

WEST TEXAS Country Trader



The West Texas Country Trader is a Supplement of:

Abernathy
Weekly Review
The Canyon Arts

The Castro County News
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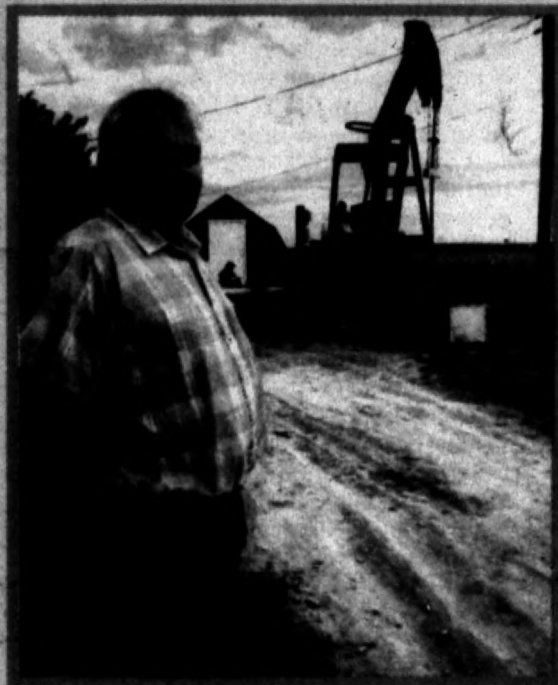
Plainview Daily Herald
Ralls News

The Slatonite
The Tullis Herald

Thursday, October 6, 1994

OIL PUMPS TO THE Farm:

PLAINVIEW MAN
BELIEVES OIL PUMP JACKS
COULD BE UTILIZED TO
PUMP IRRIGATION WATER . . .



Ramsower's pump jack delivers H₂O . . .

Special to AgReview

PLAINVIEW — Oilfield jacks and irrigation wells, each providing their own wealth, are familiar sights in the South Plains area.

Vernon Ramsower of Plainview has developed a reciprocating water pump that joins the technology of the two. Believing in the possibility, coupled with years of trial and error, and prodded by comments of "that can't be done" has paid off, he says.

"We have been told many times even by engineers and oilfield people, that it is impossible to pump irrigation water with an oilfield jack," Ramsower said.

He has been working on the project for many years.

"At first we built a small pump and put it in a well with a small jack," he recalls. "Then we put it on a windmill and it displaced water both ways. Now we have a larger pump that does the same thing."

The pump displaces water, pumping on the downstroke as well as on the upstroke.

Although the pump will not throw a steady stream due to the stroke change, it will average 400 gallons per minute, Ramsower claims.

See PUMP, Page 3

'WIT AND WISDOM' COLUMN RUNS WEEKLY

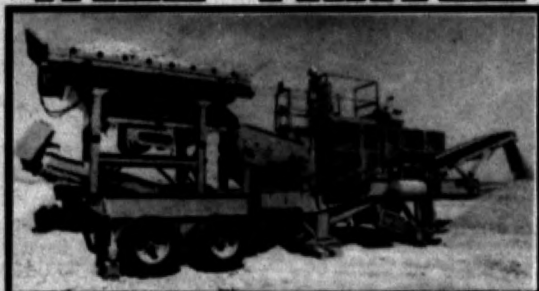
'Dangerous Don' debut this week in Country Trader

"Wit & Wisdom of Dangerous Don" weekly column is appearing in an ever-growing list of publications across the country. A radio feature under the same heading is heard every morning on the 52-station INTERSTATE RADIO NETWORK out of Chicago and is now being syndicated to a number of local radio markets.



See DANGEROUS, Page 5

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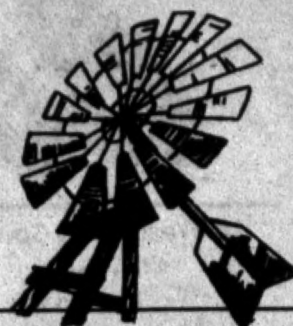
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AgReview



South Plains

Ag News

Oct. 25

WASTEWATER
Seminar sponsored by the public education committee of the Water Environment Association of Texas, South Plains Section in Lubbock. Information is available by calling Blas Gomez at 767-2349 or Martha Ellerbrook at 767-2498.

Nov. 29-30, Dec. 1

AMARILLO FARM & RANCH SHOW at the Amarillo Civic from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Show to feature more than 725 booth spaces indoor with an additional 100 booths next door. Texas Wheat Producers Association, Panhandle Farm Management Symposium.

Cattle group says slow down endangered species act

FORT WORTH — Congress must reform the federal endangered species law to protect property owners from agency regulators that have gone wild with power, a spokesman for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association told elected officials at a congressional field hearing

in Cleburne Sept. 16.

TSCRA is a livestock trade association based in Fort Worth with 15,000 members who own or control approximately two million head of cattle on millions of acres of land primarily in Texas. "Our land and our livelihoods are impacted by the feder-

al Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended," said Chaunce Thompson, a Breckenridge, Texas, rancher who serves as TSCRA's first vice president.

The hearing, chaired by Rep. Charles Stenholm, D-Stamford, chairman of an agriculture subcommittee, was also attended by Reps. Pete Geren, D-Fort Worth, Chet Edwards, D-Waco, Joe Barton, P-Ermis and several state officials. The purpose of the hearing was to learn how the endangered species law is impacting farmers and ranchers in Texas and how the U.S. Department of Agriculture may be involved.

TSCRA believes that "the protection of endangered species is a legitimate and worthwhile function of society which can be achieved without driving Texas cattle producers out of business," Thompson said. However, the current law is broken and "things are going to get worse for ranchers, not better, unless something is done by Congress..."

Cattle producers will experience financial hardship if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designates "critical habitat" in 33 Central Texas counties to further protect under the endangered species law the golden-cheeked warbler, a migratory songbird, Thompson said. He gave several examples where landowners in these counties have already been harmed financially since the warbler was declared endangered in 1990.

The law requires federal agencies to deny landowners access to federal programs if the wildlife agency determines such activities might harm species and their habitat, Thompson said.

Report cites fraud, misuse in disaster aid program

By ROBERT GREENE

AP Farm Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two investigations have uncovered fraud and misuse in an Agriculture Department aid program that gives billions of dollars to farmers who lose crops to weather disasters.

Farmers have inflated crop losses, lied about acreage they planted and failed to harvest crops when prices fell below what they were getting in disaster aid, say investigators at the Agriculture

Department and the U.S. Senate.

"Producers can earn more in a disaster year than they earn in a normal year," the department's Office of Inspector General said in a report.

The aid program has paid billions of dollars to farmers who suffered crop losses caused by the Midwest floods of 1993 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

The separate investigations by the Inspector General's office and the Senate Agriculture Committee focused on "non program" crops like fruits, melons, tomatoes and

squash, and ornamental crops like trees, flowers and turf.

Those crops were singled out because no farm support program exists for them that would enable the government to keep records of acres planted and harvested.

Many overpayments occurred because the producers never harvested crops. Harvesting is the highest cost of production for most of those crops, while disaster payments are based on market prices. In some cases, producers claimed disaster losses rather than harvesting or marketing their

crops when prices had fallen.

One group of owners got \$200,000 for crop losses from last year's Midwest floods, despite the fact that just three weeks before the damage, they had paid only \$138,000 for the property.

The Senate Agriculture Committee's report looked at just eight crops in nine states, and uncovered \$92.5 million in questionable payments between 1988 and 1993.

The report looked at disaster payments for cantaloupes, blueberries, cucumbers, peaches,

squash, tomatoes, turnip greens and watermelons in nine states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

The report noted that Texas, for example, was the third-ranked watermelon producer in this country, accounting for 17 percent of the nation's crop. But the state was the top recipient of disaster payments for watermelons, accounting for 45 percent of payments.

Grant B. Buntrock, the adminis-

Prospects are good for a record cotton crop

Prospects remain good for a record 19 million bale U.S. crop, world production close to expected consumption of 86 million bales, with stocks sufficient to meet market needs. As a result, seasonal price weakness seems likely this fall during peak harvest.

September weather has been generally favorable for cotton in the Southeast, Delta and Western growing regions. In the Delta, early harvested acreage indicates exceptionally good yields.

Acreage was increased by 40,000 acres in Georgia to 890,000 in September, up from 600,000 acres in 1993. However, the Southwest, Texas cotton yields were lowered by the dry, hot summer weather.

The August rains came too late. The rains delayed harvest in the Central and Coastal regions and reduced cotton quality and yields in the Upper Coast and Blacklands areas.

West Texas dryland cotton has suffered from too little



COTTON MARKET UPDATE

Dr. Carl Anderson

moisture with abandonment of large acreages and low yields across about 2-3 million acres. However, Lubbock irrigated cotton of almost 2 million acres remains good.

The U.S. crop may turn out close to the 19 million bales estimated in September with total use about 18 million. This

leaves room for both production and consumption to change a little and still have 4.5 million or more bales to carryover to the 1995 crop.

With stocks-to-use currently about 24 percent, the target for 1995/96 crop will be 29.5 percent. Thus, a lower ARP than this year's 11 percent appears likely for next season.

If price moves seasonally lower this fall, a "storage hedge" using a call option in March, May or July futures is a strategy that you may wish to consider. In recent years, the average seasonal price change has been 8-cents per pound from the low in November to a high in July.

Although it is early and much uncertainty lies ahead, the price for 1995/96 crop may be somewhat lower than it was for this year's crop.

(Dr. Carl Anderson, Cotton Marketing Specialist with the Texas A&M Extension Service, is an authority on the cotton markets.)

Dangerous Don

"A Cotton-pickin Episode"

Howdy, neighbors!
Dr. I.M. Smart, Windy Valley's most illustrious product, lectured we local yokels the other night about the wonders of the fantastic computer we all have up here in our craniums.

Fact is, he said that we are all like a programmer feedin' a computer, except that, we are both the programmer and the computer. Then he really jangled my juices. He said, "We perceive, believe and then behave!"

It all got me to reminiscin'.
When I was a boy, my favorite thing was visitin' Grandpa and Granny DeBord's farm out on Tate's Creek, about halfway between Windy Valley and Quail Creek.

One afternoon, I sat on the big front porch overlookin' the mesquites and shinnery patches scattered willy-nilly down the hillside, windin' their way to the edge of the creek. In the care-free breeze of that summer's afternoon, I was readin' a sports article in one of Papa's magazines.

I remember the article, "Will We Ever Break the Four-Minute Mile Barrier?", like I read it only yesterday. Way back then, no mere human being had ever run a mile in under four minutes. The thrust of the article was that it is quite unthinkable that the human animal will ever run a mile in under four minutes, unaided.

That ole boy was dead wrong. What had reminded me of that article was Dr. Smart's illustration of perceivin' believin' and behavin'. He talked about the supposed impossibility of the sub-four minute mile. He added, "A few years ago, Roger Bannister looked at the situation differently. You could say, he fed new information into the computer of his mind, information that concluded that the sub-four-minute mile was possible after all. In 1954 he became the first human

bein' to run the mile in under four minutes. This changed the perceptions, beliefs and behavior of others, and John Landy broke Bannister's record a month later. Today, a lot of runners do it!"

Smart sold me. Heck, if my subconscious mind is the world's greatest computer, and if I can operate that rascal as both the programmer and the computer, well, there's no stoppin' ole Dangerous. By thunders, it's a new day! Get out of the way world! Dangerous Don has more than just a tiger in his tank. He's got a computer runnin' overtime twixt his ears! Reckon there's nothin' holdin' me back!



Illustration By Chris Johnson

There might be one thing: You know, "garbage in equals garbage out." But, shucks, I can just blame that on the computer like they do when they make a mistake down at Security Bank.

Course, old Dangerous knows that Roger Bannister was not the first human bein' to run a mile in under four minutes. I personally broke that record ten years earlier when brother chased me across the cotton patch swingin' a live bull snake!

He didn't even come close to catchin' me. That's one cotton-pickin' episode I'll never forget!

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PUMP, from Pg. 1

At the top or bottom the stream may drop to 200 gallons more or less, but when the arms are crossed, it will throw a full six-inch stream, according to Ramsower.

He also has a larger pump than one he has installed at his home west of Plainview.

The displacing weight and brass tubing and shaft should give a free drop on the downstroke, Ramsower pointed out.

Fifty percent of the water is displaced using the weights on the arms of the oilfield jack to balance the weight on the upward stroke.

"It is unbelievable how much fuel this type of pump

will save because the oilfield jack uses a much smaller motor than traditional irrigation motors," said Ramsower.

"The farmer will not need a gearhead, only a small motor on the jack."

Ramsower said he has used a natural gas motor and will be trying electricity as well.

Ramsower and his part-

ner, Kirk Cobb, a Dallas-based attorney and accountant, hold a patent on the Reciprocating Water Pump.

Although it is not yet on the market, it will be as soon as they find a manufacturer, he says.

"We are proud of the pump we have developed and wanted to let the farmers know of its potential," Ramsower added.

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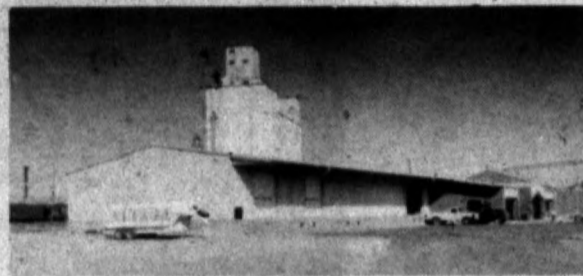
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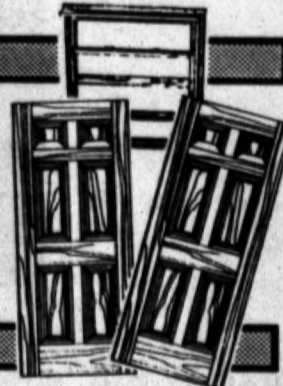
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Photographer: Dana Fineman

DANGEROUS, Pg

"Dangerous" Don, the reluctant mayor of the mythical town of Windy Valley over in Windsor County, weaves a verbal web of wit and wisdom based on the ideas, concepts and lifestyle of his friends and neighbors in his home grown, located eight miles off the Interstate ("smack-dab in the middle of my heart") and populated by "8,203 Really Nice People and One Really Grouchy Person."

"Dangerous" said he reckoned he wouldn't much want to live anywhere else. He said he feels just like Bubba Barfield felt when he heard that eight million people live in New York City. Bubba said, "What a shame. All these people so far from everything."

You will be reminded of people you know as "Dangerous" Don tells about his relatives and neighbors like Billy Bob "Bubba" "Junebug" Baker, with whom he started the first grade over at Quail Creek School; Uncle Henry Lee, his favorite uncle who sometimes consumes too much of that Buck Creek Holler 'shine; Joabb Rollins, the likeable president of Security Bank; J.C. Shields, one of Windsor County's leading farmers and number one bird dog lover; and, Ruby "Don't Take Your Love to Town" Blabber, Windy Valley's leading grouch and gossip ("We used to all take

turns but now we've just turned it over to Ruby because she's so good at it!"). In a recent interview, a reporter asked, "Dangerous," are all of those stories about the people in Windy Valley, true?" He replied, "They're everyone, one hundred percent, possibly true."

"I get out in the world some. It's all moving so fast. The world has changed a lot since I was growing up in that old clapboard house out on the Windsor County Line. Rockets are soaring in outer space, men walk on the moon, change is taking place everywhere; knowledge is exploding all over us faster than we can possibly absorb it. It's all a bit much and if we don't take the time every now and then to escape the concrete and wires and return to a place like Windy Valley, we could lose our way," he added.

"Dangerous" really warmed to his subject as he "It's a fast-moving world out there. Everything is break-neck speed and everything that is nailed down, is threatening to come loose. It can all make you plumb dizzy, and if we don't pause every now and then to escape every now and then and "re-affirm our roots," we've had it as a civilized people. Windy Valley is roots; rock-solid and for sure. We just have to remember that in a world of change, the most important things must not change: values, belief systems, integrity, human decency, call it whatever you will — if we are to survive these things just have to remain in place."

You are sure to identify with and be amused and entertained with such characters as Delbert Crabtree, the laziest man in Windsor County; Preacher Fike, everybody's favorite preacher; boisterous, "Big Jim" Cox, who is as arrogant as he is rich; Marvin "Digger" Doty, head Undertaker at Wilson & Womack Hardware, Furniture & Funeral Parlor; C.L. Barfield, one of the best men who ever lived in Windsor County, and many more.

Many of the features are based on conversations over early morning coffee down at Fanny Mae's "Why Go Elsewhere to be Cheated" Coffee Shop & Cafe. Other stories come from Qlo Neely's Service Station & Branch Post Office, or from social gatherings

out at the Windsor Lake Country Club & Bingo Parlor.

Doctor I.M. Smart, one of Windy Valley's leading products who has achieved some fame as a big-time author and professor over at the big university, furnishes "Dangerous" a lot of fodder for his articles and features, along with, his favorite motivator, Zap Zapper, "the Big Z from Big D," who really jangles old "Dangerous" juices.

Jay Truitt, Farm Director at WHB in Kansas City called "Dangerous" Don, "the red-neck . Garrison Keillor."

Sunni Stevens, popular on-air personality at the INTERSTATE RADIO NETWORK said, "Dangerous Don is the Will Rogers of the 90's"

"Dangerous" Don says, "I really like doing these little features. They aren't rocket science but a person just might pick up a gem here and there that could prove helpful. I've about decided that everything I really needed to how, I learned at my mama's knee."

"Dangerous" Don is also enjoying a growing reputation as an entertainer since the release of his new comedy album, "Gettin"

Down in the Country with Dangerous Don," on NSN TAPES, in spring, 1994. The album is enjoying steady sales and the result has been a growing schedule of personal appearances at dinner shows, banquets and conventions across the country.

You can begin enjoying the "Wit & Wisdom of Dangerous Don" columns in the West Texas Country Trader beginning today, and presented for your entertainment by MRL, Merchandise Recyclers & Liquidators, 100 S. Pierce in Amarillo. (Write Dangerous Don may at MRL, 100 S. Pierce, Amarillo)

viduals doing business with the Agriculture Department. Espy received free tickets, lodging, travel and used government money to lease a car.

will happen late today or tomorrow, probably today.

A White House official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said Espy planned to meet with White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta today. It was unclear whether his resignation was requested by Panetta or Clinton.

An independent counsel is trying to determine whether Espy violated federal law by accepting gifts from organizations or indi-

viduals doing business with the Agriculture Department. Espy received free tickets, lodging, travel and used government money to lease a car.

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Conditions favorable for fishing at a few West Texas area lakes

AUSTIN — The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has reported the following fishing conditions across West Texas last week.

ARROWHEAD: Water clear, 78 degrees, 4 feet below normal level; black bass slow; crappie good 12-18 feet deep in lake and at docks on minnows and jigs; sand bass fair; catfish very good on cheese bait and stink bait.

BAYLOR: Water clear, 13 feet below normal level; black bass good to 6 pounds early on buzz baits and later on plastic worms; crappie fair on minnows; catfish slow.

FORT PHANTOM HILL: Water clear, 74 degrees, 5.5 feet below normal level; black bass good on chartreuse cranks; crappie good on small minnows; hybrid stripers slow; catfish good but small on minnows.

FRYER: Water clear, 80 degrees, 4 feet below normal level; everything is slow.

GRANBURY: Water clear, 78 degrees, normal level; black bass good on topwaters; stripers fair 20-30 feet deep on shad-type baits; sand bass good in schools on silver spoons; crappie good 20 feet deep on small minnows; catfish good 14-20 feet deep on cheese bait.

GREENBELT: Water clear, 70 degrees, 6 feet below normal level; large-

mouth bass good to 3.5 pounds on artificials; small-mouth bass fair to 4.5 pounds on artificials; walleye slow; sand bass slow; crappie slow; catfish good to 11 pounds on minnows and night crawlers.

KEMP: Water clear, 7

feet below normal level; everything is slow, but the gates have been closed.

MEREDITH: Water clear, 78 degrees, normal level; largemouth bass fair on cranks; smallmouth bass fair off rocky points on jigs with minnows.

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Espy resignation expected

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ag Secretary Mike Espy, under investigation for accepting gifts from people or companies that do business with his agency, plans to resign, administration officials said today.

The former Miss. congressman, one of four blacks in the Clinton Cabinet, is expected to submit his resignation as early as today, said two administration officials, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"It's imminent," said one of the officials. "It



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1988-1992 Fullsize Pickups & Suburbans (Shaded)	\$143 ⁰⁰
1993 Fullsize Pickups & Suburbans (Shaded)	\$198 ⁰⁰
S-10 & Jimmy Blazers (Shaded)	\$90 ⁰⁰

Ford Pickups

1980-1986 Fullsize Pickups (Shaded)	\$98 ⁰⁰
1980-1986 Fullsize Pickups (Tinted)	\$92 ⁰⁰
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Nelson Mandela: Salesman for South Africa

By STEVEN A. HOLMES
c.1994 *Emerge Magazine*

As he rose to his feet to address an audience in Washington's Omni Shoreham Hotel last fall, Nelson Mandela had undergone a transformation.

He had gone from being a lawyer, a revolutionary and an imprisoned martyr to being a head of state in waiting.

He was about to try his hand at being a salesman.

"We appeal to you who are important players in the world economy to seize this historic moment of the lifting of economic sanctions on South Africa to look afresh at our country in terms of investment, trade and other economic opportunities," the salesman said.

"We are aware that we live in a world in which there is intense competition for scarce capital," he continued. "We are therefore determined to ensure that our own country becomes an attractive destination for the enormous capital resources held by the institutions you represent."

The role of pitching for South Africa is forcing the African National Congress (ANC) to undergo an intellectually wrenching and politically precarious evolution away from its socialist roots and toward a more market approach to economic development.

Where once they sounded like Karl Marx, Mandela and the ANC leadership have in recent months acted more like Margaret

Thatcher. The change has not always sat well with the rank-and-file South African.

Yet it is a role the ANC and Mandela feel they must play to keep South Africa from plunging into political chaos, ethnic strife and economic collapse.

When the ANC seized the reins of political power in the April elections, it inherited a fading economy, a white population worried that its standard of living might slip and a black constituency impatient for the basic necessities: jobs, housing and education.

"People justifiably ask, 'Where are the fruits of the long years of struggle and sacrifice?'" says Trevor Manuel, former director of the ANC's department of economic planning, who is now a cabinet member in the new coalition government.

South Africa's rate of economic growth has declined steadily since 1965, even before the country tumbled into a crippling three-year recession in 1990. It was buffeted by high

inflation in the 1980s and low investment by domestic banks and government-run industries.

Sanctions, high tariffs and an insular mentality among the country's whites spawned a manufacturing sector geared toward the domestic market rather than export.

Without engaging in international competition, much of South Africa's industry has grown inefficient; 30 percent of its plants rely on obsolete technology.

Despite exchange controls aimed at preventing capital from leaving the country, South Africans sent more than \$3 billion abroad in the first nine months of 1993, according to the South African Reserve Bank, a measure of the initial lack of confidence many whites feel in the change of power.

And there is the problem of the apartheid legacy.

About 45 percent of blacks are jobless. About 60,000 white farmers own 87 percent

of the land. Per capita income for whites is 9.5 times that of Africans.

Of South Africa's nearly 38 million people, 12 million don't have access to clean drinking water; 21 million do not have adequate sanitation, including toilets.

A black South African child has a greater chance of dying before age 5 than of completing high school.

Alleviating the stark disparities between South Africa's 30.8 million black, Asian and mixed-race people and the country's 7 million whites is both a moral and political imperative for the ANC.

Yet a program to radically redistribute the country's wealth through high taxes or the confiscation of white-owned property could set off another flight of white capital or an exodus of skilled whites.

More important, it could scare off the type of foreign investment the ANC craves.

Even with its problems, South Africa is hardly an economic

basket case. It has vast wealth — gold, platinum, coal, diamonds and other natural resources.

Years of being shut out of international credit markets means its external debt is relatively low. It has good roads, ports and telephone systems. It boasts a sophisticated banking system and a functioning stock exchange.

Since the lifting of sanctions, capital from overseas has flooded the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, boosting its value by 21 percent late last year.

"I think it's a fascinating place and a real opportunity," says Ernest Green, a Lehman Brothers managing director, who toured the country on a U.S. trade mission.

The Clinton administration, believing a stable, growing South

African economy could help bring prosperity to the whole of Southern Africa, has chipped in with some help.

President Clinton pledged to make the United States a full partner with the new South African government, offering additional trade benefits and \$600 million over three years for the post-apartheid society.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will be responsible for \$528 million of the amount, tripling its current contribution of \$166 million, for such projects as jobs and business development, health and education services, and housing investment guarantees and improvements.

A congressional ban had allowed USAID to help only nongovernmental organizations.

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Immigrant sticks to plan, meets with success

By JANE BAIRD
Houston Chronicle

HOUSTON — From the time he first came to the United States 15 years ago, Brij Agrawal imposed a rule on himself: He would spend no more than half of whatever he earned.

Even then, as a 17-year-old immigrant from India who could not speak English, Agrawal already had decided on his goal. He wanted to own a manufacturing business, and he would need money to achieve it.

His determination has paid off. Agrawal not only has bought a metal fabrication company but has seen that company grow and diversify, at a time when many of his competitors have gone out of business. ABM Industries racked up sales of \$1.5 million last year and about \$2.5 million so far this year.

What's more, Agrawal has financed ABM without turning to a bank or investor group. He has used his own savings, the backing of other members of his close-knit family and a 20-year loan from the former owner of the company.

Agrawal started his career by working odd jobs. He soon began taking night classes toward a mechanical engineering degree at

the University of Houston.

After about a year, he began working full-time as a drafting trainee for an industrial design company. He worked for this and a similar company over the next nine years, advancing to design engineer and finally supervisor of an engineering group. He also finished his engineering night classes in 1986.

In 1989, Agrawal felt ready to buy his own business, but he got another job as a lead engineer for M.W. Kellogg, he says. "My purpose in going to M.W. Kellogg was to see how they operate. I had no experience in business management."

Meanwhile, he spent three or four hours every evening looking for the right business. He read newspaper advertisements, drove to different parts of town, met with business brokers.

He wanted to get involved in manufacturing large custom industrial equipment, but soon realized he did not have enough resources, he said. "I then decided to look at any kind of manufacturing."

He perused dozens of businesses for sale before locating Redco, a small Pasadena metal fabrication company that also did maintenance work for petro-

chemical companies. The husband and wife owners had operated the company since 1973 and wanted to retire. Sales were running about \$250,000 per year, and the company had no debt. It employed five people, excluding the owners.

Agrawal knew it was a tough business and that many fabrication companies were going under, he said. But he believed his engineering and drafting skills would give the company a competitive advantage.

Agrawal had saved nearly \$150,000 by then, enough for the down payment and initial working capital. He negotiated with the former owner to pay off the rest over 20 years. If he needed any additional operating capital, he said, he could borrow it from two of his brothers or five or six cousins.

The deal closed in May 1990, and he renamed the company ABM Industries. Business was slow for the first two or three months. Agrawal lost some former clients, but he also brought in new clients from contacts in his previous jobs.

One big boost to earnings came from the Japanese conglomerate Bridgestone/Firestone. Redco had earned about \$30,000 to \$40,000 per

year supplying Bridgestone with steel panels that it used to make marine fenders for sale to port authorities worldwide.

Agrawal focused his attention on increasing that business through price, quality and on-time delivery and offered to assist with some of the engineering design, he says. Each job requires custom design, depending on the depth of the water, the size of ships, the types of dock support and other factors. Engineers came from Japan to visit the shop.

"We used to bring most of these parts from Japan," says Michael Hioki, president of Bridgestone Engineered Products Co., a Bridgestone subsidiary in Nashville, Tenn. The company first hired Redco to supplement its Japanese production.

Then, "because of yen appreciation, Japanese production was no longer competitive, and

we switched to U.S.-made," Hioki said. Bridgestone is now exporting from the United States to customers abroad, from Hong Kong to Oman to the Bahamas.

ABM is Bridgestone's only U.S. supplier, Hioki says. "We know there are so many fabricators in the United States, but we do not like to shop. We keep one supplier. We ask for loyalty to the company in keeping the price low and good quality. A longtime relationship in which we can trust each other is most important."

In 1993, ABM did about \$500,000 in business for Bridgestone alone, Agrawal says.

The company's sales went from \$350,000 in 1990, to about \$800,000 in 1991, to \$1 million in 1992, and \$1.5 million last year. Agrawal reinvested profits in the company.

ABM soon outgrew its Pasadena location. In October 1993, Agrawal

bought a new 40,000-square-foot shop on 15 acres in north Houston. He paid \$500,000 for the property and another \$500,000 to renovate it, and moved in by the end of the year.

His work force then amounted to 20 to 25 people. "We decided to hire more people and grow," he says.

He put an advertisement in the newspaper, and among the people he interviewed was Larry Potts. Potts, a mechanical engineer with a long career in engineering and production, had worked for a California company as head of its Houston operation with 285 people. The company had downsized the office out of existence and left him unemployed for the first time in his life.

Agrawal first hired Potts as a sales manager and soon made him vice president of operations. Potts brought in Guy Harrell to head a new sales staff.



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