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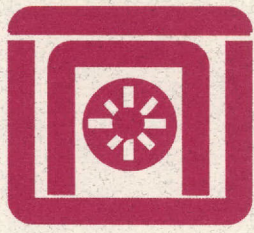
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NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

September 1997



AUGUST BOARD MEETING REPORT

by Mac Marquez

The Authority's Board of Directors held its quarterly meeting in Houston on August 15, 1997. Several persons attended from Hudspeth County, including County Judge James Peace, County Commissioners Curtis Carr and Larry Brewton, and Manny Lujan, Jr., Hudspeth County community development coordinator.

Dr. Milton Guiberteau, the Board chairman, introduced the newest member of the Board, Claudia A. Ball. Mrs. Ball is a rancher who resides in Comstock, Texas.

The first order of business was an executive session of the Board in which the Board heard a report from the Authority's lawyers on the hearings related to the Authority's license application pending before the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. The Board also conducted its annual evaluation of the General Manager's job performance in executive session.

Following the executive session and approval of the minutes of the May 16, 1997 meeting, the Board heard a report from Tim Schaffner, Director of Finance, on the current budget and the 1998 operating budget. Several budget adjustments were recommended by the staff and adopted by the Board. The 1998 operating budget of \$5,101,706, which includes financial incentive payments of \$591,950 to Hudspeth County, was approved.

Lee Mathews, General Counsel, reported on the status of license hearings before the State Office of Administrative Hearings and the status of the proposed Texas compact and other compacts. He reported that the Authority will begin discovery proceedings on September 1, 1997. With regard to compacts, a vote on the Texas compact in Congress is expected in September or October, 1997 and passage is likely.

Ruben Alvarado, Director of Technical Programs, discussed the demonstration cap project. The cap was completed on August 8, 1997 and testing is underway. Mr. Alvarado also reported on the status of 1997 agency contracts.

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TO THE POINT

-- by Rick Jacobi, General Manager

Every two years, two members of the six member Board of Directors are up for appointment by the Governor. This year, James Carroll, a lawyer from El Paso, was re-appointed for a six year term. Mrs. Claudia Ball, a rancher from Del Rio, was appointed for a six year term. Interestingly, Mrs. Ball's grandfather was Claude Hudspeth, for whom Hudspeth County is named. Mrs. Ball replaces Mr. David Ojeda who served on the Board for six years.

Mr. Ojeda is a community development expert who was instrumental in designing and promoting many of the Authority's programs to assist Sierra Blanca in community and economic development. Through his efforts, programs for acquiring emergency service equipment, for financing housing development and renovation, and for medical services were implemented. The Sierra Blanca Community Development Corporation was formed under Mr. Ojeda's leadership to be a central point for acquiring state and federal grants to bring prosperity and community improvements to Sierra Blanca and Hudspeth County as a whole.

We all appreciate David Ojeda's leadership on these issues.

Board Meeting Report

(continued from pg. 1)

Rick Jacobi, General Manager, reported on the status of community development projects in Hudspeth County, including the Sierra Blanca park, housing developments, and the new school cafeteria. He also indicated that the next community working group meeting will be held on September 11, 1997 and will feature a speaker from the Comanche Peak Power Plant. Mr. Jacobi also discussed the Authority's public information and quality assurance programs.

The revised Hudspeth County Master Plan for 1996-97 was discussed and approved by the Board in the requested amount of \$732,972. Board member Mac Marquez proposed, and the Board adopted, an amendment regarding the proposal for reopening landfills in the city of Dell City and the community of Sierra Blanca.

The Board approved an amendment to a contract with the University of Texas' Bureau of Economic Geology to increase funds for further study of the exploratory trench. The Board then approved thirteen contracts for legal and technical work, for fiscal year 1998. One of contracts is an agreement with the Sierra Blanca Volunteer Fire Department to provide fire protection and emergency response services to the Authority.

The Board adopted a resolution of appreciation honoring David Ojeda, the Board member replaced by Mrs. Ball.

Finally, the Board voted to continue to table a proposed rulemaking requiring the use of a Texas disposal facility by in-state waste generators. ☺

A Word With the Public...

Because I have visited Hudspeth County, Sierra Blanca, the county courthouse, and all other surrounding communities on many occasions, I may have met some of you already, but I also look forward to meeting those of you whom I have not yet met. My name is Claudia Abbey Ball. I am the recently appointed public member to the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority's Board of Directors. I am also the granddaughter of Congressman Claude Hudspeth for whom Hudspeth County is named. I live north of Comstock, Texas in Val Verde County where I own and operator a ranch which has been in my family for four generations.

I will be up front with you and tell you that I accepted appointment to the Authority's Board because I strongly believe that we need to safely and permanently dispose of low-level radioactive waste and I honestly hope to help implement the proposed project. I believe in being honest with you and in realistically addressing the low-level waste issue. The waste has already been generated and we can not continue to temporarily store it on-site where it is being produced. Such waste requires a safe facility where it can be disposed of permanently without posing harm to the public or the environment.

The Hudspeth County site is safe. I have read the reports on the scientific studies conducted at the proposed site. All data indicates the site is safe and suitable for this type of disposal.

It is important to me that a safe disposal facility is built particularly because of the need for radioactive materials in medicine. Medicine needs radioactive materials for the treatment and diagnosis of many diseases and conditions affecting people in our society. I am also a firm believer in the use of nuclear energy. Our society relies on electricity very much. If my ranch were suitable for such a facility, I would certainly agree to have it used for disposal of low-level waste. If my ranch were adjacent to a low-level waste facility, I wouldn't "bat an eye" about the situation.

Claudia A. Ball of Val Verde County was appointed by Texas Governor Bush to serve on the Authority's Board through February 1, 2003.



The proposed compact with the states of Maine and Vermont is another issue which must be dealt with realistically. These two states generate very little waste compared to Texas. By forming a compact, the State of Texas is protected from being made to accept waste from any other states in the nation. In addition, Maine and Vermont will be helping pay for the cost of having the facility. If we have the opportunity to split the cost with someone, why not do it?

Although I have only been serving on the Board since early June, I have seen enough to be impressed by the group of people serving on the Board of Directors and those employed by the Authority. I believe they certainly make an effort to educate the public and anyone else interested in the facility. I strongly feel that all residents of the State of Texas should take the time to find out more about this project regardless of whether or not they support it.

I would like to invite anyone who wants more information on the site, or anyone who may have specific questions, to feel free to contact me. As a Board member, I have been appointed to serve you. Again, I believe in being up front with you. The Authority has proposed a safe site, the low-level waste is here and we need to dispose of it safely and permanently. From what I can tell, the construction of such site near Sierra Blanca will only be an asset to the community.

Claudia Abbey Ball
TLLRWDA Board Member

LICENSING HEARINGS UPDATE

The discovery phase of the licensing hearings began in May with the filing of interrogatories and document requests by the opponent parties, the Executive Director, and the Public Interest Counsel of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC). The Authority responded with formal answers to the interrogatories and with thousands of pages of documents. This first round of requests was followed by a smaller second round, which was received in mid-June.

The depositions period of the discovery phase, July 22 - August 22, allowed for taking of depositions from the applicant (the Authority) and aligned proponents (Texas Utilities, Houston Lighting and Power, and David French, and the Sierra Blanca Community Development Corporation). As of August 18, no deposition requests had been received by the Authority or the proponents.

Beginning September 1, the Authority may begin written discovery on the protestants, Executive Director, and the Public Interest Counsel. From November 19 through December 19, the Authority may request depositions from any of their witnesses. Discovery and prehearing matters will continue until January 1998, with hearings scheduled to begin on January 21.

SEPTEMBER COMMUNITY MEETING

The Authority is sponsoring a guest speaker to discuss low-level radioactive waste handling methods at one Texas nuclear power plant. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 11, at the Sierra Blanca Courthouse, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Eric Schmitt, Communication Support Manager for Texas Utilities, will discuss overall handling methods of low-level radioactive waste (LLW) at the Comanche Peak Power Plant. Mr. Schmitt will focus on potential problems caused by LLW and how they are prevented; protective clothing required for personnel; time, distance and shielding with respect to radiation exposure; and examples of LLW generated at Comanche Peak. Everyone is invited to attend.

Refreshments will be provided by Advocates for Responsible Disposal in Texas.

Chamber Recruiting Halloween Help

Sierra Blancans, it's time to start preparing your costumes for the Sierra Blanca Halloween Parade and Costume Contest sponsored by your local Chamber of Commerce. As always, the event will take place on Halloween night, which happens to be on a Friday this year. Chamber members look forward to being scared, haunted and helped. If anyone would like to volunteer some time to help ensure everything goes as planned, please contact Rhonda Willis at (915) 369-4118.



SEPTEMBER 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 LABOR DAY (HOLIDAY)	2	3 SB Beta Sigma Phi "Beginning Day" & Mtg., 5:30 PM (J. Elder's Home)	4 S.B. WIP Mtg. Noon (Michael's)	5	6
7	8 Hudspeth County Commiss. Cr. Mtg. 9:00 AM	9 S.B. Volunteer Fire Dept. Mtg. 6:30 PM (Crthse.)	10 S.B. Chamber of Commerce Mtg. 6:00 PM (Hole In The Wall)	11 TLLRWDA Community Mtg. 7:00 PM (S.B. Courthouse)	12	13
14	15	16 H.C. Water District Mtg., 5:00 PM	17 SB Beta Sigma Phi Mtg., 5:30 PM	18	19	20
21	22 Hudspeth County Commiss. Cr. Mtg. 9:00 AM	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

***Have a Happy
and
Safe Labor Day***

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

TELL US ABOUT IT... 

We are working hard to provide you with the most up-to-date and accurate information pertaining to our project. Please feel free to comment, ask questions and/or make suggestions:

Comments/Comentario :

Form area with 15 horizontal lines for writing comments. A small red pencil icon is located at the bottom right of the form area.

Name/Nombre: _____

Address/Dirección: _____

Phone / Teléfono: _____

 **Mail To/Envíe á:**

**ATTN: Editor
TLLRWDA
7701 N. Lamar, #300
Austin, TX 78752**

**COMPARTA SU
COMENTARIO...** 

Deseamos ofrecerle la información mas precisa y reciente tocante a nuestro proyecto. Por favor envíenos su comentario perteneciente al proyecto y/o a este boletín de noticias.



**Texas Low-Level Radioactive
Waste Disposal Authority
7701 North Lamar, Ste. 300
Austin, TX 78752**