

# White's first bill to close loophole

United Press International  
AUSTIN — Aides to Gov. Mark White say the first piece of legislation he signs into law will be a bill to close a legal loophole that threatens to cost the state \$100 million in revenue.

On a nearly unanimous vote Monday, the Texas House passed emergency legislation aimed at closing a loophole in laws used to regulate the way Texas sells mineral rights on state-owned lands.

Since 1939, Texas has used sealed, competitive bids to sell mineral rights, particularly for oil and gas. Such lease sales annually generate millions of dollars in state revenues.

But, according to Land Commissioner Garry

Mauro, an Arlington lawyer, John Foster, discovered and used an antiquated statute that allowed developers to get around the bidding process by filing "prospector permits."

A prospector permit, Mauro said, allowed a person to pay a \$2 filing fee for the right to look for oil and gas on specified tracts of state land. If a discovery was made, the prospector was obligated only to pay the state a \$2 bonus for each acre of land leased and a one-eighth share of oil royalties.

In contrast, leases made under the sealed-bid process routinely yield bonuses of \$10 to \$40 an acre and royalties ranging from one-fifth to one-third of production.

"Had others (besides Foster) been able to take advantage of this loophole in our laws, it could have been disastrous and cost the state millions of dollars in lost oil and gas revenues," said the bill's sponsor, Sen. Tati Santiesteban, D-El Paso.

Foster's company stands to make \$5 million more on the Eastland tract than they would have had they used the sealed-bid method, Mauro said.

The Senate passed the same bill last week and White is expected to sign it in the next few days.

Foster and his company, West Texas Minerals Inc., were the only parties who tried to utilize the prospector permits, Mauro said.

# White to fight drugs with laws, more agents

United Press International  
AUSTIN — Gov. Mark White Tuesday promised tougher laws and additional drug agents to perpetuate and expand the Texans' War on Drugs program during his administration.

White, speaking to the first Texans' War on Drugs Youth Leadership Conference, urged several hundred youths from across the state to open another front in the battle against drug usage and trafficking by building and exerting peer pressure against narcotics abuse in their schools and communities.

The governor repeated his

stated intention to increase the Department of Public Safety's narcotics division squad beyond its current 169 agents. He also indicated that the use of federal military forces to combat drug trafficking may become more of a factor in the future.

"We now have the ability to utilize military forces, military radar, military air surveillance," White said.

He said he will seek a mix of stronger laws and increased enforcement personnel as the best method of combatting "the multi-billion-dollar nightmare" of drug abuse and trafficking.

"It does absolutely no good to pass a law and not have it enforced," White said.

White indicated he will work more to expand the laws enacted during Clements' administration than change them.

"My predecessor and I disagreed on many issues, but one we did agree on is the war on drugs," White said.

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# Man's phone call leads to arrest

United Press International  
AUSTIN — A man who telephoned police Monday to inquire whether they had a warrant for him on bank robbery charges was arrested a few hours later at a motel, authorities said Tuesday.

Gary Faubion, 31, of Fredericksburg, was charged with aggravated robbery in the Jan. 5 holdup of the Gibraltar Savings & Loan Association in northwest Austin, Lt. Olan Kelly said.

He is in the Austin city jail under \$75,000 bond.

Faubion was arrested after a man telephoned the Travis County Sheriff's office, wanting to know if they had a warrant for him for bank robbery. He would not say where he was.

Authorities then received a tip that the suspect might be in the Oak Hill area southwest of Austin.

Sheriff's office spokesman Curtis Weeks said Deputy Sheriff James Scroggins stopped at a motel on U.S. 290 southwest of Austin Monday night and found that Faubion had checked in at 9:30 p.m.

Since the suspect had earlier threatened to "shoot it out" with police, Weeks said Scroggins called in three other officers and broke into the room. He said Faubion did not resist arrest.

Kelly said a man who identified himself as Faubion called Austin police earlier and said he planned to surrender at 8 a.m.

Faubion was charged in a heist in which a bandit placed a package said to contain a bomb on the bank counter. He was given an undisclosed amount of cash and left.

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