

Sewage-dump locale angers residents

EL PASO (AP) — Ranchers and environmentalists are blasting a New York company's proposal to dump 324,000 tons of treated sewage sludge on West Texas ranch land each year.

Documents released by Merco Joint Venture show the company is interested in buying a 108,000-acre tract of the Mile High Ranch near Sierra Blanca, 90 miles east of El Paso.

"It's another indicator of the border becoming a national dumping ground," said Linda Lynch, leader of Alert Citizens for Environmental Safety, a Hudspeth County group fighting a planned low-level radioactive waste dump near Sierra Blanca.

"I don't hear about this kind of thing going on along the Canadian border."

But a company representative

New York company to use W. Texas land for waste site

said the project would be monitored by Texas Tech University scientists and is expected to increase land productivity.

"It'll involve about 10 railroad cars of sludge a week," said Susan Potts, the Texas spokeswoman for Merco Joint Venture. "We want to work closely with the community on this; we want to make this a good project."

Environmental Protection Agency officials in Dallas confirmed Friday that company officials have asked about permits for the project.

"It's a relatively new technology, and that unknown element

causes public fear," said Roger Meacham, an EPA spokesman. "But we support it, if it's done properly."

The semi-liquid municipal waste would be treated to remove pathogens, chemicals and most heavy metals before being transported from New York.

At the ranch, the sludge would be spread over the ground.

"This has been going on for years on farms in the Midwest, but never on rangelands before — that's what's exciting," said Ron Sosebee, a Texas Tech range and wildlife management expert who would oversee a \$1.5 million re-

search grant funded by Merco Joint Venture.

"This will be 'clean sludge,'" Sosebee said. "It'll be comparable in quality to store-bought organic manure."

He said some heavy metals, mainly copper and cadmium, would be present in small amounts.

Sierra Blanca rancher Sam Dodge said he and others do not like the idea.

"I've been ranching here since 1966 and turned a profit every year without the help of any human waste," said Dodge, whose property borders the Mile High Ranch. "If this stuff is so good, they can keep it in New York."

Dodge said fecal matter in the sludge could infect his cattle's eyes. He also said groundwater could become contaminated.

Committee celebrates successful fund-raiser

Continued from Page 1

bers," Newbury said.

Representatives from the Big Event Committee went around to the sites to make sure everything was running smoothly and to see if anything was needed, Newbury said.

KKYS radio, another sponsor of the Big Event, was on hand and broadcasted live from several of the work sites.

"KKYS went around to different sites and

talked to people throughout the day, and they helped out at the 'after Big Event party' at Fuddrucker's," Newbury said.

Russell said the party at Fuddrucker's provided the opportunity for everyone to come together at the end of a successful day.

"It was kind of nice to sit back and relax and to talk about the day with everyone," she said. "The committee members said the groups were having a really good time."

The Big Event Committee began planning for this project last September.

"The committee really did a great job," Newbury said. "I think we were a different committee after Saturday was over. It was neat to see everything come together and all of our hard work pay off."

Russell said that, overall, the Big Event was a "big" success.

"Everything went really well," she said. "Considering the magnitude of the project, it was really smooth. Many people said that this was the best Big Event they had ever seen."

Elections ignite Iranian attack, spokesman says

Continued from Page 1

nied attacking the Iranian villages.

Ali Reza Jafarazadeh, a Mujahedeen spokesman in Baghdad, said: "The real reason for today's attack was the tremendous political crisis facing the Tehran regime inside Iran over the parliamentary elections." He spoke by telephone with The Associated Press in Nicosia.

Iraq said eight U.S.-built F-4 Phantom jets "heavily pounded"

the Iranian base and that Iraqi troops shot down one warplane and captured the two crewmen.

The rebels said 12 F-4s attacked in five waves and claimed they shot down the jet.

The official Iraqi News Agency said President Saddam Hussein met with his military commanders after the attack. It did not give details of the discussions.

Baghdad Radio said Iraq's Foreign Ministry sent a letter of protest to U.N. Secretary General

Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His predecessor, Javier Perez de Cuellar, angered the Iraqis last year by blaming Iraq for the Iran-Iraq war.

Mujahedeen Khalq issued a statement in France saying its leader, Massoud Radjavi, sent a telegram to Boutros-Ghali asking that the U.N. Security Council condemn the attack and embargo oil and arms trade with Iran.

In Europe, dozens of Mujahedeen supporters hurled firebombs, bricks and rocks at Iranian

diplomatic offices in Germany, Sweden, Britain, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Two buildings at the embassy in Sweden were badly burned and a consulate in Hamburg, Germany, also suffered fire damage.

The Iranians are believed to have about 20 American-made F-4s in working condition. The rest have been grounded because of a lack of spare parts, which the United States cut off after Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979.

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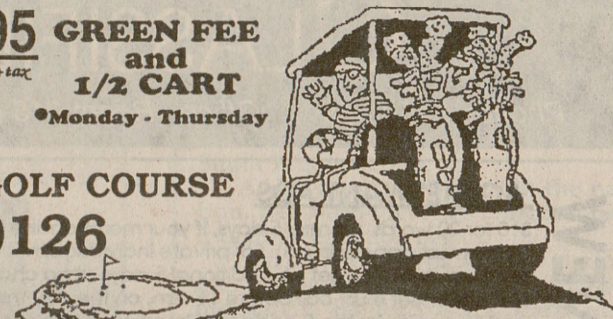
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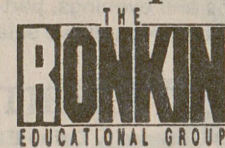
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