Korea and other countries in the Far East to invite participation in the project.

Chapman said the subcommittee appropriated \$317.8 million for the collider with little discussion.

"It went very smoothly," he said. "The subcommittee staff and members did not want mark-up to be a debate forum for the project."

Earlier Thursday, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, Rep. John Myers of Indiana, said he hopes the United States will make the most of technology yielded by the super collider's construction and use.

Myers told a coalition of companies participating in the the atom smasher that the country hasn't capitalized on scientific breakthroughs in recent years.

Barton told the group he was confident the collider would be funded on its own merit. But the "bigger picture" being framed by the budget summit could cause problems, he warned.

Committee begins reviewing project ideas

DALLAS (AP) — Somewhat like selecting options for a new family car, members of an advisory committee began fielding suggestions from top physicists about what the planned superconducting super collider should do.

Fourteen groups representing more than 1,500 scientists began making presentations Thursday about possible projects, including a "Siberian snake concept" and another to shoot subatomic particles underground to Arkansas.

"Some of the best physicists in the world are obviously eager to go," Roy F. Schwitters, director of the SCC laboratory, said.

When completed, the 53-mile particle accelerator is expected to confirm many theories about matter and energy while disproving others.

Schwitters said Thursday that completion is at least eight years away, adding that it's "too soon to say" how much the total cost will be. Current estimates say about \$8 billion.

The project passed a critical test Thursday when a House subcommittee in Washington unanimously accepted the White House's spending recommendation of \$318 million for the super collider.

The experimental programs being touted in Dallas by representatives of the 14 groups not only included recommendations for possible experiments, but concepts for detectors that can record results of experiments.

More than 100 people, including many of the world's leading physicists listened as the presentations unfolded Thursday. The oral presentations were scheduled to continue Friday.

The proposals will be evaluated by the advisory committee during the summer and the fall. The committee will make its recommendations Nov. 1-3.

Alan Krusch of the University of Michigan led off Thursday with a pitch to include spin-correcting devices in the collider. He stressed the importance of considering the rotation of the protons as they are shot out around the giant ring.

Under the proposal from Krusch's group, a series of eight half-meter-long magnets would be placed every 3 kilometers. At each point, the magnets would force protons to flip over 180 degrees.

"Whatever imperfections there are in the facility would cancel each other out," Krusch explained.

The technique is called the "Siberian snake concept," and one of its creators, Y. Derbenev of the Soviet Union, will soon be conducting research at Ann Arbor, Mich., alongside Krusch.

Another group wants \$150 million to search for the Higgs particle, which has eluded scientists so far. Group spokesman Dick Lander said the particle's attributes have been predicted by many, including namesake Peter Higgs. The super conductor has been designed to be large enough to find one.

"If it exists, it should show up as a particle that decays into four other particles. It's almost guaranteed the way the theory is written that we'll find it," he said.

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KAMU-TV documentary takes second at Houston film festival

By JAMES LOVE
Of The Battalion Staff

A KAMU-TV documentary addressing the issue of dropouts in Bryan and College Station public schools finished second recently in the 12th annual Houston International Film Festival.

"School Dropouts," which aired as a three-segment program during the spring as part of the "15 Magazine" series, was produced by Bruce Biermann, producer and director of KAMU-TV.

The 30-minute special was awarded the second-place Silver Award and selected from 85 international entries in the "Local Television Programming" division of the competition.

The program was based on the 1987-88 Student Dropout Research Project conducted by the Texas A&M University/School Collaborative.

Biermann said this is not the first time he has tackled a tough issue as a producer and director.

"I often find myself researching the 'not-so-fun-to-hear-about' stories," Biermann said. "It's not I'm a dark, depressing person. It was just something that I felt I should do."

Biermann said the award was a surprise and an honor, but he believed he had an obligation to inform people about the dropout problem.

"I want people to know what's going on," he said.

"I believe the airwaves are public property, and since I work in public broadcasting, I feel that I have an obligation to inform people."

Biermann said he learned a lot in making the program and was especially shocked to hear what some of the young students at risk had to say in their casual conversations.

"In listening to some of the fourth and fifth graders, it became overwhelmingly obvious to me that this is not a government problem; it's not the school's fault, or too much television," Biermann said. "This is a family problem."

Biermann said the families of potential dropout students were deficient in values and were not teaching their children to have goals or to value themselves.

He said many families did not eat dinner together or show interest in each other. Oftentimes, family conversations were negative, he said.

"It hit me like a ton of bricks," he said. "The schools are no longer teaching math and science. They're having to pick up where the families are failing by teaching the students to have pride in themselves and to set goals for their lives."

Biermann said he hoped his program helped people understand more about the dropout problem in the local area and what they can do to help.

Official blasts animal activists

Health secretary defends scientific research

Associated Press

Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan, with an indirect reference to a Texas Tech scientist whose lab animals were stolen, blasted animal rights extremists Thursday for disrupting important research.

Sullivan called animal research "an integral part of mankind's striving for the betterment of humanity."

Actor David Birney, who appeared with Sullivan and others at a news conference designed to blunt an animal rights rally at the Mall this weekend said, "There is an enormous potential for the cure and management of many diseases that are significantly derived through animal research."

Several participants mentioned last July's break-in and theft of cats from the Texas Tech lab of physiologist John Orem. The loss of the cats and vandalism at the lab set back Orem's research of sudden infant death syndrome about 10 months, he said recently.

Researchers are looking for a cause for the disorder, which kills about 8,000 children annually.

"When the animal rights activists broke into John Orem's lab ... they claim to have liberated five cats," Jana Koch, whose 9-year-old daughter received an animal-tested pacemaker shortly after her birth, said.

"What they didn't emphasize is they also will have liberated 8,000 babies this year from their chance to grow up," Koch said.

Sullivan said, "The humanity of animal research is embodied in the work of the medical researcher urgently seeking a solution to the tragedy of sudden infant death in the crib."

Lenore Rumpf, whose 18-month-old son was placed on an animal-tested heart-lung machine just after his birth to treat a defect, said her niece died from sudden infant death syndrome last December.

"We really must support medical researchers, not impede their efforts," she said.

Estimates of the damage to Orem's lab range from \$50,000 to \$85,000. An underground group called the Animal Liberation Front

claimed responsibility for the break-in. No arrests have been made in the incident, officials say.

Similar break-ins and thefts have cost the nation's medical schools \$6.5 million during the past five years, said Dr. Tom Bowles of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

A bill by Rep. Charles Stenholm, D-Stamford, that makes it a federal crime to steal animals from research facilities and farmplots will be discussed by a House agriculture subcommittee next week.

Stenholm said he became interested in the animal research issue after animal thefts at Orem's lab and several agricultural operations.

Rep. Vin Weber, R-Minnesota, who is a member of the House appropriations committee, said he supports such legislation.

"They are a strong, growing, powerful movement," Weber said. "I believe it's reasonable to state there is no political movement that more directly threatens the quality of life of the American people in the 1990s than the animal rights movement."

Sakowitz prepares to close its Texas stores after failing to find new buyer

HOUSTON (AP) — Sakowitz, a fixture in the state's retail business for decades, is closing its stores in Texas after failing to find a new buyer for the financially troubled chain.

A liquidation order was signed Wednesday by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Tina Brozman in New York for the four Sakowitz stores in Houston and the one in Dallas.

About 420 Sakowitz employees will lose

their jobs once the liquidation sale is completed. The going-out-of-business sale is expected to begin next week and end late next month.

L.J. Hooker Corp., which owns 80 percent of the chain, has been disposing its assets under bankruptcy court supervision. It plans to keep the Sakowitz store in Cincinnati open indefinitely to maximize the value of the Hooker-owned mall in which it is located.

Former Sakowitz chairman Robert Sakowitz had tried to prevent the liquidation, but he couldn't find investors willing to back his efforts to make a bid. He is the grandson of one of the two men who founded the chain 88 years ago in Galveston.

Observers in the Houston retail industry

said the liquidation would mark the end of an era.

"Besides the unfortunate business of people losing their jobs, Sakowitz was an institution in Houston," Ed Wulfe, president of Wulfe & Co., a retail consulting company, said.

Sakowitz Inc. lost \$4.4 million in the fiscal year ending Jan. 31. During the past

three months, it lost \$1.3 million. Wilhelm Mallory, the acting chairman of Sakowitz Inc., said the chain has been losing money because of inadequate inventory or merchandise to pull in customers.

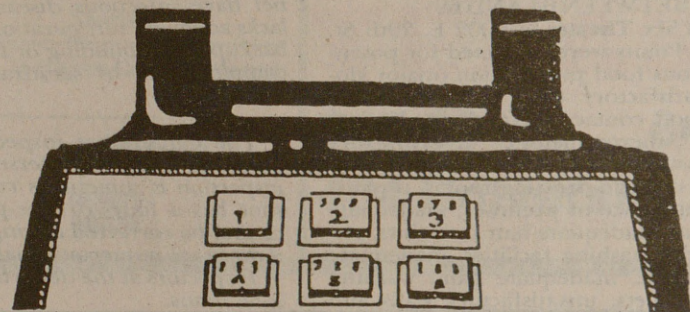
But enough inventory is left, Mallory said, for a successful liquidation. The sale is expected to generate enough money to pay Sakowitz's debts in full.



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