

Housing vacancies rare

By JED T. YOUNG
Battalion Reporter

The U.S. Government says any one looking for a place to live in Bryan-College Station should have no problem.

Preliminary 1980 census figures indicate a 7.8 percent vacancy rate for housing in Bryan-College Station. Of the recorded 28,912 housing units (houses and apartments) available, 2,245 are supposedly vacant.

Vacancies? In Bryan-College Station? A study is now being conducted under the supervision of Jim Gardner, professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Texas A&M University, comparing census figures to current counts.

Gardner's hypothesis is that the recent census of the area is low. He said that since the census was conducted in April and May, many Texas A&M graduating seniors were not counted and many students probably listed home town residences.

D.D. Williamson, supervisory engineer for Texas State Department of Highways and Transportation, said, "Census (officials) count a single room as a dwelling unit if it is rented and has an outside door."

Housing problems for Bryan-College Station are real and this vacancy rate is obviously inaccurate. Ask any apartment locator about

vacancies in town; there are none.

With enrollment at an all-time high at the University, housing officials are not finding vacancies for the overflow of on-campus housed students.

Off-campus students plan roommate and apartment accommodations sometimes a year in advance in order to beat the housing crunch.

Newcomers to the area are discovering that locating a decent place to live is nearly impossible.

Texas Housing Needs Analysis figures from 1979 indicate that 11.4 percent of all occupied dwellings in Brazos County are below federal standards. Of all minority occupied homes in town, the majority of these were built before 1949.

For many dependent on federal housing assistance programs, finding a shelter that keeps out wind and rain is a real problem.

According to Al Mayo, College Station city planner, this federal aid problem is intensified in the city by 1980 census figures. The census gave College Station a preliminary figure of 36,710.

"We are conservatively estimating 42,000," Mayo said. "The census figures slighted us four to five thousand which could be roughly equal to \$1 million."

Census calculations certainly are

not helping the Bryan-College Station housing situation.

But according to Mayo, finding housing financiers is the real problem in increasing the number of area homes.

"Financing is not readily available for large apartment projects," he said. "There is not enough capital and the interest rates are much too high."

"Although we are seeing an increase in the number of four-plexes and duplexes, they simply can't catch the market."

Single-family housing is also very difficult in Bryan-College Station since middle-class families, interested in homes ranging from \$40,000 to \$80,000, simply cannot afford the \$600-plus monthly payments.

U.S. Department of Commerce figures indicate that out of the 24 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas in Texas, Bryan-College Station has the lowest vacancy rate with the exceptions of El Paso, Laredo, San Antonio and Tyler.

Results from Gardner's census comparison study and an upcoming study on area housing conditions may provide a stimulus for improvement, officials hope.

If not, the housing situation in Bryan-College Station will continue to present a bleak picture.

Absentee voting ends on Friday

By USCHI MICHEL-HOWELL
Battalion Staff

Friday is the last day for absentee voting.

Eligible voters must be registered in their county of permanent residence and must have one of the reasons listed below for voting absentee.

1. Expecting absence from the county on Election Day.

This would make registered voters eligible for voting absentee in person at their county clerk's office between now and Oct. 31, when absentee voting in person ends.

2. Expecting absence from the county between now and Oct. 31 during the absentee-in-person voting period.

In this case voters can apply for an absentee ballot by mail. The application must be sent from outside the county of permanent residence and will be returned by the county clerk to a point outside the county. When the voter sends his absentee ballot back to the clerk, it must also be mailed from outside the county.

All mail-absentee applications must be received by the respective county clerks by Oct. 31. The absentee ballots must be in the clerks' office by 7 p.m. Nov. 4.

3. 65 years of age or older persons can vote absentee by mail or in person anytime. Their application for an absentee ballot may be mailed from inside or outside the county.

4. Religious belief that restricts people's activities on Election Day may enable them to vote absentee also from within the county using the above procedures.

5. Service during the General Election that prevents the person from casting a ballot. May vote absentee in person.

6. Sickness/Physical disability that prevents the voter from participating in the General Election can also be a reason for absentee voting. A medical statement must accompany the application. The absentee vote can be cast in person or by mail.

Absentee ballots can be obtained from the county clerk of the voter's home county or from the Secretary of State, Capital Building, Austin, Texas 78701.

An informal application for an absentee ballot by mail can also be made and must include the following information:

Name of voter, address (perma-

nent and current), voter registration certificate number (on the white registration card), reason (one of the above) and any necessary medical documents, precinct number (if known), type of election (General Election to be held Nov. 4, 1980) and the voter's signature.

Absentee voting in person is in progress now at the Brazos County Clerk's Office in the courthouse and will continue until Friday.

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President' Increase tuition, Hope show commissioner asks is delayed

Bob Hope will not bring his presidential campaign to television tonight as originally scheduled.

Hope's NBC special, "Hope for President," has been postponed until Saturday, Nov. 1, so the presidential debates can be televised.

Hope filmed a mock campaign rally at Easterwood Airport when he arrived in College Station for an Oct. 3 MSC Town Hall concert.

Several hundred cheering Aggies, armed with "Hope for President" signs, showed up at Easterwood to greet the comedian.

Hope performed to a packed G. Rollie White Coliseum audience that night, and told the audience he may return to AggieLand for more extensive filming in the future.

"Hope for President" takes a satirical look at election year antics, and stars former President Gerald Ford, Johnny Carson, Jonathan Winters, Tony Randall and Mr. Bill.

Increase tuition, commissioner asks

United Press International

AUSTIN — The Texas Legislature should cut back on branches, courses and administrative positions if money for higher education is scarce, but not on quality, salaries or research, says Higher Education Commissioner Kenneth Ashworth.

Ashworth recommended to the Coordinating Board that tuition rates and faculty salaries be increased.

"To reduce the state costs of remedial courses in higher education, the Legislature should consider establishing a statewide test as a condition to high school graduation," Ashworth said Friday.

Ashworth presented a set of recommendations to the Legislature, which the board will consider Dec. 4 and vote on Jan. 30.

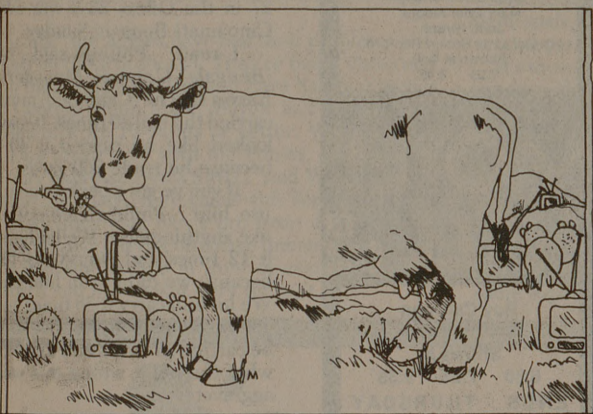
One of the recommendations would bring all schools of the University of Texas and Texas A&M University under the Permanent University Fund "if it appears the endowment and its income will provide sufficient funds to meet the construction needs of those institutions."

However, Ashworth recommended the bonding capacity of the fund remain at 20 percent "to prevent over-obligating the PUF for construction purposes at the expense of the use of PUF income for academic enrichment and improvements."

Rather than cut back on quality, Ashworth proposed, the Legislature should reduce or eliminate off-campus and out-of-district courses, eliminate some or all of the seven branch campuses and centers supported by the state, combine nearby institutions, require administrative cuts and require community junior colleges to pay more of their costs.

The proposed recommendations would reject a new medical school, a new law school, additional colleges or universities or new permanent facilities for upper-level centers.

However, Ashworth proposed "a substantial increase in appropriations for research as a long-term investment in higher education and the economic growth of the state."



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