

## California fires destroy homes, force evacuation

### Suspected arsonist arrested in connection with blaze

The Associated Press

Wildfires driven by searing desert winds torched thousands of under-dry acres in Southern California on Wednesday, destroying scores of homes and forcing hundreds to flee in terror from wealthy suburbs and rural hamlets. Six firefighters were injured, three critically.

Among the evacuees were elderly people carried on gurneys from two convalescent homes and patients at a hospital.

One 3,000-acre fire threatened the Wild Animal Park in northern San Diego County, where zookeepers evacuated 26 endangered California condors and four Andean condors.

By midafternoon Wednesday, 11 large fires fanned by hot, dry Santa Ana winds gusting up to 70 mph were burning from Ventura County to the Mexican border. The fires fed off vegetation baked to a crisp in the rainless summer.

"We have what we call a blow-up condition at this time," said Norm Plott, a Fire Department

spokesman in Ventura County, where a 15,000-acre arson fire was raging out of control.

A man was arrested Wednesday afternoon in connection with one of the worst blazes, which authorities said was set by a transient.

In that fire, an estimated 45 homes were destroyed or damaged in the northeast suburb of Altadena.

Overwhelmed firefighters ran out of water and called for reinforcements, and helicopters made daring water drops in futile efforts to douse burning homes.

Smoke and ash eclipsed the sun over downtown Los Angeles, freeways and schools were closed, and wind-borne embers picked out homes at random, quickly engulfing roofs in flame.

"They said, 'It's coming up the canyon! It's coming up the canyon!' so we just got out of there as fast as we can. I have nothing but what I'm wearing," said Sandra Bohlen, whose three-bedroom Altadena home burned.

As the 4,000-acre inferno advanced, at least 500 homes were abandoned. Some residents stayed

behind to hose down roofs.

A fire engine was destroyed in Altadena, and one firefighter suffered smoke inhalation. Other fire crews stood by helplessly as water pressure dropped to zero.

Smoke forced St. Luke Medical Center in nearby north Pasadena to evacuate 74 patients, who were transferred to other hospitals.

Two convalescent homes were evacuated as flames reached their doors. Elderly residents were taken to makeshift shelters at schools.

"It was burning on the grass outside. It got up to the back door. I don't know what happened next," said nurse Ron Green.

In Riverside County, an 11,400-acre blaze damaged or destroyed 28 homes and buildings near Winchester.

Four residents and one firefighter were injured, said Bob Blatz, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry.

In Ventura County northwest of Los Angeles, a 15,000-acre arson blaze destroyed a house and a mobile home in the Santa Monica Mountains and burned 12 miles to the ocean.

## Stop and smell the flowers



Barbara Schultz, a senior horticulture major from Seminole, Fla., arranges a flower display at the Floriculture/Horticulture Society booth in the MSC Wednesday.

## Bush Library makes progress

### Fundraising on schedule, \$10 million already received

By James Bernsen

THE BATTALION

Officials at Texas A&M University said Wednesday the George Bush Presidential Library Complex is progressing well, with the designs almost finalized and one-fourth of the needed funds already received.

Don W. Wilson, executive director of the Bush Presidential Library Center, said over \$10 million of the \$42 million needed has already been collected. Texas A&M will also contribute \$40 million to build the George Bush School of Government and Public Service.

Dr. E. Dean Gage, A&M interim president, said the administration is pleased with the progress of the library so far.

"It is going extremely well, both in terms of fundraising and the development of academic programs," Gage said.

Tim Donathen, assistant vice-chancellor for facilities and planning, said construction is still scheduled to begin in the fall of 1994, and will be completed in January 1997.

All that remains is to design the minor exterior

details, he said, which should be finalized in the next month. An environmental impact study must also be conducted before groundbreaking begins.

John Lindsey, regent and member of the George Bush Presidential Foundation, said the plans for the center look good and he is excited with the progress that has been made.

"Progress has been excellent," he said. "I think the architects are doing a superlative job."

Lindsey said Bush himself has had much input in the process and has final say on the details.

"He wants the regents to be pleased and we want him to be pleased," he said.

Wilson said the center will consist of the library and museum building, a building that will house an auditorium and conference center and an academic building for the school.

The museum section is designed around the same federal specifications as all other presidential libraries, Gage said, but has some features that will make it unique.

"We are very excited about the continuing development of the center and what it will mean to the University," Gage said. "It will bring the kind of progress that will expand the prestige of the University."

## Bikeway Master Plan awaits fate in hands of City Council vote tonight

### The Bikeway Master Plan was designed this summer to provide bicycle facilities for citizens of the College Station area.

By Mark Smith

THE BATTALION

The College Station City Council will vote tonight on a proposal to make the College Station area more bicycle-friendly.

The plan, called the Bikeway Master Plan, was designed this summer by officials from College Station's office of Planning and Zoning, the Texas Bicycle Coalition and local citizens.

According to the proposal, if the plan is adopted it will "provide signed, marked bike facilities for citizens of all ages bicycling for both recreation and transportation. These facilities will receive increased attention to bike-friendly design and maintenance."

"The Bikeway Master Plan is something to benefit the whole community," said Ed Hard, transportation planner for the City of College Station. "Not only will it

help the students who ride, but also the recreational cyclist."

Danise Hauser, local coordinator for the Texas Bicycle Coalition, described some of the benefits the community could enjoy.

"Overall, the plan will reduce congestion and the confusion with vehicular right of way," Hauser said. "It is so important for motorists and bicyclists to learn to work together."

Pierre Dube, co-owner and general manager for Freebird's World Burrito, said the plan will provide more access to the University and community, and safer facilities for the cyclists.

"Sometimes it's kind of scary to be a cyclist on the road," Dube said.

If the council does approve the plan, the city could be eligible for over \$1 million in federal money earmarked for bicycle route development.

"There was a federal transporta-

tion bill passed in 1991," Hard said. "Now we're finally seeing this money trickle down."

Hard said if the city gets the money it would be a significant amount, but would only be a small portion of the overall cost.

"The federal money would be great," Hard said. "But there is going to be major construction as part of this project and that will raise the cost."

The main points of the plan include seven miles of on-road routes, lanes and off-road paths. Bike routes are a part of the roadway, while bike lanes are separated from car lanes by a solid white line.

Some other features of the plan include actuated traffic signals, bike bridges over currently impassable creeks and bikeway crossings under Texas Avenue.

Hauser said although the plan does provide for bicycle traffic, the important thing for people to realize

is that bicycles are classified as vehicular traffic, not pedestrian traffic.

"Society perpetuates this idea that bikes are toys," Hauser said. "They're not toys. They are entitled to the rights and responsibilities of traffic laws."

The key to shared roadways, Hauser said, is the selection of appropriate facilities for bicycle transportation and the education of both bicyclists and motorists on how to share the road safely.

The Bicycle Coalition teamed up with Freebird's World Burrito for a petition drive to show the city council the community's support for the plan. The petition received over 3,000 signatures, Hauser said.

Dube said he felt businesses, such as Freebird's, are powerful agents for change.

"We would like to affect positive change," Dube said. "One of our goals is to make Texas the most bicycle-friendly state in the country."

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*-Denise Hauser,  
local coordinator for the  
Texas Bicycle Coalition*

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•Thursday: Mostly cloudy, highs in the 70s  
•Forecast for Friday: Some clouds, highs in the 80s

### WEATHER

•Wednesday's winning Texas Lotto numbers:  
1, 5, 14, 24, 35, 38

## Gov. Richards: Government to repay Texas for super collider

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Texas Gov. Ann Richards said Wednesday she's been assured by Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary that the federal government intends to repay Texas for its sizeable investment in the aborted super collider project.

Richards was in Washington this week to untangle the complicated web left by the death of the \$11 billion giant atom smasher and to lobby for passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Before leaving town, she planned to meet with President Clinton and White House chief of staff Mack McLarty.



Richards

pose: to ensure that Texas recoups its \$400 million-plus investment into the super collider; and to seek administration commitments to salvage as much as possible of the work already done on the project south of Dallas near Waxahachie.

"She asked me to consider her my partner in this effort, that she clearly understood that the obligation was there and that they intended to satisfy that obligation," Richards said at a Capitol news conference after she met with O'Leary.

"I think the Department of Energy is very anxious to use the portions of the project that they can complete within the money that they have available to them," Richards said.

A leading collider supporter, Rep. Jim Chapman, said congressional critics may be less conciliatory than the administration. "Everyone just fervently hopes there's a way to do this without

litigation," the Sulphur Springs Democrat said of his fellow collider supporters.

"But I'm not confident the Congress has the judgment to recognize what's in the country's long-term economic interest," he said.

Congress will provide \$640 million this year to terminate the collider under an agreement hammered out last week by congressional negotiators and approved Tuesday by the House. The Energy Department has estimated the shutdown could top \$1.1 billion, but critics have attacked those figures as inflated and suggested they will fight any costs they view as unnecessary.

Some \$2 billion has been spent on the physics experiment under construction 35 miles south of Dallas. In addition to Texas' \$400 million contribution, the state has spent millions more on building and upgrading roads leading to the remote site.