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Budget cut gives bureau more work

By DEBBIE NELSON
Battalion Reporter

Budget cutbacks to the Texas attorney general's office could double the workloads of Better Business Bureaus and save taxpayers \$200,000 a year, Leroy Balmain, executive director of the Brazos Valley Better Business Bureau said Friday.

Since Sept. 1, Balmain said, the attorney general has referred all consumers' complaints to the Better Business Bureaus in their areas. Only those complaints from areas without a Better Business Bureau will be handled by the attorney general.

The Better Business Bureau, a non-profit organization funded by businesses which are members, offers a free arbitration service to settle consumer complaints. The bureau also uses its files to advise consumers on the reliability of businesses.

The Better Business Bureau's job is to help the consumer and the businessman reach a settlement.

The arbitration service settles most disputes within two weeks and saves high court costs, Balmain said.

Many times a consumer complains about a business transaction when there is not a justifiable complaint, he said.

Before arbitration, both the consumer and the businessman sign an agreement to abide by the arbitrator's decision, Balmain said. Then an arbitrator, chosen from a group of community volunteers, hears the case. His decision is binding by law.

"This is the best way to settle a misunderstanding between a business and a consumer," Balmain said. The consumer's case is settled quickly, and usually in his favor; the business avoids adverse publicity from a court battle; and the attorney general has more time to concentrate on larger issues.

So far, the BBB has a 93 percent success rate in settling the 20-30 cases it handles each month, Balmain said. The bureau also handles hundreds of phone inquiries each month from its nine-county area.

Balmain doesn't know how his bureau will be affected by the attorney general's new policy, as it is only been in effect for two weeks.

If it doubles his caseload he said, it means he will just have that much more work to do.

what's up

Tuesday

MICROBIOLOGY CLUB: Two films will be shown on Industrial Microbiology at 7:30 p.m. in Room 101, Agronomy.

INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCERS: Recreational folk dancing and instruction from 7:30-10 p.m. in the MSC.

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS CLUB: New members and freshmen are welcome to the organizational meeting at 7:30 p.m. in Room 108, Harrington.

ASSOCIATION OF BIOENGINEERS: Will hold a business meeting at 7:30 p.m. in Room 404, Rudder.

ROADRUNNERS: Will meet for their 'Fun Run' at 8 p.m. on the front steps of G. Rolie White Coliseum.

AMERICAN NUCLEAR SOCIETY: Anyone interested in nuclear energy is encouraged to attend the meeting at 7:30 p.m. in Room 103, Zachry.

AGRONOMY SOCIETY: Dr. Frank Calhoun will speak on tropical soils and crops and of his experiences in the tropics at 7:15 p.m. in Room 103, SCSE.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS: Dr. Kettleborough will speak on 'Solar Assisted Air Conditioning' at 7:30 p.m. in Room 102, Zachry.

SADDLE & SIRLOIN: A canoeing presentation will be featured at 7 p.m. in Room 115, Kleberg.

WATER SKI CLUB: Preparations for TAMU Intercollegiate Tournament will be discussed at 7 p.m. in Room 501, Rudder.

YOUNG AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM: 'Big Government or Individual Freedom' and a film with Ronald Reagan will be shown at 7:30 p.m. in Room 502, Rudder.

TABLE TENNIS CLUB: Will have the first general meeting at 7 p.m. in Room 256, G. Rolie White.

DANCE ARTS SOCIETY: Beginning and intermediate tap dance classes will be held at 7 p.m. in Room 266, G. Rolie White.

CHEMICAL ENGINEERS: Membership meeting for new and returning chemical engineers at 7:15 p.m. in Room 102, Zachry.

ALPHA PHI OMEGA: Will be surveying campus needs with questionnaires today at the MSC, Sbsa and the Commons.

AUDIO ENGINEERING GROUP: Dr. William L. Beasley will speak on 'Basic Troubleshooting Techniques for Amplifiers and Receivers' at 7:30 p.m. in Room 223-B, Zachry.

HARRISON COUNTY HOMETOWN CLUB: Will meet at 7 p.m. in Room 604, Rudder.

MINORITY AND WOMEN STUDENT CAREER EMPHASIS DAY: Sponsored by the Amoco companies, whose representatives will be present to speak to students in engineering, geophysics, geology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and computer sciences.

STUDENT DIETETIC ASSOCIATION: Will meet at 7 p.m. in Room 126 (faculty lounge), Kleberg Center.

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING SOCIETY: Hamburger fry membership meeting for new and returning Agricultural Engineers at 6:30 p.m. at the Power and Machinery lab on west campus.

MARKETING SOCIETY: Will hold its first official meeting at 7 p.m. in Room 226, MSC. There will be a guest speaker.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE CLUB: Will meet at 6:30 p.m. on the field bleachers. Anyone interested in joining should attend.

EXXON CORPORATION: Will have an open house to let engineering students talk with members of its recruiting team at 7:30 p.m. at the Aggeland Inn.

AMOCO COMPANIES: Will sponsor a minority and women student career emphasis day to introduce students to all levels of career opportunities with the Amoco companies. Representatives of the companies will be in Rooms 230-231 of the MSC from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

cont'd

Dallas apartment fire causes about \$3 million in damage

United Press International
DALLAS — A "suspicious" five-alarm fire at a complex of luxury apartments forced the evacuation of residents and caused estimated damage of up to \$3 million, fire officials said.

A spokesman said calm weather early Sunday morning, however, helped contain the blaze at the Peppermill apartment complex. No injuries were reported.

Nearly 100 units were damaged, a fire department dispatcher reported. "Sixty-four were totally destroyed and 32 were partially burned. Some of the apartments

were brand new and unoccupied. The dispatcher said the new complex featured wooden shingles on the roofs which helped the fire spread quickly.

"There's a strong suspicion of arson," he said. "The investigators are out there right now but there's strong suspicion of arson. They heard some reports that just made it of suspicious origin."

Many residents had to be evacuated but the fire was under control at 3:30 a.m.

If it had been windy, however, one firefighter said the blaze would have been uncontrollable.

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