

campus & city

County unit to streamline taxing

By NANCY ANDERSEN
Battalion Staff

Last spring the Texas Legislature passed a law designed to consolidate appraisal offices in each county. Instead of each school board or appraising property for its own purposes, Senate Bill 621 would create a county-wide appraisal district. This will eliminate the current practice of appraising the same property as many as two or three different appraisal districts.

The taxing district would follow the lines of the county and be governed by a five-member board of directors. While the district will not set taxes until 1982, Brazos County appraisal district is beginning to shape now.

The Bryan and A&M Consolidated Independent School Districts, cities of Bryan and College Station and Brazos County are the tax units forming the Brazos County Appraisal District.

County governments are not required to participate in the district, but have the option to do so.

On the recommendation of County Tax Assessor-Collector Gerald

"Buddy" Winn, the Brazos County Commissioners Court has decided to join the district.

The reason, Winn said, is to save county taxpayers from paying for both the district appraisal board through school and city taxes and the county's appraisal unit.

The governing board of each taxing unit is allowed to nominate one candidate for each board position.

The board will be elected by a cumulative voting system, which bases the number of votes each unit receives on the amount of taxes levied. County Clerk Frank Boriskie is responsible for calculating each unit's entitlement.

The calculation is as follows: the amount of taxes each unit levied during the preceding year is divided by the total amount levied by all the participating units. This is then multiplied by 5 and then by 1,000.

For example, the Bryan Independent School Board levied \$5,078,718 last year. This is then divided by \$12,904,253 and multiplied by 5,000. This results in 1,968 votes or approximately 39 percent of the vote.

A&M Consolidated has 1,420 or 29 percent, Bryan 697 or 14 percent, Brazos County 560 or 11 percent and College Station 355 or seven percent.

These votes can be split or used as a whole to elect the board. The minimum number of votes a taxing unit needs to guarantee a director's election is 834, and 4168 votes are needed to guarantee all five directors.

The nominees' names are required by the bill to be submitted to the county clerk by Oct. 30. The nominees and their respective units are: Dietrich W. Bengs, City of College Station and A&M Consolidated I.S.D.; Arthur Davila, Bryan I.S.D.; Henry Seale, Bryan and A.C. Vinzant, A&M Consolidated I.S.D. Only the names listed alphabetically will appear on the ballot.

Since there are five nominees and five positions, Winn said the election is just a formality. But if one nominee failed to receive one vote, a special election with five new nominees will be held for the fifth position. Each board must vote before

Nov. 15, and the county clerk will tabulate the votes and declare the winners before Dec. 1.

The directors will serve a two-year term beginning Jan. 1, 1980. The members will not receive a salary, but they may be reimbursed for expenses.

When the board takes office Jan. 1, it will appoint a chief appraiser. He will be paid in accordance with the budget, establish an office and may hire a staff. The board has the option of creating a new office or contracting with any existing taxing unit in or out of the district or using the services of a professional appraisal firm.

The chief appraiser's duties will be to appraise all the taxable property in the district and to prepare a budget and an appraisal roll for each taxing unit. The roll will list the total appraised values within a unit's area.

The assessors for each taxing unit will then assess taxes on the basis of 100 percent of the appraised values. This will abolish the use of assessment ratios.

Currently both cities and both school districts in the appraisal district are using an 80 percent ratio; the county is using a 20 percent ratio.

Tax collections, like the assessments, will be handled by each taxing unit.

The appraisal district will be financed by the taxing units. Each unit will be allocated a portion of the budget based on the amount of taxes it levies compared to the total amount levied by each unit.

The taxing units will make four equal payments, which are due at the end of each quarter.

Overall taxes will not be increased, Winn said, because any increase in appraised values will be result in a corresponding decrease in the tax rate.

Under the present tax system, a house in Brazos County valued at \$40,000 and not taxed by any other governmental bodies would be appraised at \$5,000. At the current county tax rate of \$1.15, taxes would be \$92.

Under the proposed system, the house would be assessed at its full value — \$40,000. At a reduced tax rate of 23 cents per \$100 valuation taxes would still total \$92.

These figures do not include any city or school district taxes. In addition, the figures do not include the homestead or old age exemptions for taxpayers.

Sea Grant publication offers Gulf fishing tips

If you're a novice Gulf surf fisherman and think most fish look pretty much alike except for the flounder (which, of course, looks with both eyes on one side of its head), then Texas A&M University's Sea Grant College Program may have just the thing for you.

It's a free publication called "Fishing the Texas Surf" and the 24-page booklet continues to be one of the most popular items ever printed by Sea Grant.

More than 2,500 requests for the loose-leaf booklet have been received since this spring, Sea Grant officials said.

Written by Tony Fedler, a Texas A&M graduate student majoring in recreation and resources development, the booklet has illustrations of 20 of the most common fish varieties caught while surf, wade or pier fishing and many other helpful fishing hints.

Copies of "Fishing the Texas Surf" may be obtained by writing Sea Grant College Program, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

crafts displayed in MSC

Jewelry box wins contest

By TODD HEDGEPEETH
Battalion Reporter

Gillette Burger's wooden jewelry box was judged best-of-show in the MSC Crafts and Arts Committee's Student Juried Craft Competition.

In a reception at the Memorial Student Center Gallery Monday night, ribbons were awarded to the top four entrants in each of five categories: wood, clay, fiber, jewelry and glass.

Burger's winning entry, which also took first place in wood, featured three levels and four drawers with ebony handles and brass dials. The drawers were made from rosewood and the rest of the box was ash. Kurt Buck's wooden box won second place in wood. Wayne Heaton's coffee table was judged third and Ed Scull's spalted bowl earned honorable mention.

Jody Landry's poppy bowl won top honors in clay and Bobbie Baker's wind chimes were second. Landry's coffee pot earned a third-place ribbon and a pitch-

er by Pamela McCowen took honorable mention.

In fibre, Valerie Wilks claimed the top two ribbons, with her wool hanging winning first place and her fibre basket getting second. Andrew Jordan took third with a wall hanging and Clint Isbell received an honorable mention for his macrame.

A glass terrarium by Lynette Ham won top honors in glass. Barb Vinson took second with an etched dragon and also won honorable mention with a stained glass window. John Baker's tiffany lamp won third.

In jewelry, Clint Isbell's dinosaur bone ring won first place and his belt buckle was judged third. Landry won second place with an agate pin, and Cindy James was judged honorable mention for her obsidian drop.

Five judges, each an expert in one of the categories, evaluated the entries, all of which are on display this week in the MSC Gallery.

Black Engineers to host conference this weekend

By ANGELIQUE COPELAND
Battalion Reporter

Ways to improve achievement among minorities will be the main focus of the regional conference of the National Society of Black Engineers at Texas A&M University this weekend.

Seventy-five delegates representing seven charter chapters and five affiliated schools will meet in workshops and discuss methods used in educational programs.

The A&M chapter will speak on interviewing techniques while the University of Houston and Lamar University present programs on tutoring and high school interaction.

Annie Carter, president of the local chapter of NSBE, said Texas A&M currently has an interaction program where members go to local high schools and talk about engineering careers. They also speak to their home-town schools over the Christmas holidays. "Many of the high school students have never been exposed to engineering and we try to tell them something about both the careers available and A&M," Carter said.

The local chapter, which was officially recognized in 1978, also publishes a book containing resumes of its members each year.

Leroy Callender, guest speaker for the conference, will discuss education as a means of upward mobility in society. Callender is with the largest black engineering consulting firm, located in New York.

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