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# Report: Intel Uses Too Much Water

## Groups Targeting High-Tech Industry

BY TANIA SOUSSAN  
Journal Staff Writer

Intel Corp. and other high-technology companies in the Albuquerque area's "Silicon Mesa" are using so much water they are threatening the supply available for residents and traditional farmers, according to a report released Friday.

"The costs go beyond just the impacts to the environment. What we're seeing is a shift in the lifestyle of the Southwest from traditional agriculture to high-tech manufacturing," said Michael Leon Guerrero of the Albuquerque-based SouthWest Organizing Project, one of the report's sponsors.

He criticized the computer industry for using millions of gallons of water a day and not doing enough to protect the water supply.

But Richard Draper, manager of media relations for Intel, said conservation has allowed the company to decrease water use 15 percent even while production grew by 20 percent. Intel uses 3.6 million gallons of water a day.

"Water is a precious resource to Intel," he said. "We want to be water smart and we've done a few things to aggressively reduce our use of water."

Guerrero and other authors of "Sacred Waters: Life Blood of Mother Earth" said Intel and other firms aren't doing enough.

"We expect a lot more of an industry that has become this dominant industry and has the resources to do a lot better," said Ted Smith, coordinator of the California-based Campaign for Responsible Technology.

He said the most important recommendation that came out of the report was the proposal that manufacturers use a closed-loop system in which water used to clean computer chips is recycled.

Draper said that would be great, but isn't economically feasible.

He said the plant is installing a new filtering system that will cut water use dramatically. Currently, 65 percent of the water Intel puts through a reverse osmosis system is clean enough to use in the manufacturing of chips. The new technology will increase that to 85 percent by next year, he said.

Water that isn't clean enough is used for irrigation or sent to the city's sewage treatment plant. Some other water is recycled and used in the building's cooling towers and air pollution scrubbers, he added.

The report, researched and written by grass-roots organizations, includes case

studies of Albuquerque, Phoenix, Austin, Texas, and Northern California's Silicon Valley. In California and Arizona, computer firms have been the cause of groundwater contamination, the report states.

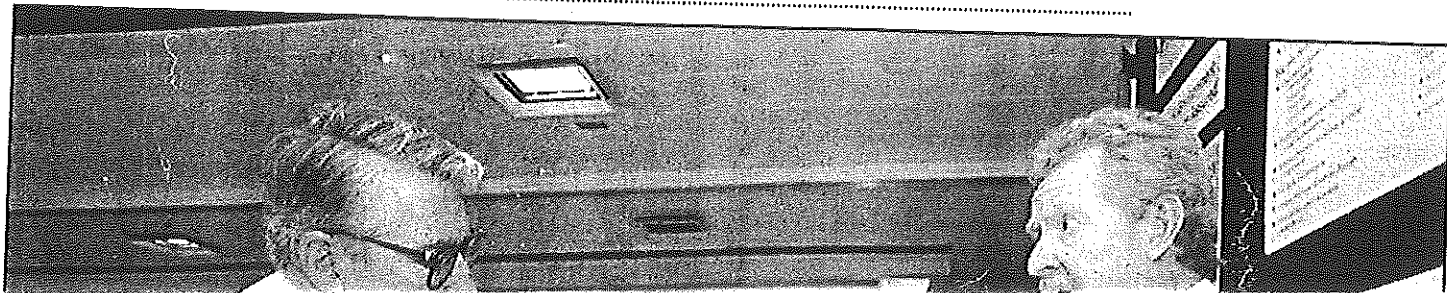
In many cities, including Rio Rancho, where Intel is located, residents pay more for their water than industrial users, Guerrero said.

Rio Rancho homeowners pay \$1.75 for 1,000 gallons of water while Intel pays 87 cents for the same amount of water bought from the utility. Intel also pumps water from its own wells at a cost of about 25 cents for 1,000 gallons, according to the report.

Draper said the industrial rate reflects the lower cost of delivering a large quantity of water to one user.

Jack Jekowski, president of the Technology Industries Association of New Mexico, said the report has good recommendations but doesn't present all the facts.

## ENGINEERING ANNIVERSARY



## Presbyterian Opens New Eye Center

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Parking for the disabled is no longer free at the University of New Mexico, and complaints are trickling in.

Come August, all parking on the University of New Mexico campus will have a price, including disabled drivers. They'll have to pay \$40 per year to park in the handicapped spaces, UNM parking officials say.

"We're going to get some static," said Leon W. Ward, UNM's parking and transportation director.

Disabled student Jeff Lynn started complaining this week to "everybody who would listen," he said, including politicians and regents whom he said would receive his letters next week.

Lynn thinks the fee is wrong because he can't get a good parking place, even in the handicapped zones. The best spaces are often full of illegally parked cars because enforcement is lax, he said.

In the 200 handicapped spaces on campus

Professors pay as much as \$343 for a parking spot

Dom residents pay \$90.

"There's no preference for disabled people. Professors get better parking than disabled people," Lynn said.

Ward defends the fee as a bargain — 11 cents per day, the lowest fee for campus parking. Professors pay as much as \$343 for a parking spot. Dom residents pay \$90.

Lynn said he called the governor's office, U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici, U.S. Rep. Steve Schiff and State Sen. Cisco McSorley to complain.

Graduate student Sandra Dement says she doesn't want to pay, but the \$40 annual cost is not the issue. It's the location of the handi-

es I need to. My complaint is that we're being charged for something we cannot use," Dement said.

Still, she'll park in the handicapped spaces and pay the fee, because "I can't have my car towed every day. That costs \$100."

Lynn says he too will pay the fee. "I've got to park somewhere."

For several years, Dement has been pushing for better access for disabled students. She contends while UNM has plenty of handicapped parking, it's not where it's most needed. She said she'll take part in a spot check of parking lots this month with a representative of the Governor's Committee on Concerns for the Handicapped.

Dement identified three parking lots she claimed were in violation of federal laws ensuring access for the disabled, lots UNM officials say are now in compliance.

Hope Reed, the state coordinator of barrier-

UNM has approximately 200 handicapped parking spaces for the 160 disabled permit holders, said Ward, the parking director.

The \$40 fee would have been imposed several years ago, but the handicapped parking was not in compliance with federal standards, requiring that more spaces be located in high-use areas, Ward said. Now that the parking is in compliance, the fee will be collected.

"There's nothing that says they should not be charged," he said of the disabled permit holders. "They should have always been paying like everybody else. In fact, a few years back a group (of disabled students) asked why we weren't charging them."

Ward said UNM has allowed free handicapped parking longer than most universities.

"Almost all universities charge. Most other state institutions are just beginning their parking programs. I expect they'll be charging someday too," he said.

## High-tech centers tough on water, report charges

By Sue Major Holmes

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An environmental coalition sounded a warning about water use and pollution by high-tech companies, saying people don't realize how thirsty and how toxic manufacturing plants are.

The Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice and the Campaign for Responsible Technology on Friday released a report, "Sacred Waters: Life Blood of Mother Earth," which looks at high-technology computer chip and electronic firms in New Mexico, Arizona, California and Texas.

"Water means much more to us than just a commodity that can be bought and sold," said Sylvia Ledesma of Southwest Network in Albuquerque. "It's an environmental as well as an economic-justice issue. We need water to survive, and industry needs water to make money."

Ted Smith, executive director of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition in San José, Calif.,

said community groups must work to make high-tech industry pay its share of taxes and to develop better manufacturing techniques.

"We (Silicon Valley) got snuck up on," Smith said. "Too many of us bought the rhetoric that it was a clean industry."

The New Mexico portion of the study focuses largely on water use by Intel Corp.'s huge plant in Rio Rancho, the state's biggest high-tech manufacturer.

Michael Guerrero of the Albuquerque-based SouthWest Organizing Project said his group worries about the amount of water used by high-tech firms and the pressure on agricultural users to sell their water rights.

"You're seeing a shift of people, a shift off the land," he said. "A way of life is being affected."

Richard Draper, a spokesman for Intel's Rio Rancho plant, said the company has begun aggressive water-conservation efforts.

When Intel first looked at a major expansion project in 1992, the conventional wisdom

was that Albuquerque had plenty of water, he said. By the time the project began, a study had discovered water was not flowing into the aquifer as fast as it was being used.

Draper said Intel began immediate conservation methods.

Intel expected to use 10 million gallons of water a day by the time the expanded plant was in full operation in 1998, Draper said. Now, he said, officials estimate it will use 4.5 million to 5 million gallons a day.

Intel has spent millions of dollars to reuse and recycle water, he said. The plant is putting in a better water-purification system to save 500,000 gallons a day by next year and is tearing out bluegrass lawns in favor of low-water landscaping, he said.

He said production went up 20 percent between 1995-96, but actual water use dropped 15 percent.

The Southwest Network wants Intel and other high-tech firms to use a closed-loop water system in which a plant would continu-

ously clean and reuse its water.

Draper said Intel was looking at redesigning manufacturing processes to lower water needs but said such changes take a few years "to see how it works in a real-life factory situation."

Intel is also studying whether "gray water" — water after it's used in the manufacturing process — could be reused for public purposes, he said.

About 70 percent of Intel's water comes from its own wells, and about 30 percent comes from water from the city of Rio Rancho, Draper said.

Draper said the state permit that allowed Intel to drill three wells required monitoring their effect on the aquifer. Draper said the first two years have shown no significant impact at levels where homeowners in nearby Corrales drill their wells.

The state engineer has authority to step in any time he sees data that worry him, Draper said.