



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2003

Valley Projects To Benefit In New Federal Budget

The Imperial Valley will benefit from the Omnibus Appropriations Bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on Monday.

Funding for at least three local projects is included in the bill. They include money for research into the use of sugarcane as a fuel source, funding for the Brawley Field Station and \$300,000 to assist the Calexico Transit System in upgrading its bus fleet.

The Imperial Valley/Renewable Energy/Ethanol Project is an economic development project to develop sugarcane production and processing capabilities, along with ethanol and renewable energy production in the Valley. Funds will be available to provide much-needed research funding to develop production and processing data, including legal studies for environmental impact assessments and permitting requirements, as well as engineering studies prior to construction of a new facility.

After the bill is signed by President Bush, representatives from the Department of Agriculture will meet with Congressman Bob Filner to discuss the project and determine an appropriate funding level.

There will be \$324,600 allocated for the Brawley Field Station, a unique federal-private industry partnership that has contributed significantly to the progress of U.S. agriculture since 1951. Funding for the field station had been deleted from the 2004 budget but was put back in by Filner, according to a press release from his office.

The Calexico Transit System will be receiving a \$300,000 grant to upgrade its fleet of buses. Ten new buses will be purchased with air conditioning and handicapped access. The fleet of buses currently being operated isn't air conditioned or accessible by the handicapped.