



Campaign trail

Morales visits West Texas voters in bid for Senate

West Texas • 1C



Trip of Revelations

Sacred stones speak to local French teacher on how history colored France's ancient abbeys

West Texas Living • 1E

Big bulle

The Big 12, college football's newest superconference, is ready to

Sports • 1D



SAN ANGELO

STANDARD-TIMES

Serving West Texas Since 1884

SUNDAY

AUGUST 11, 1996

164 PAGES

PROPOSED CITY BUDGET

Projected City Revenue 1996-97



* - numerous city fees and interest on investments

Property Tax Allocation 1996-97

The following pie chart shows projected 1996-97 expenditures for these eight areas. Dotted areas indicate what percentage of each area's money is to come from property tax.

City studies water options

By WILLIAM TAYLOR
Staff Writer

San Angelo city leaders will consider options such as recycling treated wastewater, cloud seeding and new conservation practices as the drought continues to strain the city's water resources.

The drought has already prompted the city to draw from the O.C. Fisher and O.H. Ivie reservoirs to relieve the demand on Twin Buttes and Lake Nasworthy.

"We are as low as we have ever been in our local lakes," former City Manager Stephen Brown said.

The city's water storage in local lakes - Twin

Buttes, O.C. Fisher and Nasworthy - totals just 45,124 acre feet of water, according to Public Works Director Will Wilde.

An acre-foot is the amount of water needed to cover an acre a foot deep and San Angelo uses about 18,000 to 20,000 acre feet annually.

And with just more than two years' supply of water in local lakes, San Angeloans likely would have already found themselves restricted to watering their

lawns only once or twice a week - if at all - if it wasn't for the availability of the out-of-town resources like the Ivie Reservoir, according to a draft of drought contingency plans.

And still more restrictions could become law as the city shapes its long-range policies, city officials said last week.

City Manager Tom Adams has already asked city staff to gather conservation information from the Texas Water Development Board, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission and other cities and water districts.

Please see WATER, Page 13A



WATER

Continued from Page 1A

He hopes the staff will bring some proposals to the city council by late September.

But Adams cautioned that he doesn't see the conservation plan as a "quick fix" in reaction to declining water supplies but rather a long-term approach for maximizing resources.

"Conservation in West Texas needs to be a way of life that we live with and deal with on a daily basis to make our water supplies last," Adams said.

Proposed conservation steps in the city of San Angelo's Water Management Plan include proactive approaches such as monitoring water mains for leaks and requiring water-conserving plumbing in new construction.

Those are already in place, Wilde said.

The plan also suggests various levels of water restrictions to enforce in the event of drought or mounting demand.

For example, under mild conditions the city might ask residents to limit watering to between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. and to refrain from washing cars.

Under moderate conditions, the city might enforce those watering

hours with fines.

And under severe conditions, the city might outlaw the watering of lawns, washing of cars and filling of swimming pools, according to the plan.

Wilde said the city already has reached moderate conditions as defined by the plan.

"Water levels are still adequate," he said, "but they are declining at such a rapid rate that a more serious problem will result in the very near future if some type of formal action is not taken.

"Reservoir levels, well levels or river flows are low enough to disrupt some major economic activity or cause unacceptable damage to a vital ecosystem."

But Adams said the availability of Lake Ivie keeps the city from needing to rush into stricter water use rules.

The city has rights to 15,000 acre feet annually from Ivie.

And the Colorado Municipal Water District is confident that water will remain available.

John Grant, general manager of the district, noted that Ivie is still 70 percent full, and an engineering analysis of its staying power remains positive.

Even if the area repeats the drought conditions of the 1950s - the worst on record - Ivie has enough water to keep meeting its users' needs, Grant said.

Still, water from Ivie is costly - an estimated \$1,000 a day to pump 12 million gallons.

The city set aside reserves to handle those costs during repairs to Twin Buttes, but the need to conserve remains, Adams said.

One option the city will discuss this week is a plan to pump treated wastewater to farmers in the Tom Green County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1 to use for irrigation.

The city currently uses the treated wastewater from its sewage plant to irrigate the city farm, but there is enough to supply the farmers who use Twin Buttes water to irrigate.

Adams said rough estimates indicate a pipeline would cost \$2.5 million; grants or low-interest loans could help pay for the project.

The city's share of the costs has not yet been negotiated, but the plan has merit because it would reduce the load on Twin Buttes, Adams said.

Another option for the city is cloud seeding.

So far city officials have been reluctant to support cloud-seeding efforts, but with the area in desperate need of the long, broad rain spells that can refill reservoirs, that's an issue the city may explore, Adams said.

The city could make its participation contingent on the level of Twin Buttes. If the lake got high

enough so that the Bureau of Reclamation needed to release water to facilitate repairs, the city could drop out of the cloud-seeding effort, Adams suggested.

Despite the dry conditions and the options the city is considering, Adams said he expects conditions to improve.

"It is not unusual for San

Angelo and this area to experience dry seasons," he said. "But the weather patterns of the past indicate that after a dry year or two, wetter seasons return."