

TABLE 4.11.1.5-3.—1992 Crop Production in the Pantex Plant Region of Influence (Bushels Harvested)

| CHARACTERISTIC | ARMSTRONG COUNTY | CARSON COUNTY | POTTER COUNTY | RANDALL COUNTY | TOTAL ROI |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|
| Corn for Grain or Seed | 266,156 | 1,535,723 | D | 269,204 | 2,071,083 |
| Sorghum for Grain or Seed | 1,284,593 | 4,165,729 | 162,989 | 1,483,308 | 7,096,619 |
| Wheat for Grain | 1,347,074 | 3,172,483 | 301,852 | 1,873,135 | 6,694,544 |

D - Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.

Source: TX Cen 1994:1

action to recover the airport portion of the airfield for civilian aviation and initiated plans for the development of the airport.

In February 1968, Bell Helicopter started operating a military helicopter modification and repair facility on part of the Air Force Base land. The non-airport land was acquired by the State of Texas for use as a technical vocational training site by the Texas State Technical Institute. The air carrier terminal building was completed in 1971 and the City was well on its way to recovery from the population loss resulting from the Air Force Base closure. In the 1970's, Amarillo maintained a healthy economy providing major medical, financial, professional, governmental, transportation, and retail services to the entire Texas Panhandle and beyond (City 1989; Cress 1980).

The 1980's saw two major events which had a substantial impact on Amarillo area economy. In 1986, the Department of Energy announced that a 60-acre site in Deaf Smith County, adjacent to the Amarillo MSA, would be tested as one of the three potential sites for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in geologic repositories. Activities at the Deaf Smith site in 1987, employed approximately 300 engineers and scientists (AGT 1986). In December 1987, the Congress enacted the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987, which directed the DOE to characterize only one site, the Yucca Mountain

Site in Nevada, as a candidate for the first repository (DOE 1988a). This resulted in the closure of activities in Deaf Smith County with a loss of 300 direct jobs, mainly in the Amarillo metropolitan area. In 1989, Bell Helicopter announced it was closing the Amarillo facility. It eventually closed in March 1990 with a loss of 350 jobs. At its peak in early 1980's, Bell Helicopter employed between 800 and 1,000 workers (PC 1996t).

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines, has been operating a Helium Plant in Amarillo area since the early 1940's. The facility presently employs approximately 175 workers. The U.S. Congress is currently considering downsizing or eventually closing the plant. The U.S. House of Representatives voted in May 1996 to downsize the plant. However, the U.S. Senate has not voted on it yet. If downsizing were to occur, the employment at the Helium Plant would be reduced to about 30 to 40 workers within 18 months of the decision (PC 1996s).

In spite of the employment and population loss represented by the activities described above, the decennial population growth presented in Table 4.11.1.1-3 clearly demonstrates that the Amarillo metropolitan area economy has remained vibrant. Because of the visionary approach of the local leaders in diversifying the economy of the metropolitan area, Amarillo has withstood adversities in the past and has