

Reno trying new tactics to offset falling economy

United Press International
RENO — Nevada's gaming industry is proving an island of stability in a sea of national economic difficulties, but not without effort and cost. Revenues from gaming, the state's No. 1 money earner, rose more than 20 percent for eight consecutive quarters before this year, sending gross revenues for fiscal 1979-80 to \$2,275,750,000. This year, the rate of climb dropped to 12-14 percent. And the casinos are having to put more and more of their gross into tour packages, junkets and promotions to induce tourists to come to Nevada. "They don't have the movement of people by automobile they used to have because of gas prices and the economy," said Jack Stratton of Nevada's Gaming Control Board. "So operators are having to put out a lot of money to bring people in." And one of the things the clubs are putting that money into is bus tour packages. A good share of casinos rent half or more of their rooms to "bus people" each weekend. "A lot of people want to come by bus now because of the energy crunch," said Tom Engelmann of MGM Grand, Reno. Just how much casinos depend on the bus trade is emphasized by the fact some casinos pay drivers to stop at their establishments. Pam Carter, bus tour coordinator at the Sands in Reno, said the going rate is \$1.50 per

passenger for a bus that wouldn't normally stop at a given casino. Some have questioned the ethics of paying drivers to bring in customers, but a district attorney's spokesman said it doesn't appear to be illegal as long as no contract is being broken. "We wouldn't survive if we didn't have the bus trade," said Ben Hathaway of the Red Garter Casino in Virginia City. The junkets are high-class plane tours in which rooms, food and beverages are taken care of by the casino if customers agree to bring along a certain amount to gamble, sometimes up to \$10,000. Stratton says, however, he's seeing some evidence a number of casinos are cutting back on junkets. "They've looked at the bottom line and found it isn't as profitable as predicted," he said. Bob Martin, vice president and general manager of Harrah's, Reno, said business has picked up this fall with the opening of a new casino section downtown. That addition includes a new bus terminal and Martin said some 500,000 bus customers are expected to arrive at Harrah's this calendar year. Casinos combine subsidized bus tickets with special room rates, meals and gambling coupons and numerous other promotions designed to draw customers to a casino and keep them there.

Fines of \$500,000 expected; ticket volume 'ridiculous'

By JENNIFER AFFLERBACH
Battalion Staff
Texas A&M University Police wrote 118,000 traffic tickets last school year for a total of \$365,000, an amount the director of security and traffic called "kind of ridiculous." It is estimated that \$500,000 in traffic fines will be collected this year. Col. Thomas Parsons said at the Residence Hall Association meeting Tuesday night. He attributed the higher estimate this year to the increase in parking violations from \$5 to \$10 and in moving violations from \$10 to \$20. "I was in opposition to that increase in fines," he said. "I didn't think it was needed." The money raised from traffic tickets goes into a Parking Facilities Reserve Account. That money is used for the construction of parking lots and "has nothing to do with salaries" in the police department, Parsons said. There are 17,000 parking spaces on campus for the 26,000 parking permit holders this year. "The ratio is not bad," Parsons

said, because that number includes night permits and motorcycles, which don't always take up parking spaces. "At any given time, I could show you a legal parking space," he said. "We have available spaces but no convenient ones." Parking is available in the lots at the baseball field which Parsons said he has never seen full. "There really is no additional space available for parking on the main part of the campus," he said. In other RHA business, a policy

was discussed requiring dorm students to turn in their room keys during the Christmas break. Ronald Hilton, Coordinator of Housing Services, said the policy would eliminate key losses and improve residence hall security during the break. The chances of someone finding a lost key and using it to get into a vacant dorm room would be reduced, he said. An RHA member argued that students would just have extra keys made, which would mean more keys around to be lost or stolen.

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OCA hears input on transcripts, bars

By USCHI MICHEL-HOWELL
Battalion Staff
Off-campus support for a student government proposal to recognize a minor field of study on transcripts was solicited by the Ward II student senator Tuesday night. Senator Kenzy Hallmark said the proposal will be voted on a second time in the student senate tonight and asked for student response to the proposal. Another off-campus student senator also asked students to give their input to the pending suggestion to sell alcohol in the Memorial Student Center basement and the Northgate crowd-ing problems. The bars at Northgate have drawn attention recently, because customers crowd into University Drive, obstructing traffic, student senator Sue Vito said. In other business OCA reminded attendants that parking annex 62, behind Kyle Field, still

needs to be filled with day students' cars, in order not to be lost as a day student lot. OCA will have a fundraiser for their recently formed apartment councils. Under the motto 'celebrate', all students are invited to attend a party at Cellblock 5 on Nov. 6. Since bonfire cutting weekends are getting fewer, OCA asked for cooperation. "More help is needed for bonfire cutting", bonfire coordinator Phil Suter said. He offered to take interested students to the cutting site Sunday. The meeting point will be behind Duncan at 6:15 a.m. In other business, OCA reported a third place in the campus blood drive which won the organization a keg of beer. Kim Lawrence, director of the Miss Texas A&M University pageant, invited all off-campus women to take part in the competition. Deadline for application is Nov. 3.

Leaking Portland oil well won't be controlled soon

United Press International
PORTLAND, Tx. — Up to two months and between \$2 million and \$3 million may be needed to drill a relief well to stop gas feeding a burning well west of this south Texas city, the operating company says. Richard Phillips, of Phillips and Spradly, said Monday, work should begin this week on the relief well. The well began leaking last Wednesday and ignited Friday. A road near the well has been closed as a safety precaution.

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CAPTURE OF THE GIANT ARMADILLO PARTY



Giant Armadillo Captured

After a week-long rampage through central Texas, the now-famous GIANT ARMADILLO has entered the COLLEGE STATION area. The giant beast has ravaged Lone Star Beer's brewery and warehouses since Thursday, swallowing kegs of beer whole. Authorities have been unable to explain this armadillo phenomenon, but have now come up with a viable explanation. It seems that the giant armadillo had planned on coming to College Station from the beginning. It's a well-known fact that AGGIES AND LONGNECKS make Texas the great state it is. Add to that the fact that the armadillo snatched the now-famous band, THE MAX, when he ravaged San Antonio, and the beast's final stop in College Station becomes certain. Apparently the GIANT ARMADILLO wants to culminate his adventures across Texas with a celebration on Saturday. While the THE MAX plays their own brand of Texas music, the armadillo plans to liquidate his stock of ICE-COLD LONE STAR BEER, the National Beer of Texas.



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