

BLACKWELL JOURNAL TRIBUNE

Offering Daily Associated Press and NEA Full Service-Complete Kay and News Coverage (USPS 057-440) 20 Pages 25c Per Copy

Blackwell, Okla., Wednesday, Sept. 4, 1991

Environmental queries probed at meeting

By TERRY GROOVER
J-T. Managing Editor

Has the City of Blackwell been attempting to cover up environmental problems at the old Blackwell Zinc Smelter site? That was the question posed before members of the Blackwell City Commission Tuesday.

Bill Coussens, who along with his wife, Angie, are highly involved in environmental issues in Blackwell, probed the commissioners about a recent visit to the site by the Environmental Protection Agency and the city's decision to engage the same law firm which is representing AMAX, former owners of the site.

Officials from the city admitted that Blackwell has been placed on a low priority list and that some minor

testing has been conducted at the smelter site.

As for the decision to hire the same attorney to represent both the former owners and the city, City Attorney D.W. Boyd said it was a good move.

"We hired Shipley-Inhoffe two years ago. All we have done is sign an agreement that said they could represent Blackwell and AMAX in any action involving the smelter site," Boyd said.

Coussens then asked if having the same attorney would not provide a conflict of interest if a problem were found at the site.

"Right now, we are looking at what's there. We're trying to find out if there is a problem. AMAX is

footing the bill," Boyd explained.

He also said if a problem were to be found and the Environmental Protection Agency were to come in with a plan, Shipley-Inhoffe would not represent either side, and Blackwell would seek counsel of its own.

City Manager Joe Dickinson confirmed the EPA had completed some minor testing at the site, and Boyd said Blackwell had been placed on a site to be looked at.

"This not the first time they have looked at Blackwell. They also looked in 1975. That is why we have hired an engineering firm to do some testing. If we see a problem, we will run to the EPA. If there isn't a problem, we will run to the EPA with that as well," Boyd said.

"Blackwell is not on the 'Super Fund' list," Boyd said.

Coussens then asked why he had trouble getting the information from the city about the situation.

"This is our home. We understand your position and we would like to try to help. But we ask questions and they seem to be side-skirted. In my view, this has been covered up," Coussens said.

"We're not trying to cover anything up," Boyd said. "Sure, we haven't made it publicly known. I don't want to be the person to put Blackwell on the front page of the *Daily Oklahoman*. That is the reason we have been trying to keep this quiet."

"We have hired the finest legal

counsel we can find. We hired him so we couldn't get any better legal advise. We are not trying to cover anything up," Boyd expressed.

"We have been cooperating with the EPA," said Dickinson. "We want hard factual information. We have the best interest in the city at heart."

The smelter, which closed in the early '70s, currently houses the Blackwell Industrial Park. The EPA visited the site approximately two months ago and took samples from several different locations. The results of those tests have not been released, according to Dickinson.

Meanwhile, in other action by the city commission, they voted to ap-

(Please see QUERIES, P.12)

Queries

Continued from P.1

prove a request for payment from the Department of Commerce in the amount of \$48,325.50 for work completed on the Community Development Block Grant project.

They also voted to deny a request from the Kay County Extension Homemakers' Council to raise the amount of reimbursement from \$23,000 to \$43,000 should the extension building located at the fairgrounds be destroyed.

Commissioners expressed their concerns about the reimbursement section of the lease, stating should anything happen to the wood frame structure, the city could not afford to rebuild.

In business from the commissioners, Mayor Eileen Mackey told the

group that the local youth court would hold its first meeting on Thursday in the Study Center. That project has been more than a year in the making and would make Blackwell the third community in the state to implement such a program.

In Municipal Authority business, the authority voted to purchase an engine driven pump for the water department in the amount of \$47,613. This is part of the CDBG project.

Also approved were specifications for the final phase of the water-line project. The work will include the installation of a 12-inch main from Dewey to Fulton.

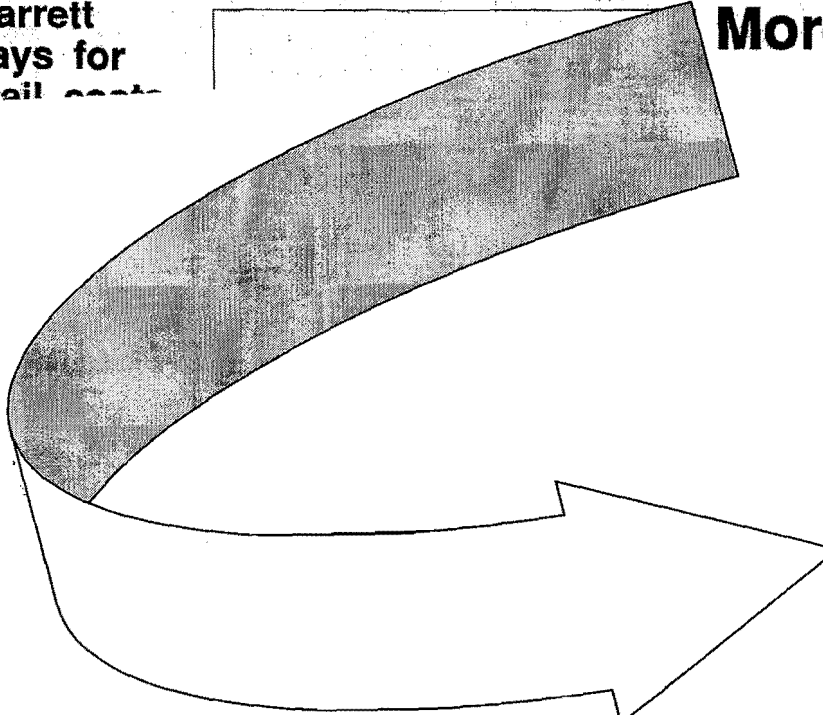
Also purchased was a portable wastewater sampler. The Isco sampler will meet future EPA specifications and costs \$3,087.

Garrett
pays for
mail costs

More personnel

covered up," Coussens said.
"We're not trying to cover anything up," Boyd said. "Sure, we haven't made it publicly known. I don't want to be the person to put Blackwell on the front page of the *Daily Oklahoman*. That is the reason we have been trying to keep this quiet."

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76th Year—No. 252

Blackwell, Okla. Tuesday, October 20, 1992

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Low levels of lead found EPA study shows park, school soil contaminated

By TERRY GROOVER
J-T Managing Editor

A section of the playground at one local school and a park were cordoned off today after officials learned that there were elevated levels of heavy metals in the ground.

Blackwell Mayor Eileen Mackey told the *Journal-Tribune* early Tuesday morning that a preliminary report from the Environmental Protection Agency showed amounts of lead in the soil samples that were taken at Washington Elementary Center and also at Beauty-Rodgers Park.

In August, officials with the EPA were in Blackwell to take soil samples throughout Blackwell as part of a comprehensive study to see if the city should be placed on the EPA's Superfund list.

On Friday, a preliminary report was received, according to Mackey. That report indicated levels of "bound lead" in a small area of Washington school and at a section of Beauty-Rodgers Park, both located on West College Ave.

Bound lead, according to Mackey, means that it is bound to other particles and is not a danger to anyone. However, because play-

City says no reason for alarm

ground areas are involved, the city will take no chances and will rope off the areas.

Also, Mackey said that someone would be at the school to keep children from playing near the contaminated area from after school until late in the evenings.

"The portions of the park that were sampled are covered with grass and there is no danger. It is a portion of the slag from the zinc smelter, and because it is bound to other particles, you can't inhale it, and even if you ate it, it wouldn't digest," she said.

"We have decided to take these steps because we feel it is a prudent thing to do and the people in Blackwell have a right to know," she said.

According to Mackey, the decisions were made on Monday during a conference call between the EPA, Blackwell city officials, school officials, AMAX and the law firm handling the situation.

School officials sent letters home today with children attending the school to explain the situation. Also, representatives from the State Health Department and AMAX are expected to be in attendance at to-

night's city commission meeting to discuss the problem with concerned residents.

"The State Health Department said you don't have to move kids or anything, but if you want to do something, do that. They are not worried about it, but we think it is the prudent thing to do," she said.

Assistant Superintendent Steve Hart said it was the school administration's feelings that there is no cause for alarm.

"But we are taking what we consider to be precautionary steps to insure that there is a safe area" for the students and staff, Hart said. "The action we are taking is under the advisement of the EPA."

The location in question at the school, according to Hart, is located west of the recently installed playground equipment near the new asphalt area.

Hart said city crews were roping off the area this morning and the teaching staff had been advised to keep the students away from the area.

The area in the park where the contaminated samples were taken

was located just east of the train. However, because the size of the contaminated area is not known, the entire playground area of the park has been placed off-limits, City Manager Joe Dickinson said.

According to the city manager, an independent environmental engineering firm was in Blackwell last Friday to take additional samples at Washington Center as well as Beauty-Rodgers Park. The results of those tests will indicate how much of the area is contaminated.

"Next week, the abatement will proceed," Dickinson said.

The abatement will include the removal of the contaminated dirt, which will be replaced by untainted top soil, he said.

"The city does have a responsibility to research, determine and take action in a progressive manner. That is what we have pursued over the last 4 1/2 years," Dickinson said.

"We want to assure the people of Blackwell that we are receiving and presenting, as correctly as humanly possible, the information. We are categorizing the hazards in a realistic manner," the city manager said.

Mackey, Dickinson and Hart all

(Please see SOIL, P8)



SOIL CONTAMINATION — Children at Washington Elementary Center enjoy a sunny morning, while nearby officials with the City of Blackwell cordon off an area that has been determined to be contaminated by lead. (J-T photo by CWA)

Candidates heat up final debate

By JOHN KING
AP Political Writer

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP) — President Bush and Bill Clinton today opened a two-week dash to Election Day fresh from a stormy debate marked by clashes over trust and taxes and Ross Perot's frequent, pointed attacks on Bush's foreign policy.

Bush's last debate performance was his best, repeatedly criticizing Clinton for a "dangerous" pattern of waffling on issues ranging from

Presidential Debate Outtakes on Taxes

Mr. and Mrs. America ... watch your wallet because his figures don't add up and he's going to sock it right to the middle-class taxpayer.

If the money does not come in to pay for these programs we will cut other government spending ... I am not going to raise taxes on the middle class to pay for

Chamber is informed of effects of motel tax, 2 state questions

By HELEN SEUBERT
J-T City Editor

The Blackwell Chamber of Commerce approved motions Monday supporting the Motel Tax and State Questions 649 and 650 for higher education capital improvements to be voted on Nov. 3.

Jon Ihrig, Chamber president, reported the executive committee had adopted a resolution in favor of the Motel Tax during a meeting

for construction, renovation and other capital improvements for state institutions of higher education and other state entities. The measure becomes law only if voters approve charity gaming laws and taxes proposed in SQ 650.

SQ 650 would enact new laws allowing and regulating charity gaming. It would impose a 1.5 cent tax on each bingo face or bingo set sold, a 10 percent gross receipts

ure. It's a question of continuing education today and enabling education later."

NOC still has buildings in use built when the college was established but the electrical system in one building must be replaced, Kinzer said. Renovation would cost as much as it would to erect a new building, he added. There are plans to build an auditorium at a cost of \$1 million.

care provider services and the implementation of various reforms in programs offered by the Department of Human Services.

Nursing homes would be required to pay \$3 per patient day, some facilities for mentally retarded people would pay 10 per-

centage, some way passing the costs on in the form of higher bills for health care and health insurance, Blackwell Regional Hospital Administrator Greg Martin added to the discussion.

Both Holder and Martin agreed that passage of the provider tax

BIA's new brochure is printed and will contain full color inserts including a community profile, Blackwell advantages and sites and locations.

BIA has been working with the Blackwell-Tonkawa Airport Authority to locate a remanufacturer of tractor engines facility at the airport employing 10 people.

An ad in Plants, Sites and Parks has resulted in an inquiry from an industrial supply company interested in a distribution site. He set the employment figure at 100 for now.

Forms to complete the V-shaped sign at the B-T Airport on I-35 have been received, he said. Closure of the \$100,000 term loan note with Eagle Iron is expected this week.

Long's report drew applause from the directors.

Speaking for the transportation committee, Bob Shepherd urged directors to push for resurfacing of Sixth Street and other streets, long neglected.

Irrig encouraged directors to attend the city commission meetings and said the Chamber's executive committee would execute a strategic plan of action in November including the Sixth Street project.

president for administration, detailing naming his labor secretary and trade representative.

by Jim Roberts

HARVEST LIFE Insurance Company

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE



Keeping our nation free isn't an easy job. It takes the combined efforts of dedicated people who can rise to meet any challenge. People like the proud men and women of the U.S. Navy. From the polar ice to the tropics, the Navy rises to the challenge every day. Representing us, defending us and making us proud of our country. All around the world, they're out there for America.

IT'S YOUR NAVY.

Soil

Continued from P1
strenuously pointed out that the report was only a preliminary report and that although there was reason for concern, there was no reason for alarm.

"If my child was going to Washington School, she would still be going," Mackey said.

"I want people to come tonight. I want to have public forums to educate groups. We want to handle this issue together because this is all of our problem," she said.

Area Stocks

The following is presented as a public service by Edward D. Jones and Co., Blackwell. Selected stock quotes are those at the close of the New York Stock Exchange. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 3,188.45 Monday up 14.04.

Stock	Close	Gain/Loss
DuPont	47 1/2	Unch
Phillips	26	+ 3/8
Wal-Mart	60 5/8	+ 1 1/8
Williams	35 3/4	+ 3/8
Int. Multifoods	27 1/4	+ 1/8
OG&E	33 1/8	- 1/4
Oxy	17	- 1/4
McDonald's	42 1/2	Unch
IBM	68 5/8	- 2 1/8
Arko	9 1/2	- 1/4
ConAgra	30	Unch
GE	76 3/8	+ 1/8
Smith Int.	9 7/8	+ 1/4
Volume traded	227,641,660	

Hospital Notes

Blackwell Regional Hospital
DISMISSED
Linda Boyer, Blackwell

Wheat Prices

Blackwell CO-OP	
Wheat	\$3.11
Clyde CO-OP	
Wheat	\$3.13

Wheat prices are 10 a.m. quotations and are subject to change.

Walter Strawn
will be celebrating his
85th Birthday
October 23rd



He will be honored with a dinner Sunday by his family in Guthrie. Anyone wanting to remember him may address cards to 223 Lloyd

Happy Birthday Dad
We Love You

Jane, Jack, Ron
and Families