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Illicit pilot crashlands but unhurt

United Press International
HOUSTON — A man, who apparently was intoxicated and unlicensed to fly an airplane, gave residents of Pearland an air show and then crashlanded at the town's airport, police said. "Half the town was at a standstill watching him for 45 minutes," Police Chief G.C. Atkins said Tuesday.

Gerald Griffin was not hurt after crashlanding on his seventh pass over the runway about 5 p.m. The Cessna 170 plane received only slight damage.

Griffin was charged with public intoxication. And the Federal Aviation Administration is investigating Griffin, Atkins said.

"All he had was a health certificate saying it was OK for him to take flying lessons," Atkins said.

Texas drunken drivers may face tougher laws

Driving-while-intoxicated laws will probably be toughened in the next state legislative session, state Sen. Kent Caperton said Wednesday. But, he said mandatory jail sentences for all first-time offenders are unrealistic.

Caperton, speaking at the Sixth Annual Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at Texas A&M University, said that over-crowded county jails and problems of judges and probation officers must be considered along with the need to remove drunken drivers from the streets.

Mandatory jail sentences for all DWI first-offenders have been requested by members of MADD — Mothers

Against Drunk Driving, Caperton said.

"Yes, we do need to toughen the DWI laws and I believe that they will be toughened," the state senator from Bryan said, "but we cannot put blinders about the rest of the system."

Caperton said the Legislature has already begun to act in the area of alcohol abuse.

"The Texas Legislature historically has been largely unconcerned with this problem," he said, "but during the past two years dramatic changes have occurred."

Caperton cited five laws enacted recently which he believes will make an impact on the problem.

One of those bills raised the drinking age to 19, which Caperton said may have paved the way for even older age limits.

"There will be a move next time to raise the drinking age even higher," he said.

Caperton said a bill requiring anyone on probation for a first DWI offense to attend a DWI education program should help prevent repeat offenders.

One measure he believes would be beneficial is a requirement that medical schools include a course on alcohol abuse in their curriculum.

Caperton's speech was the keynote address of the insti-



Kent Caperton

tute's alcohol abuse program, "Community in Crisis," which includes workshops on alcoholism sponsored by the state to increase awareness of the problem.

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Convicted bid-rigger aiding Colorado feds

United Press International
DENVER — A Kansas contractor convicted of rigging competitive bids for highway paving work in Kansas is cooperating with authorities to determine whether a pervasive bid-rigging scandal has spread to Colorado.

Donald Popejoy of Ulysses, Kan., and his attorney, James Eisenbrandt, of Overland Park, Kan., met for three hours Tues-

day with representatives of the Colorado attorney general's office and the highway department.

Eisenbrandt said Popejoy agreed to answer questions after receiving a written agreement that he would not be prosecuted in Colorado should the state investigation turn up any evidence of wrongdoing.

"Just because the agreement was written, it shouldn't be implied in any way, shape or form that he (Popejoy) has anything to hide," Eisenbrandt said. "The reason for the letter is, as Donald Popejoy's lawyer, I felt he was entitled to some kind of protection."

Similar agreements signed in more than 15 other states, including Texas, have led to some 250 indictments, convictions and cash fines involving alleged bid-rigging.

The Popejoy Construction Co., Inc., has been awarded more than \$14 million in Colorado road projects by the state Department of Highways.

Eisenbrandt said Popejoy told the Colorado authorities he was "not engaged in collusive activity in the state of Colorado nor is he aware of any."

Bid-rigging investigations in other states have turned up evidence that private contractors agreed among themselves to submit the lowest bid on a specific highway project.

Prosecutors have also colluding contractors submitting the low bid, ensuring the work was distributed evenly among competitors.

Robert Miller, the attorney for Colorado, said he was interested in the investigation and may improve federal task force working in Kansas and the last few months.

Popejoy and Peter Sons' Inc., of Omaha, another contractor that has extensive work in Colorado, been suspended in other states from seeking highway work.

State Highway Department Director Jack Kinsinger last week no firms had been suspended in Colorado, but had been warned their option to bid in Colorado was revoked.

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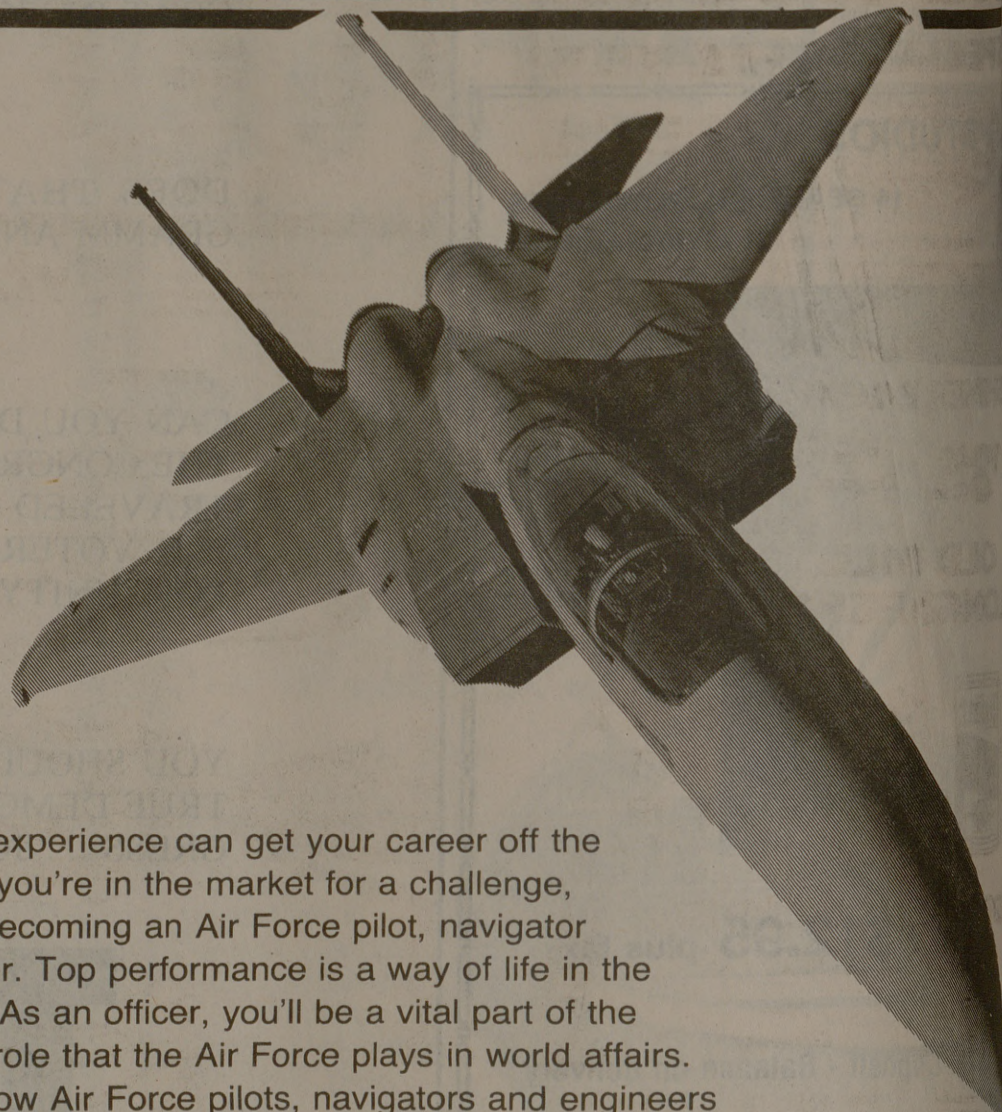
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