

DISPUTE

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the Texas Instruments plant. In exchange, any land annexed by College Station for the next 16 years would invariably fall under College Station's utilities jurisdiction.

This agreement operated smoothly until 1993, when Bryan legal counsel realized the Bryan city charter prohibited making sales power contracts of more than 10 years in length.

Bryan declared in 1994 that the utilities agreement was invalid and began negotiations with College Station officials.

Joe Brown, Bryan public information officer, said negotiations reached an impasse, and Bryan filed a declaratory judgment lawsuit, which seeks only a judge's ruling and no monetary compensation.

"I don't know what exactly we're asking for," Brown said. "But there've been a whole lot of customers taken away from us since 1980."

If the agreement is declared invalid, utilities of College Station areas annexed between 1990 and 1995 will once again be regulated by Bryan.

Skip Noe, College Station city manager, said having different power rates throughout College Station would be confusing and unnecessary.

"Now, we have a say so in what happens, and we are responsive to all the taxpayers in College Station," Noe said. "We just want to continue providing service to all parts of our city."

If Bryan takes control of utilities in some College Station annexes, Noe said, rates will likely increase for all College Station residents.

"The more customers you have, the better rates you can get," he said.

Peggy Calliham, College Station public relations and marketing manager, said Bryan officials are using the charter technicality as an excuse to break the contract because the deal was not beneficial to them after the Texas Instruments plant shut down.

"Bryan just wanted to provide power for them (Texas Instru-

ments)," Calliham said. "It's a matter of dollars."

Calliham said Bryan officials protested the agreement because they feared that in 1996 College Station would not renew its power contract with Texas Municipal Power agency of which Bryan is a partner.

College Station, which does not produce any of its own power, did in fact sign a contract with a different power company, Texas Utilities, effective Jan. 1, 1996. This contract will result in lower utility rates for College Station.

The argument presented in court by College Station officials was that since both cities continued business as usual after the 10-year limit had passed, the contract was, in effect, renewed.

Noe likened the situation to leasing an apartment. He said that if a tenant's lease runs out, but the tenant continues to live there and continues to make payments, the contract is still good.

"If they never tell you otherwise, and you keep paying, basically you've renewed your lease," he said.

Since Langley ruled to have another hearing before making a final judgment, Noe said the court must have found some merit in College Station's argument.

However, Brown said Langley's judgment against College Station was clear.

"Basically the judge said, 'This argument you made is not a good one,'" he said. "If you want to come at it from a different way, you can have one more try."

The power contract signed in 1980 states that if the agreement was found to violate either city charter, Brown said, the agreement would be void. Brown compared College Station's argument to people breaking the speed limit because they are unaware it has changed from 65 to 55 mph.

"Just because the city of Bryan continued to do it, doesn't erase what the charter and the agreement state," he said.

But Noe said, as a matter of honor, the agreement should not be broken.

"The world was all peachy keen for 13 years, and then someone said, 'Hold on, the agreement's not good anymore,'" he said. "We're honorable folks, and we entered into an agreement for 16 years, and we just want to follow through on that."

BUDGET

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the environment and aid to working families from severe reductions.

Panetta insisted that the administration had surrendered little in accepting the GOP's timetable, saying it was spending levels for important social programs that really counted. On NBC's "Today," he even seemed to hedge a bit on the timetable itself.

"If we can work out an agree-

ment that protects those priorities, we can do it in seven years or eight years," Panetta said. "But the important thing is protecting those priorities, and that's what we got in the agreement last night."

Sunday's agreement sent about 700,000 federal workers back to their jobs Monday, following another 100,000 who returned earlier as bills financing several agencies were signed. That meant that the Grand Canyon and Smithsonian museums reopened to tourists, the Commerce Department resumed tracking economic statistics, and overseas embassies could issue visas to travelers.

LIBRARY

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"Basically, we thought it would be very effective," Taylor said. "We've provided a great educational resource to the community."

Taylor said the prison camp donated both resources and labor to the effort.

"The federal women's program and our affirmative action committee sponsored the project through book donations," she said. "Also, our warden, Anne Beasley, was kind enough to authorize the building of book shelves by our inmate construction work detail, so our inmate population actually built the shelves."

"We got other organizations involved in the project, and it became their community service project."

Georgiana Vaccaro, a doctorate bilingual education student in the class, said the project was chosen for its merit in the community.

"We entertained several ideas, and this one seemed to be the only one that everyone could contribute to evenly," Vaccaro said. "We knew before we started that there were a number of school-aged children in this project, and we thought this could help address a need and a concern."

The group also focused on a multicultural aspect when coordinating the project, Vaccaro said, obtaining materials written in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

"Since this is a diverse population, we tried to get a diverse collection for the library," she said. "We think this project is replicable in other parts of the community."

Debra Mixon, Mockingbird Run complex manager, said she believes the project will have a positive effect on both residents and the surrounding community.

"I think it will have a tremendous effect," Mixon said. "They have books on many great levels."

Mixon said there are 300 school-aged children living in the complex, 75 percent of whom attend schools surrounding the complex.

The library will benefit students as well as their families, Mixon said.

"We're trying to raise the level of reading," she said.

In addition to the library project, the complex has a program in which volunteers read to children, help them with school work and serve as role models.

Volunteers are still needed for this program, and interested persons can contact Mixon at Mockingbird Run at 779-0051.

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Fri - Sun 1:25 9:40
Mon - Thur 5:15 7:20 9:35

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT • R
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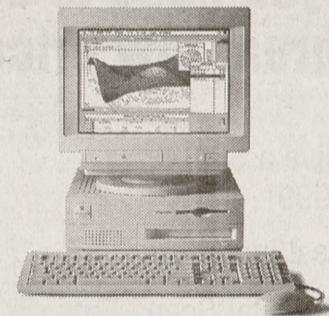
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