

Texas faces slow recovery

Southwest economy ebbs

United Press International
Energy and energy-related industries in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma have been seriously hurt by declining oil prices, and the situation will get worse, an economic forecasting firm reported Tuesday.

"During the last quarter of 1982, economic conditions within the region continued to deteriorate," according to the report by Chase Econometrics.

Total employment in the four states has fallen 2.5 percent since March alone, the report said, representing a loss of some 250,000 jobs.

"While just about all major employment sectors have been hit by employment losses, ranging from the textile, transportation, computer equipment, and electronics industries in the manufacturing sector to the construction and trade sectors in non-manufacturing, the largest declines have occurred in those industries with strong ties to the energy sector," the report said.

From 1978 to 1982, oil prices grew at a faster rate than did average prices. Since then, however, the decline in oil prices "has been unprecedented," the

report said, and the real price has dropped for seven consecutive quarters.

"The impact of this decline in the real price of oil has been clear cut," the report said. Mining employment declined by 10 percent since the

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first quarter of 1982, resulting in the loss of more than 50,000 jobs. Employment in the structural metal products industry in Texas and Oklahoma has declined by 20 percent. There has been a 40 percent drop in the mining and oil field equipment industry in Texas and Oklahoma.

Meanwhile, there has been a "multiplier impact" on other

sectors of the economy, the report stated. Severance taxes collected by state governments also showed a major drop, the report said.

"The outlook for the region is not bright for 1983," the report said. "Consequently, we expect the recovery in the region to lag the national recovery."

The U.S. is experiencing a rise in total employment, but "we do not expect this to occur within the region until late in the first quarter of 1983," the report said. By the end of 1983, national employment is expected to rise by 2.3 percent, but by only 1.75 percent in the Southwest.

Depressed oil prices due to the worldwide recession resulted in continuing layoffs in the mining and oil field equipment sectors. Declining national investment added to problems in Texas by retarding growth in the electronics industry. During the last quarter of 1982, total nonagricultural employment fell by 0.8 percent, or a loss of more than 52,000 jobs. This decline accounted for 45 percent

of the employment loss during the 12-month period ending in December 1982. During the last quarter, manufacturing employment fell by 2.8 percent, or 29,700 jobs; oil field machinery employment lost 12,300 jobs and another 10,000 jobs were lost in the metals industry. Only the finance and service sectors experienced growth, adding a total of 10,500 jobs. The largest absolute loss was in the wholesale and retail trade areas, where employment fell by 24,700, the firm reported.

Outlook: The Texas economy will be slow to pick up and employment is expected to lag behind the U.S. average for most of 1983, the report predicted. Employment should improve, however, in 1984. By 1985, the impact of rising defense spending and high technology should offset the weakness of the energy sector. Unemployment will remain relatively high — expected to rise to 8.4 percent during the first half of 1983 and then fall very slowly to just under 7 percent by the end of 1985. Even that rate is much higher than the 4 and 5 percent rates of the late 1970s, the firm reported.



Making waves

staff photo by Eric Evan Lee

How do you spell relief for a hot summer day? Charlie Burns, 3, Rudder Fountain Wednesday.

New laws benefit consumers

United Press International
AUSTIN — Consumers gained an unprecedented interest rate break, and taxpayers held their own during the 68th session of the Texas Legislature, but the real battle for taxpayers may still be ahead.

Though the Legislature adjourned without addressing Gov. Mark White's proposal for a \$1.2 billion tax increase to fund teacher salary raises, the issue is assured of being at the forefront of a special session this summer.

"I think it is imperative that the citizens of the state feel like the Legislature did its best to produce a bare bones budget," said Robert Strauser, executive vice president of the Texas Association of Taxpayers.

Strauser also applauded the Legislature for rejecting proposals to increase the severance tax on oil and gas and hike the school tax burden on industry.

While taxpayers may have been heartened that no increase was able to make it to the House floor, consumer advocates are elated at legislation that failed to even reach a vote in the Legislature.

"The homestead legislation didn't make it out of committee in either the House or Senate," said Jim Boyle, spokesman for

the Texas Consumer Association. "We consider that a real plus."

The legislation proposed to repeal the current ban on a homestead being used to secure a loan other than a mortgage.

But Boyle said the most important consumer measure addressed by the Legislature was a bill passed and already signed into law by White — the lowering of the interest rate ceiling on bank credit cards.

"It's certainly the No. 1 piece of consumer legislation," Boyle said. "I think it's significant that for the first time this century a state has lowered interest rates."

Under the new law, bank credit card interest rates will be allowed to float between 14 and 22 percent, with the actual level determined by the rate paid on U.S. Treasury bills. Under current T-bill rates, the interest rate would be 16.5 percent — the lowest in the nation.

The 1981 Legislature set the bank credit card interest ceiling at 24 percent. The lower rates are expected to be reflected in billings this month.

"Even though it's only one area of credit, it sends a signal to lenders that overreaching and unresponsiveness are not the order of the day," Boyle said. "I think the ultimate impact may

be far greater."

Reform of the Public Utility Commission — another piece of legislation dear to consumers — didn't go far enough, Boyle said, but did allow some gains. The groundwork for regional hearings was established and an independent public counsel was established. However, Boyle criticized the failure of the bill to call for an elected commission, weak language in a restriction on construction work in progress being included in rate bases and a lack of adequate funding for the public counsel's office.

"The language is not tough enough on CWIP," Boyle said of the provision which allows CWIP to be included in a rate

base if the PUC determines it is vital to a utility's financial integrity.

"Why should the ratepayer be loaning money to a utility when the utility is in a much better position to go out and borrow elsewhere?" he said.

Boyle also pegged a bill allowing electronic transfer of funds from a consumer's personal account to the account of a retail

merchant as one which will have immeasurable long-range implications, saying it will affect how people will spend money.

"They're going to spend more," he said.

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Refunds: Workshop fees will be refunded 100% four days prior to the first class meeting, provided your cancellation does not place the class below its minimum enrollment of five students, and 95% after the four days prior to class limit. Full refunds are issued if the class is cancelled.

Day	Class	Dates	Times	Location	Student Fee	Non-Student Fee	Instructor	
MONDAY	Beginning Pottery	June 13,20,27 July 11,18,25	5:00-7:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.00	\$21.00	Ann Dobbs	
	Beginning Pottery	June 13,20,27 July 11,18,25	7:30-9:30 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.00	\$21.00	Ann Dobbs	
	Gas Kiln Construction	June 27 and to be arranged	7:00-9:00 p.m.	MSC 137A	\$18.00	\$18.00	Brian Dougan	
	Quilting	June 13,20,27 July 11,18,25	7:00-9:00 p.m.	MSC 137	\$18.00	\$21.00	Norma Metzger	
	Basic Watercolor Techniques	June 20,27 July 11,18,25 Aug. 1	7:30-9:30 p.m.	MSC 137A	\$18.00	\$21.00	Betty Graham	
	Stained Glass Suncatchers	June 13,20,27 July 11	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Ruoms	\$12.00	\$14.00	Linda Thompson	
	Beginning Stained Glass	June 13,20,27 July 11,18	7:00-9:30 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.75	\$21.25	Connie Hester	
	Furniture Construction	June 13,20,27 July 11,18,25 Aug. 1,8	7:00-10:00 p.m.	Woodshop	\$20.00	\$20.00	Wayne Helton	
	TUESDAY	Introduction to Calligraphy	June 14,21,28 July 12,19,26	7:00-9:00 p.m.	MSC 137	\$18.00	\$21.00	Stacia Ogles-Smith
		Basic Drawing	June 14,21,28 July 12,19,26	6:00-8:00 p.m.	MSC 137A	\$18.00	\$21.00	Helen Finney
Intermediate Pottery		June 14,21,28 July 12	6:00-8:30 p.m.	Craft Center	\$12.00	\$14.00	Ann Dobbs	
Batik		June 14,21,28 July 12,19,26	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.00	\$21.00	Lucia Athens	
Evening of Needlework		June 14	7:00-9:30 p.m.	MSC 137	\$ 3.75	\$ 4.25	Cheryl Earp	
Evening of Needlework		July 12	7:00-9:30 p.m.	MSC 137A	\$ 3.75	\$ 4.25	Cheryl Earp	
Beginning Stained Glass		June 14,21,28 July 12,19,26	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.00	\$21.00	Linda Thompson	
WEDNESDAY	Woodshop Orientation	June 15,22,29 July 13,20,27	3:00-5:00 p.m.	Woodshop	\$18.00	\$21.00	Wayne Helton	
	Woodshop Orientation	June 15,22,29 July 13,20,27	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Woodshop	\$18.00	\$21.00	Wayne Helton	
	Beginning Stained Glass	June 15,22,29 July 13,20,27	7:00-9:30 p.m.	Ruoms	\$18.75	\$21.25	Connie Hester	
	Glass Etching	June 15,22	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Craft Center	\$ 7.50	\$ 9.00	Deborah Brown	
	Glass Etching	July 13,20	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Craft Center	\$ 7.50	\$ 9.00	Deborah Brown	
	Watercolor Painting	June 22,29 July 13,20,27	6:00-8:00 p.m.	MSC 137	\$14.00	\$17.50	Helen Finney	
	Beginning Pottery	June 15,22,29 July 13,20,27	4:30-6:30 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.00	\$21.00	Graye Lynn Hodgson	
	Intermediate Pottery	June 15,22,29 July 13,20,27	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.00	\$21.00	Michael Hodgson	
	Matting and Framing	June 15,22,29	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$ 9.00	\$10.50	Russell Cox	
	Matting and Framing	July 13,20,27	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$ 9.00	\$10.50	Russell Cox	
THURSDAY	Dried Flower Suncatcher	July 27 Aug. 3	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$ 7.50	\$ 9.00	Deborah Brown	
	Advanced Calligraphy	June 15,22,29 July 13,20,27	7:00-9:00 p.m.	MSC 137A	\$18.00	\$21.00	Stacia Ogles-Smith	
	Advanced Pottery	June 16,23,30 July 14,21	7:00-9:30 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.75	\$21.25	Brian Dougan	
		June 16,23,30 July 14,21,28	7:00-9:30 p.m.	Craft Center	\$18.75	\$21.25	Connie Hester	
	Acrylic Painting	June 23,30 July 14,21,28	7:00-9:00 p.m.	MSC 137	\$14.00	\$17.50	Stacia Ogles-Smith	
	Beginning Air Brush Techniques	July 14,21,28 Aug. 4	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$11.50	\$14.00	Helen Finney	
	Casting: Jewelry and small Sculpture	July 14,21,28 Aug. 4	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$12.00	\$14.00	Famela Hamlette	
	Copper Enameling	June 16,23,30 July 14,21,28	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$10.00	\$11.50	Famela Hamlette	
	Matting and Framing	June 16,23,30 July 14,21,28	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Craft Center	\$ 9.00	\$10.50	Russell Cox	