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# CAMPUS

## A&M chemists seek solution to waste proble

Project leaders aim to make disposal of radioactive elements easier and cheap

By Colleen Kavanagh Staff writer

Texas A&M chemists have found a way to clean up groundwater contaminated by the disposal of nu-

clear waste. The chemists developed a way to remove the most potent radioactive elements from the waste, making disposal easier and cheaper. The waste, at the Hanford Processing Site in Washington, has started to

leak from the tanks it is stored in. Elizabeth Behrens, an A&M doctoral student, has been working on the project for four and a half years. She said the solution is feasible, but it is difficult to convince the Hanford managers to test it because the solution came from a university.

Hanford works with various national laboratories on solutions to the nuclear waste problem," she

said. "It's hard for us to get our ideas across when they work with labs who work on this kind of stuff all of the time. Our solution is the best for groundwater remediation.

Behrens said the production of

"None of this (pollution of groundwater) is good for wildlife or the people in the area "

> **ELIZABETH BEHRENS** A&M DOCTORAL STUDENT

nuclear weapons at Hanford left behind highly radioactive forms of the elements strontium and cesium. This waste was dumped into steel tanks and half-buried on the processing site. Some of the tanks have

started to leak, and highly radio-active chemicals are migrating into the soil in the area.

"Not only is there a problem with chemicals in the soil, but the Columbia River is nearby and radioactivity can be detected in the water,' she said. "None of this is good for wildlife or people in the area.

Behrens said that if the chemicals reach the aquifers nearby, they will contaminate drinking water supplies.

"Strontium's properties behave like calcium," she said. "If ingested, it goes directly into people's bones, where it decays and can

Normally such high-level radioactive waste must be turned into glass logs that are wrapped in steel and buried deeply. The U.S. government is looking for cheaper ways to convert this high-level waste into less harmful forms that

strontium and cesium for waste and groundwater changing them with harmful sodium. The uses an ion exchanger, that can selectively ren ments from a solution

place them with otherel After the radioactive ents are removed, they then be mixed with cen

safely buried. A&M chemistry Profe Abraham Clearfield

who supervises Behr ject, said the research hasn compounds that are inex yet effective.

"We have compared th er solutions," he said. "Or vast array of materials to from, this is one of the be

**Heavy metal** 



lar

Max Mondelli, a junior mechanical engineering major, bends sheet metal to form a box lid in an Engineering Technology 181 lab Thursday afterno in Thompson Hall.

#### A&M voices interest in SENATE Naval Air Station Dallas

FORT WORTH, (AP) — Texas A&M University is staging separate talks with Dallas and Grand Prairie about its interest in using Naval Air Station Dallas for its extension programs.

Sore feelings over the smaller city's flirtation with the Mavericks has created a need for separate meetings, officials said

Two A&M deputy chancellors and two other system officials met with Grand Prairie and Dallas officials Tuesday.

Grand Prairie City Manager Gary Gwyn Wednesday said A&M officials had spotted the tension. "They said something to the effect that they understood there was a rift between Dallas and Grand Prairie," Gwyn said.

Grand Prairie recently courted the Mavericks, whose team owners were looking for a site to build a new arena. Dallas won the arena battle.

Grand Prairie and Dallas have an agreement to redevelop the NAS Dallas base together. The base, which straddles the boundary between the cities, was ordered closed in 1993, but the Navy is still there and scheduled to leave in September.

Texas A&M could take over the majority of the base and move its engineering extension service, experiment station and agricultural extension service to the base, or it could open a smaller, temporary training facility, A&M officials said.

Dallas City Manger John Ware said the cities still have a relationship, but when asked why Dallas had canceled the last three monthly meetings of a joint redevelopment committee, Ware alluded to the arena battle.

"We didn't hear anything from them when they were trying to steal our teams, either," Ware said.

Continued from Page 1

In other business, the Course Wednesday.

Craig Rotter, Student Services committee chair and an agricultural education graduate student, said the Course Evaluation Bill will provide a forum for students to have access to information about profes-

#### HOLIDAYS

Continued from Page 1

'We decided to buy a tree in order to encourage some of the other 36 agriculture organizations to do the same," he said.

Residence halls also are participating in the holiday festivities. By Nov. 25, lights will be installed along the roofs of most halls and the Systems building.

The Residence Hall Association (RHA) bought the lights, and the physical plant is installing them. Peter Schulte, vice president of sors during registration.

"Our goal is to provide a forum students to find help in regist and information about professo courses," Rotter said. "We are e as course evaluations on the order to help the student body

The Professor Quality ance Bill, which would allo dents on-line access to ap sor's grade distribution, referred to committee.

administration for RHA a sophomore meteorology said that after RHA was ask purchase a tree on New Main Di the association decided to decided

the residence halls also. RHA is sponsoring a dorn orating contest," he said, "a there are enough participant want to invite families from Bryan-College Station area at

them tour through the halls." All students and Bryan-Co Station residents are welcom attend a lighting festival at 7 Dec. 1 on the front lawn 0

A lot of Systems Building.

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