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NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING REPORT

by Mac Marquez



The last meeting of 1996 for the Authority's Board of Directors was held at the Sierra Blanca Courthouse on Thursday, November 14, 1996. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. and concluded shortly after 11:00 a.m. Following are highlights of the meeting.

Following an executive session, the Board approved the August meeting minutes. Dr. Guiberteau reported on the recently established compensation committee which was set up to compare the salaries of the Authority's exempt positions with those of comparable positions in the public and private sectors, as well as salaries of future employees anticipated for operation of the facility.

Tim Schaffner, Authority Director of Finance reported that the year to date budget is within the anticipated expenditures range. He also noted an adjustment to the fiscal year 1997 operating budget reflecting a decrease of \$2,310,000. The decrease is due to changes in facility construction plans which reduce the construction program's budget by \$2.1 million for fiscal year 1997. This decrease also reduces the financial incentive payments to Hudspeth County by \$210,000.

Authority General Counsel Lee Mathews reported that the hearings on the license application had begun with the naming of 28 parties. He also reported that the Texas-Maine-Vermont compact will not be considered by Congress in 1996, but will be re-introduced in Congress in early 1997. On the subject of legislation for the next session of the Texas Legislature, Mr. Mathews said that a bill changing the definition of low-level radioactive waste will likely be introduced.

Chief Engineer for the Authority, Ruben Alvarado, provided an update on the exploratory trench, demonstration trench cap, and site access projects. The exploratory trench has been completed and will allow scientists to study its constructability and confirm the area's geology. Mr. Alvarado reported that the trench shows that predictions provided by the drilling logs were pretty accurate. A soil test pad and construction of a trench sidewall liner are also part of this project which is expected to be completed by mid December. The demonstration cap project is expected to

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EXPLORATORY TRENCH AT THE FASKIN

An exploratory trench to demonstrate constructability and confirm the site's geology has been constructed at the Faskin Ranch in Hudspeth County, the site of Texas' proposed low-level radioactive waste (LLW) disposal facility.

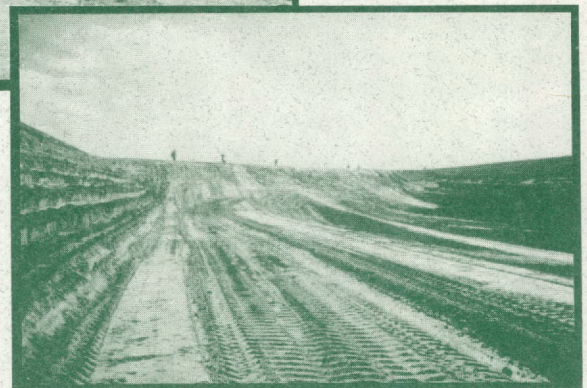
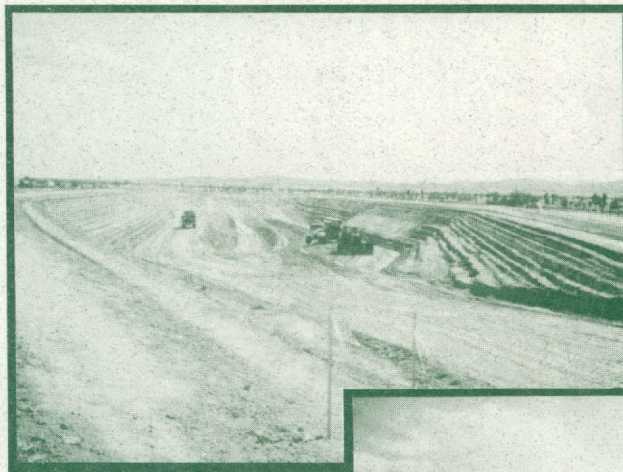
The 400-foot long, 210-foot wide and 32-foot deep trench is part of an exploratory project conducted by the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority (the Authority) to learn more about the construction of these cells as well as to evaluate monitoring and operations issues. "Because of the variability of soil types and large volumes of soil needing to be moved, it's important that we have good data on the excavation of the trenches so that when we get into construction, we know what to expect," said Bob Avant, Authority Deputy General Manager.

The Authority has applied for a LLW facility license from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC). Should a license be granted, the facility would accept waste from generators in the State. The proposed disposal method involves the placing of sealed, steel-reinforced concrete canisters containing LLW packages, in the trenches. LLW packages will be deposited in the canisters and grouted to form a monolithic structure. Once a particular trench has been filled to capacity, it will be covered with a 16-foot thick "cap" consisting of various layers of soil and other materials. The cap will then be covered with a vegetative cover to blend in with the natural landscape. Each trench will have lined sidewalls and floors as specified by LLW disposal regulations.

The exploratory trench is smaller than an actual trench to be used for disposal, and is located at the exact point where the first Class A disposal trench will be built once the facility is in operation. According to Avant, there are many advantages to conducting the project prior to operation. "This project will show us the best way to excavate the trench and stockpile materials," said Avant. "It will also show how the soils

can be classified and the soil liner can best be placed in order to meet the regulatory specifications. In addition, we will obtain specific performance data on the first Class A trench prior to facility operation," he added.

Excavation of the trench began on September 3, 1996 and was completed in early November. The entire test project will be completed before the end of December. The excavation process exceeded the anticipated schedule by approximately one week; however, the entire process was much easier than expected. "What we have learned to date is that the soils (at the site) are much more uniform than we originally anticipated, based on the site characterization



Photos of the exploratory trench excavation project: (Left) Workers use basic construction equipment to dig the trench. (Below) The sidewall "benching" effect is applied to aid in construction of the sidewall liners.

drilling logs. There is more than enough suitable material to build the liner system. The material can be processed and compacted to meet specifications with readily available construction equipment. Finally, it appears that excavation to depth will not require any

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TO THE POINT

-- by Rick Jacobi, General Manager

On November 14, the Authority's Board of Directors met in Sierra Blanca. Among things that were considered was the need for fire protection services at the Faskin Ranch. The Board approved a \$66,750.00 contract with the Sierra Blanca Volunteer Fire Department to provide those services for the Authority.

This contract will allow the Sierra Blanca Volunteer Fire Department to continue to provide service to others in the community as well. This is an example of how the Authority and local organizations can work together for the best interest of the whole community.

In addition to fire protection, the Authority is working with the community to determine how sustainable health care can be provided. Previous attempts to open a health clinic and operate an ambulance have not been successful. A consultant hired by the Authority is working on a countywide integrated health plan. Hopefully, her plan will identify ways that health care can be economically viable.

In the meantime, your County Commissioners have entered into a contract for a company in El Paso to provide ambulance service to the County. The contract is being paid for with planning and implementation funds from the Authority.

I look forward to a continued successful working relationship with all community organizations in Sierra Blanca.



Marquez Report

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begin next spring, but plans to begin construction of the interchange access from Interstate 10 have been delayed. The Authority is seeking permission to build a temporary construction access to the site from Interstate 10, rather than building the permanent access prior to receiving a license for the disposal facility.

Adoption of a revised contract with the Sierra Blanca Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) was also an agenda item. Mr. George Porter, VFD vice-president, updated the Board on the status of the organization and asked for the Board's support. Board Chairman Dr. Milton Guiberteau thanked Mr. Porter for his presentation and the \$66,750 contract was approved.

No comments were received from the public during the public comments portion of the meeting. ☺

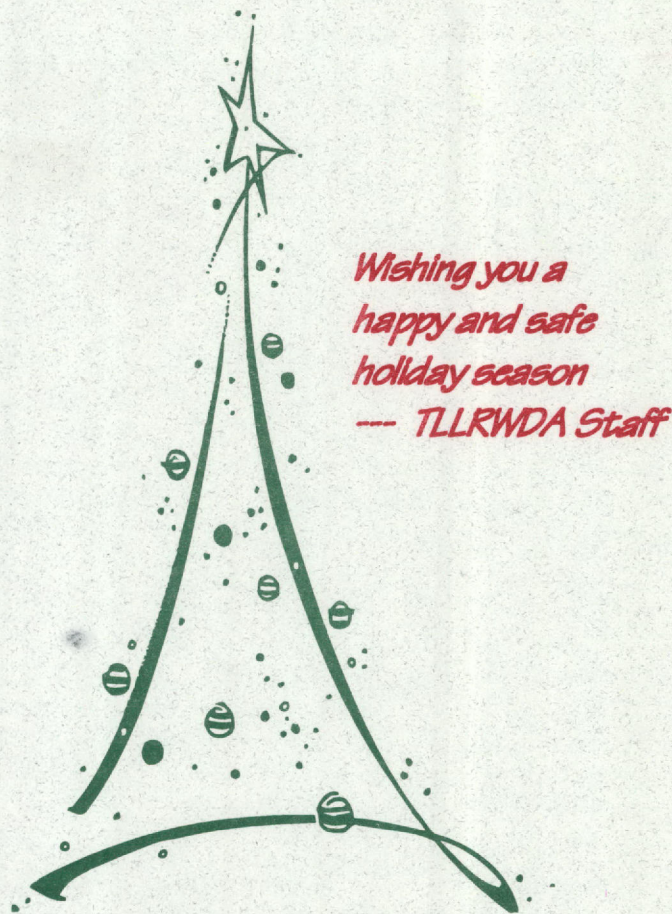
Public Hearing: TLLRWDA's Wastewater Discharge Permit

A public hearing on the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority's (the Authority) application to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) for a wastewater discharge permit has been set for Tuesday, December 17, 1996, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in Sierra Blanca, Texas. The hearing will be held at the Sierra Blanca School Gymnasium located at Ranch Road 1111 North.

Any stormwater runoff occurring at the proposed low-level radioactive waste disposal facility will be collected in retention ponds on-site. Should draining of the ponds be necessary, the wastewater would be discharged into a ditch and eventually flow into Grayton Lake, south of the site on the Faskin Ranch.

Because of the potential for occasional stormwater discharges, a TNRCC permit must be obtained.

Anyone interested in participating in the hearing as a party must be able to provide evidence of how they will be adversely and uniquely affected if a permit is granted to the Authority. For more information on the hearing please contact the Docket Clerk at the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH), Natural Resources Division, P.O. Box 13025, Austin, Texas, 78711-3025, (512) 475-4993. Anyone who wishes to attend the hearing and will need special accommodations should contact the TNRCC Chief Clerk at least two weeks prior to the hearing at (512) 239-3300 or 1(800) RELAY-TX (TDD).



Project Offers Advantages

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special equipment or techniques," Avant reported.

"Other advantages of conducting this project prior to facility construction are a time and money savings because we will have evaluated the entire trench excavation process in advance. We will have a good feel for the most effective construction equipment and the best excavation techniques," he concluded.

Because LLW is categorized into three classes based on radioactivity content, two sizes of trenches will be used for disposal. Class A trenches will measure 700 feet long, 211 feet wide, and 33 feet deep. All Class A LLW will be disposed of in the same size trench with the concrete canisters containing the waste packages stacked in layers of two. Each trench can hold a maximum of 1,320 canisters.

Class B and C waste will be disposed of in a shallower trench placed in a single layer. Class B/C trenches measure 446 feet long, 109 feet wide, and 23 feet deep. Each Class B/C trench holds 132 waste canisters, or 1/10 of the capacity of a Class A trench. ☺

DECEMBER 1996

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Varsity BB vs Tornillo 5:00 PM (Home)	4 Beta Sigma Phi Mtg., 6:30 PM (Scarborough Res.) Nat. Honor Society Mtg., 2:30 PM (Library)	5 Jr. High BB vs Van Horn 5:00 PM (Home) Varsity BB Trmmt. (Marfa)	6 <i>Happy Hanukkah</i> College Day 1:30 PM (San Elizario H.S.) Varsity BB Trmmt. (Marfa)	7 Beta Sigma Phi to Christmas Pageant (Cielo Vista Mall) Varsity BB Trmmt. (Marfa)
8	9 Commissioners Court Meeting 9:00 AM S.B. 4H Club Mtg. 7:00 PM (Co. Barn) Attendance Comm. Mtg., 3:00 PM	10 Exploratory Trench Tour, 5:15 PM (Faskin Ranch) School Board Mtg. 6:00 PM (Library) Varsity BB vs Marfa 5:00 PM (Home)	11 DeVry Institute of Technology School Present. TBA (Library) on 12/10/96	12	13	14 S. B. Invitational BB Trmmt. (Sierra Blanca)
15	16	17 Wastewater Permit Public Hearing 9:00 AM (Gym) Water Board Mtg. 5:00 PM (Water Dist. Off.)	18 Beta Sigma Phi Christmas Party 6:00 PM (Willis Residence) Nat. Jr. Hon. Soc. 2:30 PM (Library) Semester Exams	19 Christmas School Presentation (TBA) Christmas School Break Begins Semester Exams	20 End of 1st School Semester Teacher Work Day Varsity BB Trmmt. (Van Horn)	21 Varsity BB Trmmt. (Van Horn)
22	23 Commissioners Court Meeting 9:00 AM	24 STATE HOLIDAY COUNTY HOLIDAY	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i>	26 STATE HOLIDAY COUNTY HOLIDAY	27	28
29	30	31				

Invitation to the Faskin Ranch

The public is invited to visit the Faskin Ranch on Tuesday, December 10 for a tour of the exploratory trench. Authority Deputy General Manager Bob Avant will take participants out to the trench site beginning at 5:15 p.m. If you are interested in participating, please notify the Authority by **4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 6**. Please respond by contacting either Joe Castro or Lindsey Alvarez at the field office at 369-3391.

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

