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Briscoe signs tax relief bill from special session

United Press International
AUSTIN — Gov. Dolph Briscoe has endorsed the proposed tax relief amendment worked up by a special session of the Legislature, clearing the measure to be submitted to voters Nov. 7.

Briscoe also signed into law Monday a bill to implement the truth-in-taxation provisions of the constitutional amendment and a measure requiring ballots to list the proposal as the "Tax Relief Amendment."

Other proposed constitutional changes are listed on the ballot simply as Proposition 1, Proposition 2, etc.

Briscoe made no comment on the

proposal Monday, issuing a brief announcement that he had signed the measure along with eight other bills passed by the special legislative session that ended Aug. 8.

The governor's signature on the constitutional amendment was unnecessary since a governor has no power to approve or veto submission of charter changes to voters.

Briscoe endorsed the proposal last week, saying if voters approve the measure that it could provide tax breaks for homeowners, senior citizens, farmers and ranchers.

In addition to requiring school districts to grant partial tax exemptions to some property owners, the amendment would require all local

governments to alert taxpayers and hold public hearings before taking any action to increase tax levies.

The truth-in-taxation bill set out procedures for determining when a re-appraisal of property values or change in assessment will trigger the requirement for special notices of tax increases.

Another bill Briscoe signed Monday allocates \$60,000 to the Secretary of State's Office to publish notice about the proposed constitutional amendments.

The governor also signed a measure transferring the Gatesville State School for the Texas Department of Corrections for use as a prison.

Heavy, damaging rainfall temporarily relieves drought

Rains which deluged parts of the Texas Hill Country will have little agricultural benefit, but much of the state fared better, an agricultural meteorologist with the Environmental Studies Service Center said.

"There are still a few areas of the state that need a good soaking," said James M. Yates, who is affiliated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service at Texas A&M University. "Except where the rain was excessive, I think most of the rest of the state benefited."

"The major improvement as far as agriculture goes is in the pastures and ranges, where they have been awfully dry in recent months," he said. "In some cases there will be a significant benefit to crops already in production."

As for the drought situation, Yates said the conditions are temporarily improved.

"But that's about as far as I would want to go now," he said.

The shift in drought conditions is primarily due to a greater degree of weather variability in the Gulf of Mexico. A series of tropical waves sweeping across the Gulf would throw a great deal of moisture toward Texas.

The rains from the tropical storm which moved into Mexico south of Brownsville were typical of what can

occur, the meteorologist said. As storms move inland, much of the wind damage potential is diminished. The storms still contain huge amounts of atmospheric moisture which many people tend to forget. It was that moisture that triggered the torrential rains in the Hill Country, Yates said.

The recent rains will do farmers in South Texas little good, he said, since in many areas the crops were already harvested, including sorghum. Probably the most benefit to crops was in the rolling and high plains of the state.

The rains arrived in time to do some good, Yates said. Even the relatively small rainfall in those areas could significantly improve crop conditions and result in higher yields in the fall. For the areas from San Antonio to Wichita Falls, cropland was absolutely inundated. The heavy rains did more harm than good agriculturally.

However, there are still some areas of Texas that remain dry. In a line from the Bryan-College Station area to east of Dallas, the rainfall remains far below average.

"The Blacklands got some pretty decent rains, but east of there they didn't get much," Yates said.

Broken down into regions, the rainfall pattern for the state indicated East Texas averages can be measured in the hundredths of an

inch, and that's about average, the meteorologist said. In the Blacklands, the rainfall runs from 1 to 2½ inches and on the plains 1 inch to 3-inch average.

South of Wichita Falls to the plains of Abilene, the rains have been 5 inches to 15 inches. The Plains received about an inch.

Areas west of San Antonio received close to 25 inches, have the least agricultural benefit, Yates said.

The rain came down so fast after the first couple of inches, soil was saturated.

"It just couldn't go through, the run off didn't help anyone," he said.

Deputies discover final victim

United Press International
SAN LUIS PASS — Sheriff's deputies Tuesday recovered the bodies of two brothers who died in the treacherous currents of San Luis Pass during a weekend storming and fishing outing.

Capt. Gene Smith of the Brazoria County Sheriff's Department said searchers recovered the bodies of Darrell Brown, 17, and Chris Brown, 15, on Galveston Bay about a mile north of the pass.

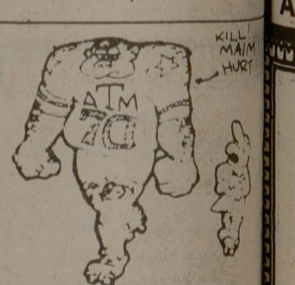
Deputies recovered the bodies of their brothers, John Brown, 22, and Chris Brown, 21, on Monday.

The four brothers drowned Monday. A fifth, Terrell Brown, 17, survived.

Investigators said one of the brothers stepped into a deep hole while surf fishing on the Brazoria County side of the pass. The brothers attempted to save him, they all were swept out in the vicious undertow.

The accident occurred near the site of a similar tragedy earlier this year where five youngsters drowned at the same time while wading the surf.

The City of Galveston has a swimming ban on beaches bordering the pass but that ban did not affect Brazoria County side.



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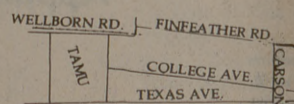
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