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USPS 045 360
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The Weather

Yesterday

High 60
Low 52
Rain none

Today

High 62
Low 48
Chance of rain 20%

Fire codes: danger in noncompliance?

Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series on Texas A&M's compliance with building codes and the potential hazards of fires in campus buildings.

By DENISE RICHTER
Battalion Reporter

Because it is not required to conform to standard fire and building codes, Texas A&M University has the potential for having a bigger fire than it has ever had, College Station Fire Marshal Harry L. Davis says.

As a state agency, the University is not required to follow any specific building or fire codes. However, University Safety and

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Health Officer R. H. Stiteler, said the University uses the Standard Building Code and the Life Safety Code as guidelines.

"We're not in full compliance," Stiteler said, "but we do comply with the code as much as we feel like it is necessary."

The University may not be 100 percent compliance with standard codes, but it has adequate protection, Stiteler said. Texas A&M complies with the codes as much as possible given funds available.

Open stairwells, partial sprinklers

Davis cited two cases where Texas A&M was not complying with the Standard Building Code required by the City of College Station.

The first case was the open stairwells in the Soil and Crop Sciences and Entomology Building. The SBC requires that a build-

ing's stairwells be closed, Davis said.

The building was filled with smoke in a July 12, 1979, fire that caused \$118,000 damage. If the building's stairwells had been closed, smoke damage would have been limited to the floor involved, Davis said.

College Station's fire and building codes also do not allow any building to have a partial sprinkler system. Yet, following a 1977 fire in a storage area of the Memorial Student Center's basement, that caused \$203,500 damage, the University put a sprinkler system only in the MSC storage area and in other campus storage areas.

Additional safety hazards

In addition to building code violations, Davis cited specific fire and safety hazards that exist on the campus.

For instance, he said that while the main doors in G. Rollie White Coliseum are open during basketball games, the fire exits are chained shut. He said that the state fire marshal's office has been informed of this violation but has done nothing about it.

Also, Davis said Texas A&M exercises no chemical control. "If they had controls on that stuff, if every chemistry lab was not stockpiling chemicals, if they had one place where all hazardous chemicals were stored, then things would be fine," Davis said.

"Unfortunately, that's not the way it happens. I've seen chemicals stored in 55-gallon barrel when there's no way it could all be used," he said.

"I've seen bottles over there with highly explosive contents but nobody knew what it was because it wasn't labeled."

City-University cooperation

Stiteler said Texas A&M's Office of Safety and Health works closely with the College Station Fire Department.



"We confer with them and put their ideas into our planning to see what best fits our needs," he said. "We have put sprinklers in hazardous areas like our storage and chemical storage areas. We have local protection instead of broad protection."

Texas A&M's fire alarm system is divided into three sections: fire alarm equipment, alarm activation and evacuation procedures.

The fire alarm equipment consists of ceiling- or duct-mounted smoke or heat detectors, manual pull stations at the exits,

"The person in charge ... can't even tell you what is stored inside that lab. That's what scares some of our firemen when they have a call for a chemistry building fire. They're hesitant about going in ... it could blow up in their faces at any time."

horn and light units throughout to give warning of an emergency and a fire alarm panel or panels which will show the location of the emergency.

In addition, a \$100,000 "Hawkeye" reporting system was installed in 1979. This system, used in 86 campus buildings, was installed in conjunction with the existing fire alarm equipment.

Under the Hawkeye system, each building is given a four-digit code number. When a building's alarm sounds, its particular code is transmitted to the University emergency operator and the University

Police and the fire's location can be pinpointed.

"If we wait on someone to report a fire or smoke, then we've lost some time," Stiteler said. "This gives a fire code quickly so a response can be made earlier."

Thirteen campus buildings are designated as immediate notification areas because of their contents or value. When the alarm sounds in these buildings, the College Station Fire Department is immediately notified.

These buildings are the Biological Sciences Building, the Chemistry Building, Harrington Tower, the Heep Building, Heldenfels Hall, the MSC (basement storage area, Board of Regents quarters and guest rooms), the O&M Building, the Plant Sciences Building, the Reed McDonald Building, Rudder Theater, Rudder Tower, the Soil and Crop Sciences and Entomology Building and the Veterinary Medicine Complex.

Building fire alarm systems may be activated using the manual pull stations or automatically by the detectors. Once activated, the horns and lights will operate and the appropriate building ventilation systems will shut down to prevent the spread of smoke to other areas of the building.

Smoke detectors can be activated by smoke particles (including cigarette smoke), paint vapors, welding, cutting and woodworking operations, steam, hairspray or tampering with the equipment.

Heat detectors are activated by temperatures in excess of 135 degrees Fahrenheit.

Compliance cost astronomical

The Texas A&M campus has more than 400 buildings, some built over 50 years ago. The cost of putting complete fire protection in each building would be "astronomical" and there is no way the University could fund it, Stiteler said.

'53rd hostage' is on her way home

United Press International
American free-lance journalist Cynthia Dwyer — America's "53rd hostage" — left Iran today aboard an Iran Air flight bound for London, officials at Tehran's Mehrabad airport said.

The only flight out of Tehran today was Iran Air Flight 735, bound for London after stops in Istanbul and Vienna. But the stops en route to London were not immediately confirmed.

The departure of the Amherst, N.Y., woman came one day after an Iranian revolutionary court found her guilty of spying but commuted her sentence to the nine months she already spent in jail and

ordered her expelled.

Dwyer was freed today and handed over to Swiss diplomats and then placed on the freedom flight, which left after a 30-minute delay.

There was no firm indication where the Amherst, N.Y., mother of three would be flown. Her husband, John Dwyer, believed his 49-year-old wife would be flying into New York City.

A spokesman for the Revolutionary Court that tried Mrs. Dwyer told UPI by telephone that the tribunal found her guilty of spying for the United States but commuted her sentence to the nine months she spent in jail.

"The verdict of the Revolutionary Court has been a nine-month imprisonment sentence, taking into account the days she already has served," the spokesman said. "The court has ordered her expulsion from Iran."

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Anita Stockman said she understood Mrs. Dwyer was in "good health" and due to leave Iran almost "immediately."

Iran's Pars news agency Sunday said Mrs. Dwyer "was found guilty on charges of establishing contact with counter-revolutionary agents in order to mediate between them and other American agents."

Mrs. Dwyer was arrested outside the U.S. Embassy May 5 — 10 days after the aborted U.S. raid to free the Americans.

Her friends and family said she went to Tehran, armed with only a press card issued by the local sheriff's office, to write stories that she said would tell the real version of events in Iran.

Her release will leave only one other American in custody in Tehran custody Afghan-born Zia Nassry, who was also arrested last May.

In a surprise move on the day of Mrs. Dwyer's trial, Iran released Iranian-born American Mohi Sobhani, 44, and allowed him to return to his wife in Tehran.

Reagan reviewing economic surgery

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Concentrating on how to avert an "economic calamity," President Reagan today moves into a crucial week reviewing his tax-and-budget-cutting options before publicly unveiling his austerity program.

The president scheduled a lunch with Treasury Secretary Donald Regan and budget director David Stockman, the two men in charge of the administration's economic policy.

The meeting precedes one with Rep. Robert McClory, R-Ill., and a conference with state legislators and county executives later in the day.

The local officials were to be given some inside information on what to expect when Reagan unveils the depth of his new economic program to a joint session of Congress Feb. 18.

In a televised address last week, the president spoke of the need for major economic surgery, contending the United States faced an "economic calamity" and was in the worst financial mess since the Great Depression.

The timing of Reagan's two speeches — the one Thursday and the one to Congress next week — was selected because the current congressional recess for Washington's

birthday falls in between.

The administration hoped members of Congress would return to Washington with positive soundings from their constituents, providing them with leeway to make the hard choices Reagan's proposals will force.

With the president not yet in office three weeks, Lyn Nofziger, one of Reagan's top political consultants, told California Republicans in Sacramento Sunday the president will seek re-election in 1984.

During the past few days, Reagan sent out memos to the heads of approximately 100 non-Cabinet agencies, telling them to promptly contact the Office of Manage-

ment and Budget with their objections to proposed cuts when they see them.

The officials, whose agencies have budgets of about \$70 billion, will get 48 hours to respond.

On Saturday, the day after his 70th birthday, Reagan signed a bill raising the national debt ceiling \$50 billion to \$985 billion. But Reagan was careful in accepting his first legislative victory.

"I was sorry that the inherited policies made this necessary but at least we can now proceed to pay the bills, write the checks and go forward to change these outdated policies," Reagan said through press secretary Jim Brady.

Bright's selection no surprise

By JANE G. BRUST
Battalion Staff
The election of H. R. "Bum" Bright to the chairmanship of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents Friday was no surprise.

When Clyde Wells of Granbury, 64, announced Wednesday that he would not seek a seventh term as chairman, Bright, one of three regents appointed by Gov. Bill Clements in January, was the most likely candidate to succeed him.

Wells served six consecutive two-year terms during the last 12 of his 20 years on the Board. His current term as a regent expires in 1985.

Between committee meetings Thursday, Bright said he did not know if he would be interested in the job.

After his election by the Board on Friday, however, Bright, 60, admitted Clements had favored his election to the position.

"The Governor told me recently, 'It would be my pleasure if you were chairman,'" Bright said. "It was assumed that I would be chairman if I was appointed."

"I'm pleased to be elected, but I don't say that I necessarily wanted it."

"The Governor told me recently, 'It would be my pleasure if you were chairman.' It was assumed that I would be chairman if I was appointed. I'm pleased to be elected, but I don't say that I necessarily wanted it."

Former students and the governor were angered when the regents fired Dr. Jarvis Miller as University president in July.

Bright — who said when he was very young his parents said he looked "like a little railroad bum" — attributed his election to his "good looks."

Bright is a senior partner of Bright & Company, an oil and gas producing firm. He also serves as chairman of the board for East Texas Motor Freight.

The Dallas oilman was nominated by Joe C. Richardson of Amarillo. The nomination was seconded by William A. McKenzie of Dallas. Richardson and McKenzie also began their first six-year terms with Friday's Board meeting.

All three men are graduates of Texas A&M. Their appointments were approved by a Senate subcommittee Wednesday.

John Blocker of Houston succeeds H.C. Bell of Austin as vice chairman of the

Board. Blocker has served four years on the Board.

None of the nine regents would speculate Thursday who Wells' successor might be, but Richardson did say he would like to see Bright get the position.

"He has so much influence," Richardson said, "he can get the governor out of the shower. His contacts are endless."

As Wells handed the gavel to his successor, he pointed out that Bright has contacts in Austin and Washington, D.C.

Bright has known Clements since 1934, and he said, "I've known George Bush a long time."

Regent Norman Moser of DeKalb lauded Bright's election: "He came along at the right time. His contacts are endless."

Wells complimented and congratulated Bright before the Board, and Bright immediately proposed that a plaque be made in recognition of Wells' service as chairman



Staff Photo by Greg Gammont

Aggies do it backwards

Unseasonably warm weather and lots of sunshine brought droves of students outdoors Sunday afternoon. David Haynie, sophomore Building Construction major took advantage of the day to practice some skateboarding tricks before more cold weather hits the area.