

## **APPENDIX C**

Public relations and media

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S-T PHOTO BY MICHAEL KOSSELING  
Chief Pilot Craig Funke describes how the flares attached to this Piper Comanche airplane release silver iodide to forming clouds in hopes of increasing the amount of rainfall.

## Cloud seeding experts work to bring moisture to West Texas

By MATT PHINNEY  
Staff Writer

Every morning Jim Boyd goes into the West Texas Modification Center office at San Angelo Regional Airport/Mathis Field and studies the area under.

He wants to determine quickly if any clouds in the area look promising for seeding. If they do, he puts his pilots on standby. Eight pilots stand ready to man five planes. San Angelo houses two planes, another sits in Big Lake, one in Ozona and another in Midland.

Boyd, project manager and meteorologist for the center, said he usually can tell

whether to have the pilots on standby as early as 10 a.m. Other times, when conditions are optimal, he has them in the air by mid-morning. Depending on how long it takes the pilot to get to the airport, a plane can be in the air in 30 minutes to an hour after the call comes in.

Sometimes, it is an awkward setup, but it works," Boyd said.

The West Texas Modification Center seeds clouds in Glasscock, Sterling, Reagan, Irion, Crockett, Schleicher, Sutton counties, and some parts of Tom Green County. The area is about 6 million acres, said Jim Boyd, project manager and meteorologist

with the modification center:

Ground water conservation districts and the city of San Angelo fund the program. The districts assess a payment of 4.4 cents per acre each year and the state matches 3.5 cents per acre.

San Angelo spends \$40,000 per year in the cloud seeding program and the water districts combine to contribute a total of about \$272,000. A majority of the cloud seeding in the county is above the North Concho Watershed. The area of the Twin Buttes Watershed in Irion and Schleicher Counties also gets seeded.

Pilots for the center do not please see RAIN, Page 9A



S-T PHOTO BY CAMERON YARBOROUGH  
Lee Ates's Concho Cartridge Company Inc. makes the flares that are used for cloud seeding.

## Man hopes to reinstate program for cloud seeding back home in Australia

By **MATT PHINNEY**  
*Staff Writer*

Australia was one of the forerunners in weather modification until people there, and in much of the world, lost faith in the program around 1970.

Although Texas and other states in the United States picked back up on the projects in the 1980s, Australia stayed out.

John Forrest wants to change that.

Forrest is the National Party's chief whip for the Australia Parliament. He toured the West Texas Weather Modification Center Thursday after the Texas Weather Modification Advisory Committee meeting.

The Texas Weather Modification program is made up of 10 programs and covers about 51 million acres. The West Texas program is the second-oldest program in the state.

Australia is in a serious drought, Forrest said. He wants to take back some knowledge gained through Texas cloud seeding programs and implement a similar program in Australia.

"People should be proud of the program here in Texas," Forrest said. "We virtually dropped the football and said it wasn't important enough to spend research dollars on. But people here stuck with the



S-T PHOTO BY MICHAEL VOSBURG

**John Forrest, the chief National Party whip of Australia's parliament, photographs part of the weather modification equipment stationed at Mathis Field during a tour Thursday.**

program and said we'll find a way to make it work."

Forrest, who has been in Parliament for nine years, said improved radar and satellite imagery led to cloud seeding improvements.

Forrest said he must prove to Parliament that cloud seeding is worth paying for and won't hurt the natural weather pattern, much like organizers here had to do in 1995 to get the West Texas program started.

"We need to pick up the football," he said. "I am a pretty determined individual. I have a master of science degree and won't have any scientist tell me that I don't know

what I'm talking about."

At the meeting, permits for all weather modification programs in Texas were renewed.

Texas Weather Modification chairman Dale Bates said the efficiency of cloud seeding has greatly improved since the concept first was practiced. Scientists have learned the best time to seed, the amount of flares to use and more from studying cloud seeding data.

"We change with the data and keep progressing," he said. "We have found out a lot that we didn't use to know. Research is the name of the game."