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October 17, 2006

By e-filing

Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit, Suite 713
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Finance Docket No. 34890, *PYCO Industries, Inc. -- Feeder Line Application --
Lines of South Plains Switching, Ltd. Co.*

Finance Docket No. 34922, *Keokuk Junction Railway Co. -- Feeder Line
Application -- Lines of South Plains Switching, Ltd. Co.*

Dear Mr. Williams:

In behalf of Respondent, South Plains Switching, Ltd. Co. (SAW), the Board is respectfully requested to take official notice of the attached article from the October 14, 2006 issue of the Lubbock (Texas) Avalanche-Journal, entitled "High Expectations: Cotton Farmers On Track For Big Haul - If Rain Stays Away." See 49 C.F.R. § 1114.6.

The fact that the 2006 cotton crop in the Lubbock, TX area is expected to be third largest on record, and that a majority of the Lubbock-area cotton crop is a "high level of quality," corroborates SAW's evidence that strong cotton crops can be realized even when weather conditions are less than ideal, and that cotton production levels will not return to the low levels experienced prior to 2004. That is so because two-thirds of the upland cotton in the Lubbock area is now under irrigation, and because more land is currently being used for cotton production inasmuch as cotton requires less watering than corn.

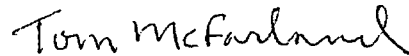
This newspaper article was published on October 14, 2006. The article refers to a U.S. Department of Agriculture crop production forecast that was released only two days earlier. The newspaper article and the USDA forecast were released after the filing of SAW's final evidence on October 12, 2006. Consequently, it was not possible for SAW to have filed the article or the

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USDA forecast as part of its evidence on October 12, 2006. Accordingly, it is appropriate for the Board to take official notice of that news article and USDA forecast.

Very truly yours,



Thomas F. McFarland
Attorney for Respondent

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cc: (by e-mail)
All Parties of Record, w/copy of article
Mrs. Delilah Wisener
Mr. Dennis Olmstead
Mr. Joseph Plaistow

LUBBOCK AVALANCHE-JOURNAL

Spotlight on Kids

Zakyah Foreman is caring, creative. D13



HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCOREBOARD

Coronado 24, Monterey 17

Andrews	27	Cooper	33	F.W. Tr. Chr.	24	Littlefield	42	New
Estacado	17	Lamesa	7	LCHS	7	Shallowater	14	Rall
Frenship	52	Idalou	35	Abernathy	42	Slaton	35	Plai
Lake View	17	Roosevelt	10	Lockney	0	Tahoka	21	Big

85TH YEAR, NO. 12

OCTOBER 14, 2006

2006
KIDS
COUNT

Area cotton producers are hoping for dry weather in order to get into fields, such as this irrigated one in south Yoakum County, for harvest.

Cotton farmers
on track for big
haul — if rain
stays away

High Expectations



D. LANCE LUNSFORD ▼ AVALANCHE JOURNAL
Reprints at www.lubbockonline.com

BY D. LANCE LUNSFORD
AVALANCHE JOURNAL

Steve Verett, Plains Cotton Growers executive vice president, clapped his knuckles against a wooden boardroom tabletop Friday morning.

"Knock on wood," someone at the table said as Randy Boman, an agronomist with Texas Cooperative Extension, delivered a wishful forecast for dry weather over the next six weeks to help cotton farm-

LubbockOnline.com

This story first appeared on our Web site at 11:31 a.m. Friday

ers get their crop out of the fields.

With widespread rain last weekend and forecasters expecting more rain in the coming days, Boman may not get his wish. Dry conditions are crucial to maintain what is forecast to be the third-largest crop on record for the High Plains of Texas area. Crop forecast figures were released Thursday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Give or take a little acreage, the PCG's

41-county region is within districts 1-N and 1-S outlined by the USDA. According to the USDA report, 1-N and 1-S are on track to produce 3.8 million bales of cotton.

"If that holds up, it's the third-largest crop on record," Boman said. "Hopefully, we won't get beat up by this weather, and we can get this crop out."

And a lot of cotton is ready for stripping, but it is difficult for farmers to maneuver tractors and farm equipment into fields where soils may be soupy.

SEE COTTON, PAGE A4

COTTON: Crop prospects rise above early expectations

FROM PAGE A1

Farmers are starting to chomp at the bit to get to those fields, though, as many who have started their harvest find a more plentiful crop than expected.

"Producers are saying cotton is coming in higher than expected," said Shawn Wade, PCG's communications director.

With temperatures in Lubbock dipping into the 40-degree range, harvest aids (chemicals used to make the leafy greenery on cotton plants defoliate) are being applied, and the growth period for cotton is nearing its end.

"We're not going to mature any more cotton," said Craig Bednarz, a crop physiologist at Texas Tech. "We're not gaining any weight at that temperature. When we go up into the 70s or 80s during the days and back down to below 60 at night, the crop's not going anywhere in terms of maturity."

With growth stages complete, the only obstacle left to hurdle is the weather that could limit the quality of the cotton.

According to a cotton quality report released Friday from the USDA's Lubbock Classing Office, fiber length for 60 percent of the Lubbock-area crop is 1.125 inches long — revealing a high level of quality.

The cotton length determines the fiber's ability to be woven as textile. The longer the fiber, the better for the producer, who takes a premium price.

Lubbock's fiber length is a good sign for farmers.

"That's closer to what the international people want," Bednarz said.

But the weather has to hold. Quality can wane if bad weather strikes with the crop waiting in the field.

"If we keep getting these rain showers coming in, that could impact us. If the crop sits out there and goes through a few rainfall events before you can harvest it, that will affect quality," Bednarz said.

'Producers are saying cotton is coming in higher than expected.'

Shawn Wade
Plains Cotton Growers

▼ On the Net

■ Plains Cotton Growers: <http://www.plainscotton.org/>

In addition to length, cotton quality is graded for color, micronaires (a measure of density in the cotton bolls) and strength — each reported favorably in the Lubbock Classing Office.

With fingers crossed, cotton producers may get out of this season a little less scathed than expected. It has not been a year of circumstances building confidence.

The new prospects follow a year of grim forecasts brought by dry, hot weather.

As dry and warmer than normal conditions parched High Plains soils from November 2005 through early August, drought conditions brought little optimism among cotton farmers despite the golden shadow cast upon their crop by two straight years of record harvests.

The precipitation farmers prayed for in the first two quarters of the year came late, nourishing fields in mid- to late August. Now, things aren't looking so gloomy.

Though the production would be 2.2 million fewer bales than last year if the USDA's numbers are right, what would become the third-largest crop for the High Plains of Texas is enough to bring a little optimism to an industry facing a number of concerns from energy costs to international trade.

To comment on this story:

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NEWS / WEATHER

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