

Federal government grants A&M offshore oil contract

By **CHERYL HELLER**

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Texas A&M University has been awarded a \$4.056 million federal contract to study the environmental effects of offshore oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG) at A&M will lead the first of three phases of the Gulf of Mexico Offshore Operations Monitoring Experiment (GOOMEX).

The contract was granted to Texas A&M by the Minerals

Management Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior in August. Field work for the program, scheduled to last two years, will begin in January and will be conducted by professors, graduate and undergraduate students, according to program director Dr. Mahlon "Chuck" Kennicutt II.

"The purpose of the study is to study oil platform sites that have been in operation for at least 10 years and find out whether the practices we use to maintain our oil resources are detrimental to offshore marine ecosystems," Kennicutt said.

Kennicutt said that previous studies have shown that toxic effects from offshore production are limited to the immediate vicinity of platforms. However, lasting biological effects have yet to be studied.

The A&M group will extensively study five offshore fields during four field activities that include 56 days at sea.

"The sampling plan should detect any contaminants up to nearly two miles from the platforms," Kennicutt said. "A key element is to provide a study design to recognize human induced changes."

Rio Grande Valley cotton farmers finish season in financial distress

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HARLINGEN — Rio Grande Valley cotton farmers ended their season in better shape than expected, but 1992 was yet another bad year for the region's growers, an agriculture official said Monday.

Figures released Monday show farmers in the four-county Valley region produced 268,306 bales, down from more than 340,500 bales in 1991.

The average yield was slightly higher than a bale, or 500 pounds, per acre.

"While these yields are better than what we anticipated, they still weren't enough for a lot of growers to escape financial problems," said extension agent John Norman, who tracks the economic impact of cotton in the region.

Farmers throughout Texas have had similar problems.

Everything from the Valley to the Coastal Bend to just south of Waco has been disappointing, said Carl Anderson, an economist with the Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service.

"It's just not a good year for cotton," Anderson said.

Norman said the Valley's crop was worth an estimated \$79.8 million in gross sales.

The crop was worth about \$260 million to the region's economy and accounted for some 5,500 jobs.

"It's still below what we consider to be a normal crop for us," Norman said. "In fact, for some growers it was too far below normal. . . . A couple have to stop farming this year. This cotton crop is the reason."

Growers faced trouble early, with unusual heavy spring rains delaying planting in some areas and later destroying some fields altogether.

An estimated 43,000 acres of the 303,000 acres planted in the Valley were lost to the weather — particularly in Cameron County and southern Willacy County — costing farmers about \$13.2 million. Growers in Hidalgo and Starr counties generally escaped the battering rains.

Farmers also lost money fighting off unexpected infestations of the tobacco bud worm. And low cotton prices are expected to add to their burden.

"So it's not a pretty picture we're painting here," Norman said, adding that farmers have faced several difficult years recently.

Last year, Valley growers lost some \$30 million as a direct result of the sweet potato whitefly, which ravaged crops throughout the region. The loss to the economy was upwards of \$100 million.

Before that, farmers were struggling with drought that entirely shut down some crops in dryland areas.

This year's Valley crop was just another blow to an ailing Texas cotton industry.

Questionable resume

Candidate criticizes official's claims

AUSTIN (AP) — Republican candidate Barry Williamson accused Railroad Commission Chairman Lena Guerrero's of a "second big lie" Monday over a claim that she was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa academic honors society.

Williamson said Guerrero showed an "appalling lack of credibility and integrity" by claiming for 12 years to hold a college degree she didn't have, then by denying that she ever took credit for the scholarly honor.

"That web is starting to grow of deceit and misrepresentations. And that's unfortunate in a public official of this state," Williamson said after he and Guerrero taped a joint television appearance.

Responding, Guerrero said she had believed she was a graduate and never personally claimed to be a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

She accused Williamson of using an honest mistake about her

college record to divert attention from his family's oil and gas holdings, businesses the Railroad Commission regulates.

The Democrat described Williamson, a former U.S. Energy Department appointee, as "a guy who spent five years in Washington, D.C., whose wife has oil and gas holdings, and whose father-in-law is in the oil and gas business. And now he wants to be the fox to go guard the henhouse."

"It was very clear to me in this debate today that as long as he can keep bringing up the academic record, then he doesn't have to deal" with conflict of interest questions, Guerrero said.

The two clashed during and after a taping of the program "The State of Texas."

It was their first face-to-face meeting since Guerrero acknowledged last week that she wasn't a 1980 University of Texas graduate.

"Until Thursday? I really

believed in my heart that I had completed my course work at the University of Texas," she said.

But during the debate and a news conference Monday, Williamson accused her of other exaggerations in her resume.

He gave news reporters a 1984 biography from Guerrero's state House campaign, in which it was stated she belonged to Phi Beta Kappa.

Guerrero told a news conference that she hadn't written the campaign biography Williamson distributed.

She also said she was unaware of a 1985 Texas House biography which claimed the academic honor.

Williamson called those statements "the second big lie she's perpetrating on the people of Texas. . . . We can't have someone leading \$60 billion worth of industry that is not honest with the people of Texas," he said.

Group fights politician for New York's trash

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN (AP) — A group of Sierra Blanca residents rallied at the Capitol on Monday, asking Texas Attorney General Dan Morales to stop his attempts to block the spreading of New York City sludge in West Texas.

Morales has asked the Texas Water Commission to reconsider a permit for the massive sludge operation in Hudspeth County, about 90 miles southeast of El Paso.

MERCO Joint Venture has a six-year contract to dump sewage sludge from New York on arid rangeland.

H.A. "Speedy" Virdell of Sierra Blanca said the operation provides jobs to the area, while the process of spreading the sludge will replenish the land.

"We welcome MERCO into our community," Virdell said.

About 50 people aboard two buses took the nearly 500-mile trip to Austin for the rally. Referring to Gov. Ann Richards, they chanted, "We love Ann. Please stop Dan."

Tony Parada, a Hudspeth County rancher, said Morales was "messing with our livelihood, our jobs. I have seen nothing but positive results from the work on this project."

But Morales said he doubted the sludge would have a beneficial environmental impact. "If this New York City human feces is so great, I don't understand why they don't want to dump it in New York City."

He said Oklahoma-based MERCO had orchestrated the rally to defend its \$170 million contract

with the city of New York.

"I do not want to see Texas moving toward becoming a garbage-based economy," Morales said, adding that the operation near the U.S.-Mexico border had also raised concerns with Mexican officials.

Rally leaders denied that MERCO had put together the rally. Virdell said about eight of the people at the rally were MERCO employees.

Virdell said state officials showed no interest in the plan when the land MERCO is using was abused by others through overgrazing or drilling for oil.


Richards' office said it was neutral on the sludge operation. Keith Jones, Richards' agricultural advisor, said the technology used by MERCO has been successful in other areas of the country.

Maximize your utility this semester with the ECONOMICS SOCIETY

First Meeting
Wednesday, Sept. 16
7:00 p.m. 158 Blocker

- ECON Test Files
- Grad & Law School Info.
- Field Trip
- Guest Speakers

ALL MAJORS WELCOMED



CEPHEID
A&M's
Variable Sci-Fi/
Fantasy/Horror
student organization

FIRST GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15,
ROOM 410 RUDDER
AT 8:30 P.M.

For information, call 845-1515.

GREENFIELD HAIR DESIGNS

A Full Service Salon
Under New Ownership

SPECIALS

15% OFF HAIRCUT AND STYLE	\$10 OFF PERMS, COLORS AND HIGH-LIGHTING	NAIL SPECIALS FULL SET OF TIP OVERLAYS \$22.00 FILL-INS \$15.00 MANICURES \$8
---------------------------	--	---

We are located at...

Greenfield Plaza, Brookwood Center, Scooter Computer, Dairy Queen

1800 Greenfield Plaza
Bryan, TX 77802
CALL 846-4150

Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
Late appt. available

Tammie K. Moore Owner/Stylist
Wes Thomas Stylist
Gayle Brown Nail Technician

The Battalion

ATLANTIS TILLMAN, Editor in Chief

STEVE O'BRIEN, Managing Editor
JASON LOUGHMAN, Opinion Editor
MEREDITH HARRISON, News Editor
HEIDI SAUER, News Editor
TODD BLACKMON, Arts & Entertainment Editor

GARY CARROLL, City Editor
J. DOUGLAS FOSTER, Sports Editor
CHRIS WHITLEY, Sports Editor
KARL STOLLEIS, Photo Editor

Staff Members
Reporters — Melody Dunne, Mark Evans, Todd Stone, Sharon Gilmore, Brandi Jordan, Cheryl Heller, Tanya Sasser, Robin Goodpaster, Juli Phillips, Tanya Williams, Julie Chelkowski, Monique Lunsford, and Will Healy.
Copy editors — Kyle Burnett, Tracia Newbould, Jennifer Mentlik, David Thomas, Jennifer Smith, Lance Holmes and Lauri Reysa.
Photographers — Darrin Hill, Jenny Matlack, Randy Nichols, Sandra Alvarado, Billy Moran, and Robert Reed.
Lifestyle writers — Susan Owen, Anas Ben-Musa, Tricia Martinez, Julie Polston and Mack Harrison.
Sports writers — K. Lee Davis, Michael Plumer, Don Norwood and Ruly Medrano.
Columnists — Anthony LoBaido, Stacy Feducia, Dwayne Purvis, Shawn Ralston, Matt Dickerson, Robert Vasquez, and Toni Garrard.
Cartoonists — William Harrison, Thomas Deeney, George Nasr, and Clay Welch.
Clerks — Darra Dees, Jane Harvey, Shelley Rowton and Jamie Anderson.

The Battalion (USPS 045-360) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer session (except university holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77840.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publications, a unit of the Department of Journalism. Editorial offices are in 013 Reed McDonald Building. Newsroom phone number is 845-3316. Fax: 845-2647.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Opinion Page staff or the contributor and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Texas A&M Battalion editors, student body, administration, faculty or staff.

Advertising: For campus, local and national display advertising, call 845-2696. For classified advertising, call 845-0569. Advertising offices are in 015 Reed McDonald and office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Fax: 845-5408.

Subscriptions: Mail subscriptions are \$20 per semester, \$40 per school year and \$50 per full year. To charge by VISA or MasterCard, call 845-2611.

LSAT MCAT GMAT GRE

If you're planning on taking one of these tests, plan to take Kaplan first. We know the test-taking strategies and content that students need to score much higher on standardized tests. And we can teach them to you.

For more information call
696-3196

KAPLAN

The answer to the test question.

Class of '93

Committee member applications are now available in the Student Programs Office in the Class of '93 cubicle.

They are due Friday, September 18 by 5:00pm

AND

Class of '93 Awareness Week
September 14 - 18!! Check the What's Up column for daily events!!