

# Local

## A&M awaits new testing lab

By CATHY CAPPS  
Battalion Reporter  
When construction of the En-

gineering Laboratories Center is  
completed next fall, Texas A&M  
University will have a structural

research lab comparable to few  
others in the United States.

The special lab is part of the  
center under construction on Biz-  
zell Street between the Civil En-  
gineering Building and the Zachry  
Engineering Center. Its primary  
use will be testing large structures  
ranging from highway beams to  
bridge components, Dr. Teddy  
Hirsch, civil engineering profes-  
sor and research engineer, said.

Civil engineering Professor  
Bob Gallaway said the building's  
design makes the lab unique. The  
strengths of structures and build-  
ing materials will be tested on a  
huge, strong floor and hydraulic  
jacks.

The lab employs a random load-  
ing system and is not limited to  
testing only certain structures,  
Hirsch said.

Dr. Robert Olson, civil en-  
gineering professor and research  
engineer, said vehicles, airplanes,  
offshore components, large beams  
and even a small building may be  
tested in the new lab.

"The whole floor and basement

is sort of a test machine," Olson  
said.

Hirsch said the lab will have a  
work area 40 feet wide, 100 feet  
long, and 42 feet high.

The floor of the lab is 2 feet thick  
and is covered with approximately  
280 holes, which serve as tie-down  
points for the tested elements.  
The holes are about 3 inches in  
diameter and extend through the  
floor. Hydraulic jacks act against  
the steel-reinforced concrete to  
test the strength of materials by  
either pushing or pulling against  
the floor, Hirsch said.

The test floor of the lab is de-  
signed to handle loads of 100,000  
pounds at each tie-down point.  
One special machine contained in  
the lab has the capacity of more  
than half a million pounds, and can  
be used separately from the strong  
back floor system.

Civil engineering is responsible  
for approximately \$5 million in  
funded research per year, with  
much research sponsored by the  
Department of Transportation and  
private industry, Hirsch said.

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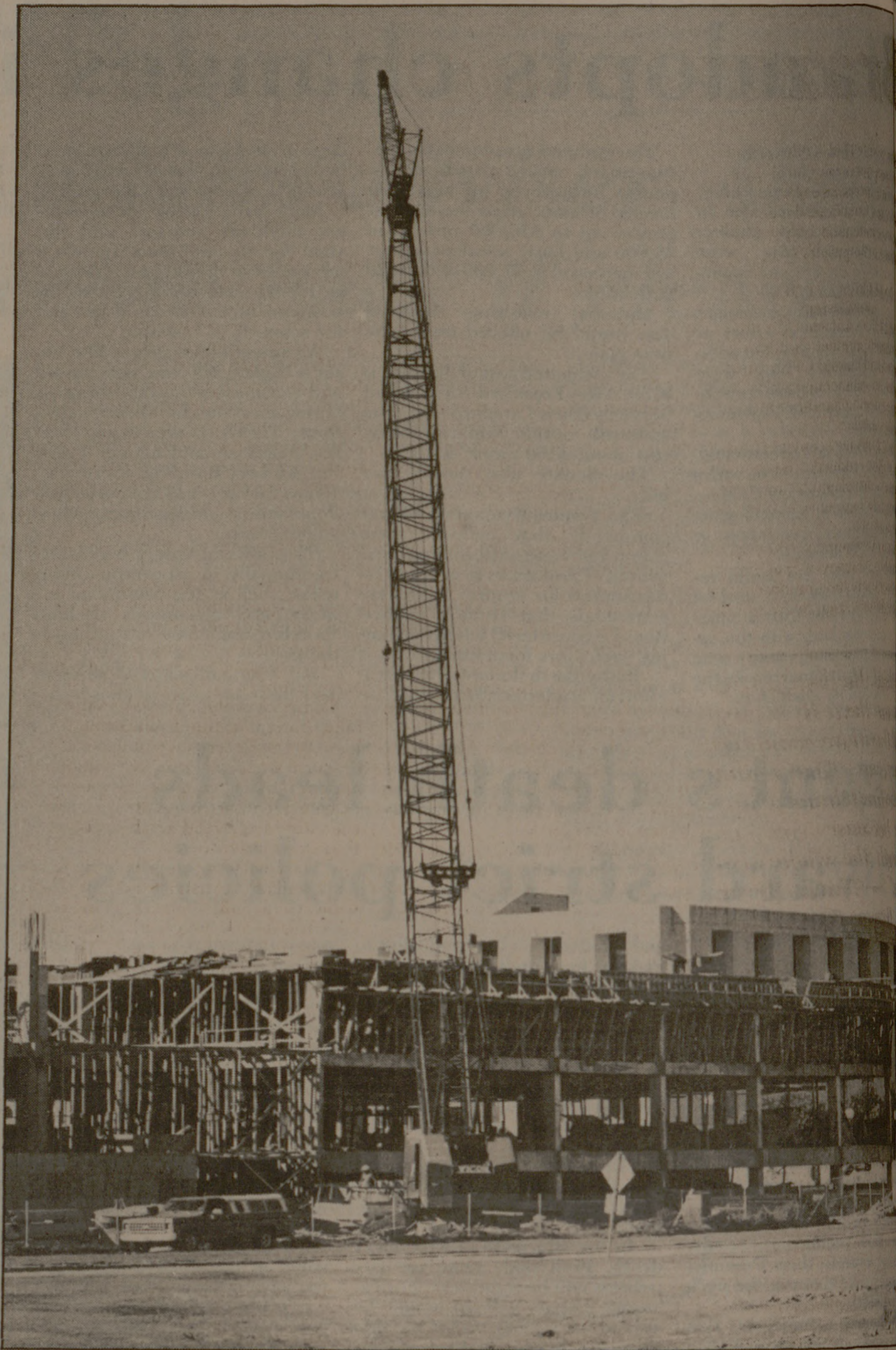
TAMU Horticulture Club

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Staff photo by Dave En-

The Engineering Laboratory Center, south  
of Zachry Engineering Building, is currently  
used as a testing center for large structures.

## Mystery cyanide poisoning affecting Houston residents

United Press International  
HOUSTON — At least 10 resi-  
dents of a Houston Heights neigh-  
borhood are suffering from

cyanide poisoning, but city offi-  
cials have been unable to identify  
the source of contamination.

No deaths have resulted from

the poisoning, but there  
have been complaints of head-  
aches, nausea and a general lack of  
energy. Health officials said  
the amount of the chemical  
the residents tested is not  
near lethal, but victims claim  
symptoms disappear when they  
leave the area.

Dr. Tim Oesch said the proba-  
bility was more threatening to  
young children than to adults. The  
source of the poisoning  
needs to be found quickly, he said.

The neighborhood is between  
small city park and the Gulf  
Bible College. One of the  
works near copper cyanide  
electroplating plant, but Oesch  
said he cannot pinpoint the  
of contamination for the other  
Dallas Evans, chief of the  
Bureau of Air Quality Con-  
said it must be from the air,  
or food, since no other cases  
have been reported in the city.

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