

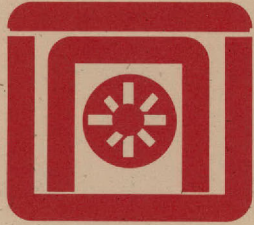
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NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

July 1998



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HUDSPETH CO. YOUTHS WORKING FOR LOW-LEVEL WASTE AUTHORITY

Two students from the Dell City High School began working for the Austin offices of the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority on June 9. The youths are participants in the State Migrant Program offered by St. Edward's University in Austin.

For the duration of the program, Vianey Mendoza and Evangelina Barraza will reside at St. Edward's University's dorms, attend classes and work part time. The students are exposed to a college environment as well as various office work environments. The program reaches out to migrant students between the ages of 15 and 21 (grade-levels 9 - 12) in effort to instill in them the importance of an education while giving them the opportunity to learn office skills and earn some money. Candidates must first qualify and be approved by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program throughout the State.

"I'd never really known much about the (low-level radioactive waste) project, except for what I'd heard my parents say. I think it's good to work here and actually meet the people who are involved in the project."

*--Evangelina Barraza
Hudspeth County Resident*

"These students are all from migrant families and most end up missing about two full months of school throughout the year," said Patricia Hanks, Recruiter/Job Developer at St. Edward's University.

"We are trying to help these students learn self-esteem, be confident, and encourage them to continue their education," said Hanks. "We want them to know that they count too," she added.

"This program is preparing me for the real world, not to be afraid and to go on to achieve my goals," said Barraza. "This job is also teaching me responsibility when it comes to a job and money management," she added.

The program is funded under Title IIb Summer Youth Employment Program of the JTPA. St. Edward's University provides dorm space and shares the cost of meals with the JTPA and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The educational portion of the program is funded by the TEA. Funding for the work portion of the program is provided by the Private Industry Councils from the participating regions.

"Students are allowed to keep \$50 of their earnings every two weeks, while the remainder is saved, then paid to their families in full upon completion of the program," said Ms. Hanks. "This allows the students to contribute financially to their families," she added.

(See page 3, "School Credits...Management")



MAY BOARD MEETING REPORT

by Mac Marquez

On May 8, 1998 the Authority's Board of Directors convened at St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston, Texas for its regular quarterly meeting.

The first order of business was the Board's executive session in which legal matters pending before the Board were discussed.

Mr. Tim Schaffner, Director of Finance for the Authority, presented the year-to-date financial report. He reported that all categories of spending are in line with expectations except for printing services which have exceeded estimates.

The Board then considered a report by General Counsel Lee Mathews on the possible sale of revenue bonds to finance construction of the low-level waste facility. Mr. Mathews stated that one alternative to cash payments due from Maine and Vermont upon ratification of the compact is revenue bonds. The Authority could issue the bonds and require Maine and Vermont to pay the principal and interest on the bonds. Discussions are underway between Texas and the two north-eastern states as to financing possibilities.

Mr. Mathews also reported on the status of construction authorization. He reminded the Board that the Authority has no construction funding authorization in its 1999 budget. Discussions are underway between the staff and Legislative Budget Board staff as to the possibility of emergency appropriations early next year or some other means of securing the necessary funds.

With regard to the licensing hearings before the State Office of Administrative Hearings, Mr. Mathews reported that the hearing phase was completed on March 25, 1998. Following receipt of closing arguments, the administrative law judges will issue a proposal for decision on the application.

Mr. Mathews reported on the status of the Texas Compact. He indicated that the compact has now passed the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, but since the bills have different amendments, they must be considered by a conference committee. The next step is the appointment of conferees.

Mr. Ruben Alvarado, Director of Engineering, gave the quarterly report on the status of agency contracts. No unusual developments were noted.

The report on community development programs in



Hudspeth County was given by General Manager Rick Jacobi.

He mentioned new construction for the fire and EMS station, anticipated construction of Sierra Blanca's sewer system, renovation of the county courthouse, and other projects.

Mr. Jacobi also reported on the Authority's public information activities in Hudspeth County. He noted that a tour of the Comanche Peak Power Plant and Southwestern Medical Center was scheduled in May for several students and teachers from Sierra Blanca High School.

The Board approved as an action item the assessment of planning and implementation fees for fiscal year 1998 in the amount of \$4,260,256, which included a ten percent assessment for local public projects in Hudspeth County.

Mr. Mathews discussed with the Board the need to set disposal fees for the facility once it opens. The fees must be set by rule. Mr. Mathews noted that the Texas Government Code provides a negotiated rulemaking procedure that may be helpful in the setting of fees by the Authority. The Board authorized the staff to begin negotiated rulemaking on waste disposal fees and authorized the general manager to appoint a convener to begin the process.

The agency's strategic plan for 1998-2003 was presented by Mr. Alvarado. This plan is required as a first step in budget planning for the next legislative session. Following a discussion of the plan, the Board approved the plan for submittal to the Legislative Budget Board.

At the end of the meeting Chairman Guiberteau invited the public to comment. One member of the public, Olive Hershey, asked several questions of the staff and Board concerning emergency response and other items.

The meeting was then adjourned. ☺

S.B. School Loses 2 Veteran Educators

Retirement has claimed Sierra Blanca School District's superintendent and science teacher of 22 years. Superintendent Lewis Rogers and science teacher Winnie Neely, retired in June, both with 32-year teaching careers.

"(After 22 years) I feel like I have married part of the Sierra Blanca community, I am part of its history and I don't think I am leaving," said Neely, a native of Weslaco, Texas. She has lived in Sierra Blanca since the summer of 1976 "just before the Bicentennial 4th of July celebration," she remembered.

As for Rogers, he said, "the reality of retirement has not really sunk in yet, but I am certain that in July, when I don't have to go back to the office, it will be very difficult".

Prior to teaching in Sierra Blanca, Mrs. Neely taught one year in Bledsoe, seven years in Salado, one year in Troy, two and a half years in Mercedes and four months in Woodsboro. "In between my Woodsboro and Mercedes jobs, I took a few years off to have two of my three children," she added. Mrs. Neely earned her bachelors degree and teaching certificate from The University of Texas at Austin. She also attended Southwestern University in Georgetown for two and a half years before transferring to The University of Texas.

Mrs. Neely's retirement plans include spending time with her family and traveling for fun. "I am happily married to the greatest man alive," said Mrs. Neely of husband Tom D., whom she married last July. She is happy to be able to spend more time with her two daughters, son, and six grandchildren (one more on the way), plus her new family. "My husband and I enjoy our garden very much and I'm looking forward to continuing that along with traveling at our leisure," said Mrs. Neely.

For the past five years, Mrs. Neely has utilized the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority's public information program as a resource for teaching the topic of radiation to her science students. Her curriculum has included tours of the two Texas nuclear power plants and Dallas' Southwestern Medical Center. "I have enjoyed taking students on field trips...to teach them about possible origins of low-level radioactive waste. The kids have learned and there's no better way to learn than by seeing first hand what people are talking about," said Mrs. Neely.

"I have had many, many students and many have gone out to do great things. I hope I've had a positive influence in their lives," she added.

Mr. Rogers is prepared to try new ventures. His

(continued on page 4)

School Credits, Work and a Lesson in Money Management

(continued from page 1)

Vianey Mendoza attests to the money management learning experience. "Last year I spent my two-week allowance a little too quickly and I didn't have enough money to do all my laundry. This year, I know to budget my money."

"The best part of the program is being able to work in a place like this (the Authority), especially with the low-level waste project so close to home," said Barraza. "I'd never really known much about the project, except for what I'd heard my parents say. I think it's good to work here and actually meet the people who are involved in the project," concluded Barraza.

contacted St. Edward's University last year after learning about the program in the Hudspeth County Herald. The Authority chose to participate and requested students specifically from Hudspeth County in order to offer them an opportunity to work closer to the proposed project near their home town. (Dell City is approximately 65 miles north of Sierra Blanca.)

St. Edward's has offered the program for 24 years under the direction of Dr. Robert A. Montgomery. Dr. Montgomery is responsible for applying for and obtaining approval for the program's funding through various JTPA's. The six week work/study program began on June 7 and will continue through July 16. ☺

The Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority

TO THE POINT

-- by Rick Jacobi, General Manager

Since the last newsletter, the hearings on the low-level radioactive waste disposal facility have been completed. The last witness was heard on March 25 and the parties sent in their responses to closing arguments on May 22. The judges say they expect to have their decision by July 7. That means the Commissioners of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission will very likely be ready to issue a license before October 1998.

That is good news. As soon as the license is issued, construction can begin. The facility can be operating by the end of 1999. Construction will employ up to 100 craftsmen for about 6 to 9 months. At the same time, the operating staff will be hired. That will require another 33 persons. Some of the more specialized jobs like health physicists and quality assurance specialists will likely be hired from outside Hudspeth County. But, all of the other positions like heavy equipment operators, concrete technicians, mechanics, radiation protection technicians, quality assurance technicians, laboratory technicians and security guards can be hired from Hudspeth County.

I am looking forward to the operation of the low-level radioactive waste facility. It will be a good neighbor to Sierra Blanca, Hudspeth County and the surrounding counties. It will bring jobs and benefits to the county. It will be the finest operation of its kind in the world. The kind of place of which we can all be proud.

Don't Forget July 4th in S.B.

Don't forget about the 4th of July celebration being sponsored by the Sierra Blanca Chamber of Commerce. A community parade will kick off the festivities beginning at 10:00 a.m. The parade will lead you to the courthouse lawn for a Bar-B-Que dinner (beginning at noon), co-ed volleyball and tennis tournaments, games, and arts and crafts. Come hang out 'til the sun goes down and stay for the fireworks display. The Hudspeth County Railroad Museum will also be open all day. See you there!

Bye, to Neely and Rogers

(continued from page 3)

plans include running the R&G grocery store and stocking it to offer the community a variety of hardware and office supplies. If that does not work out, he is prepared with plans B through D which include opening up a restaurant, gardening and painting, or simply being a "house mom".

"It has been a pleasure for me to finish my career here because I have been blessed with a great staff and the kids have proven their potential. More are going to college, which is very gratifying. I hope they'll come back to raise their families here," he said. Rogers served the Sierra Blanca community for four years after teaching in Van Horn and Fort Hancock for 14 and four years, respectively. While in Sierra Blanca, Rogers accomplished many goals he set for the school district. He introduced modern technology and feels he has decreased the number of families with resistance to a good education.

"I think I am leaving the district in good shape," said Rogers. "Test scores have increased appreciatively, we're not in any danger of being a low performance school, and I feel confident that the school will eventually be recognized," he added.

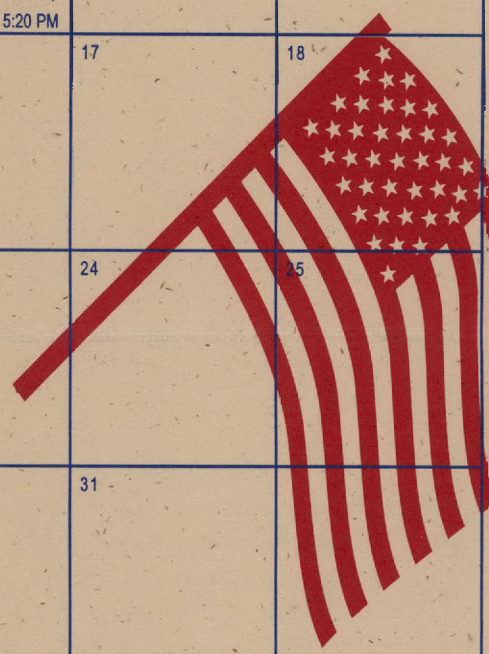
The Marfa, Texas native earned his bachelors and masters degrees from Sul Ross State University in Alpine. He also completed all course work for a doctorate degree with, as he phrased it, "an ABD specialty - all but the dissertation". Mr. Rogers' wife, Rita, also teaches in Sierra Blanca and plans to join him in retirement within the next two to three years. The couple has two daughters, Michelle and Tiffany. Michelle is a school teacher in Tornillo and Tiffany will be a freshman at Sierra Blanca School. "With Tiffany still in school, I look forward to accompanying her on school field trips as a parent rather than as an administrator," said Rogers.

Dr. Helen Stockebrand from the Anthony School District will be the new superintendent beginning July 1. Ms. Valerie McCombs who has been the school's leading substitute teacher over the past two years will fill the science teacher vacancy.

"We're real lucky to have people of that caliber," said Rogers of the two new staff members. 😊

JULY 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2 No S.B. School Summer Classes	3 No S.B. School Summer Classes	4 <i>Independence Day</i> S.B. Chamber's 4th of July Celebration
5	6 No S.B. School Summer Classes	7 Target Date for SOAH Recommendation to TNRCC on TLLRWDA License Application	8 TX Six-Man Coaches Assoc. Clinic (Lubbock) S.B. Chamber of Commerce Meeting 6:00 PM	9 TX Six-Man Coaches Assoc. Clinic (Lubbock) TLLRWDA Public Site Tours (Faskin Ranch) 12:20 PM & 5:20 PM	10 TX Six-Man Coaches Assoc. Clinic (Lubbock)	11
12	13 Hudspeth County Commissioners Court Meeting, 9:00 AM S.B. School Pre-Regist. for Secondary Students (July 13 - 17)	14 S.B. School Exit Level TAAS Exams, 8:00 AM (July 14 - 16)	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Hudspeth County Water District #1 Meeting, 5:00 PM (S.B.)	22	23	24	25
26	27 Hudspeth County Commissioners Court Meeting, 9:00 AM S.B. School Students' Parent Conferences (July 27 - August 1)	28	29	30	31	



LLRW Site Tours Offered to Public

Anyone interested in touring the proposed low-level radioactive waste site on the Faskin Ranch is invited to do so on Thursday, July 9. Tours will begin promptly at 12:20 p.m. and 5:20 p.m. Participants may register by contacting the TLLRWDA field office at **(915) 369-3391**. You must register by **4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 7**. The duration of the tour will be approximately one hour. For more information please contact Joe Castro at the above phone number.

Neighbor To Neighbor is published monthly by the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority (the Authority). The Authority is the State agency responsible for siting, constructing, operating and eventually closing a low-level radioactive waste disposal facility for the State. The Authority is headquartered in Austin, Texas and also has a field office in Sierra Blanca, Texas.

Please feel free to visit or contact the Authority at the following addresses and phone/fax numbers:

ATTN: Adriana Rhames	TLLRWDA
TLLRWDA	I-10 E., Mile Marker 112
7701 N. Lamar, Ste. 300	P.O. Box 361
Austin, TX 78752	Sierra Blanca, TX 79851
Phone: (512) 451-5292	Phone: (915) 369-3391
Fax: (512) 451-5296	Fax: (915) 369-3181

