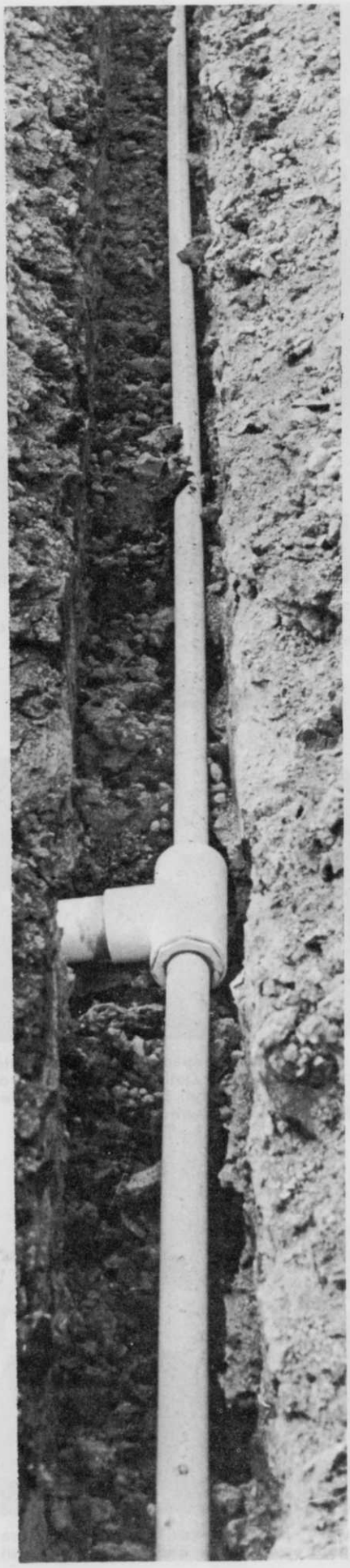

About 65 miles of trenching were accomplished. The Dallas/Fort Worth Airport lays claim to the world's largest non-ag irrigation system.

Irrigation Trenching Texas Style

TEXANS, everyone knows, like to do things big!

So it really wasn't much of a surprise when Dallas and Fort Worth announced plans to construct the world's biggest airport.

Located between the two cities, the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport opened in the fall. Covering 17,500 acres, it is larger than New York's Manhatten Island. In 1975, there should be 8 million enplanements. The figure will rise to 24 million by 1985. Including about 18,500 employees, along with passengers, service personnel and visitors, the airport will have a daily population of 100,000 by 1975.

Dallas/Fort Worth Airport is hailed as the best-planned airport facility ever built. And the planning did not neglect beauty. The world's largest airport will have the world's largest non-agricultural irrigation system.

More than $2 million is being spent on the system. Eagle-Formost of Fort Worth is one of the two contractors doing the irrigation job. Eagle-Formost is doing the irrigation work for the airport's spine road system.

Project Manager Dale Ousley says his company's contract comprises half of the total irrigation network. It includes about 65 miles of PVC pipe, ranging from ½- to 4-inches, and 6 million feet of control wire. The pipe is buried from 12 to 18 inches beneath the ground.

All of the work is being trenched, Ousley says.

"We are not doing any vibratory plowing because of the topography. There are no extremely long runs and we need to have the pipe and control wiring in an open trench for inspection purposes."

Ousley's crews are using four different size trenchers, all made by Ditch Witch.

"We have two Ditch Witch C-Model trenchers. They are compact, handlebar units and we use them mostly on traffic islands and other tight areas.

"For the other trenching we are using an 18-horsepower J20, two 30-horsepower V30 and a 65-horsepower R65.

"When we purchased our trenchers, we based our decision on speed, durability, dealer service and potential resale value."

Ousley said another important factor in his selection of equipment was the capability of working on slopes. Ditch Witch, built on a rigid frame, was able to work on extremely steep slopes around the many interchanges. The R65 worked on 3 to 1 slopes.

Ousley says the irrigation system is the most sophisticated, workable system in the world. Eventually, its master controllers will be tied in to a computer system.

To whisk people around the sprawling complex, the airport has its own rapid transit system—Airtrans. Electric, 40-passenger rubber-tire cars move through concrete guideways. The average ride to any point is only 8 to 10 minutes.

And as passengers look out of Airtrans, the grass will be a little greener because of a $2 million irrigation system.□