

# A&M a stable force for local economy

by Jill Slayman

**Battalion Reporter**  
Texas A&M University — the center of the Bryan-College Station area — may be one of the main reasons the local economy is stable and the unemployment rate is the lowest in the state. Hampton Patterson, labor market analyst of the local Texas Employment Commission, says the unemployment rate for the Bryan-College Station area was the lowest in Texas at 4.1 percent for the month of June. In May, the rate was 3.9 percent, the lowest in the nation. In contrast, the highest unemployment rate in the nation in May was in Laredo at 26.2 percent. Patterson said government-supported organizations such as state-funded universities and

military bases help stabilize the areas in which they are located, simply because there tends to be less lay-off within government positions. Mary Jo Powell, assistant director for public information at Texas A&M, said a rough estimate of all University and System employees whose headquarters are at College Station is about 6,000. All of those are non-faculty members. There are about 2,100 faculty-ranked employees involved in either teaching or research. Powell said the 1982 payroll for Texas A&M was \$184.3 million, which was up \$19.2 million from 1981. There were 9,889 permanent Texas A&M employees in Bryan-College Station. Student workers who list a Bryan-College Station permanent

address are included in the figure. The employee turnover is seasonal, Powell said. A large number of non-faculty positions open following a graduation commencement. Powell said clerk/typist, secretary and senior secretary positions are usually open all the time. Food service positions are seasonal; they are cut somewhat during the summer. There is a phone number which can be called to hear information on what University jobs are available. The jobline is up-dated every day, Powell said. Powell also said the University has a strong impact on the local economy. "Students alone contribute \$95 million a year for food, housing, and clothing," she said. Charles Gillespie, assistant director of personnel at Texas A&M, said another major reason for the continued stability of the local economy is the movement of new business into the area. A member of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, Gillespie said the area has high business ethics which helps draw new industry. The number of unions and welfare recipients is fairly low, he said, and there is a sense of pride that industries look for. Pat Mann, executive president of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, said 65 new businesses were incorporated into the area in January, February and March. The figures have been about the same for the two preceding years, he said. The oil industry has slowed somewhat locally, but compared to other parts of the state, a lot of drilling is still done here, he said. Access to Houston for shipment of goods is another factor to which Gillespie attributes the favorability of Bryan-College Station to industry. He said he feels that another industry-drawing force may be the prospect of recruiting high-technology employees from Texas A&M.

# Cable offers choice

For families with cable television, agreeing on a program to watch can be a difficult task. The list of cable programs seems endless compared to the limited choices during the early years of television broadcasting and the list just keeps on growing along with cable television. Bryan-College Station residents have been served for the past 13 years by two cable television companies — Midwest Video and Community Cablevision.

Midwest offers the viewer 26 channels. Community offers 32 channels, many the same as Midwest. Both compete for the same customers in Bryan-College Station.

Both Midwest and Community offer local viewers a basic program package as well as premium services.

The basic packages of both Midwest and Community consist of programs devoted to sports — ESPN, news — CNN, music — MTV, religious — CBN, and Spanish — SIN.

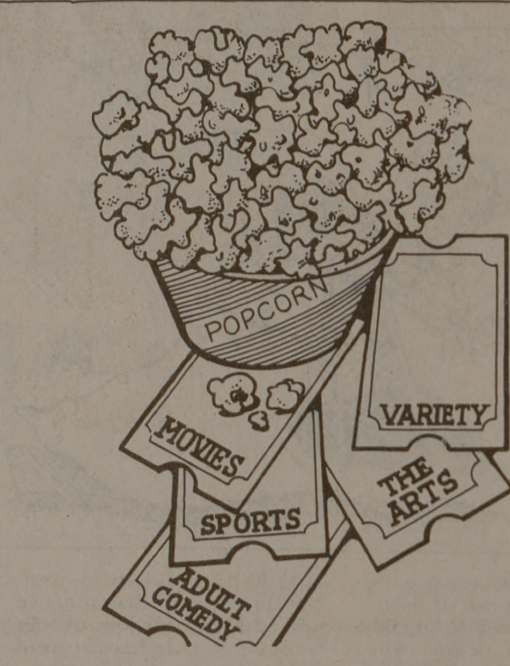
The cable systems also carry Bryan's KBTX and Texas A&M's KAMU-TV. All three major networks — ABC, CBS, NBC — are carried in the basic packages. The cost of the basic service is about \$6 per month.

Both Midwest and Community offer the superstations — WTBS in Atlanta and WGN in Chicago plus Houston's KTXH. These superstations carry such programs as old, classic movies and sporting events. The superstations are included in the basic packages.

The three superstations were added to Midwest Cable Co.'s program in July after they were taken off in March of this year.

WTBS-TV Atlanta, WOR-TV New York, and WGN-TV Chicago were dropped in March when Copyright Royalty Tribunal increased the compulsory license fees for long distance signals.

The premium services offered by the cable firms in-



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clude the movie channels and special entertainment programs. The Movie Channel and Home Box Office are offered by both Midwest and Community. Community also offers the Playboy channel and Cinemax. The cost per premium channel is about \$8 per month.

Midwest and Community offer services to all areas of Bryan-College Station including the Texas A&M campus. Each fall, the cable firms have sign-up booths on campus. This year both Midwest and Community will set up booths in the Commons. Midwest also will have booths in the Corps dorm lounge areas.

In order to assure prompt service, students should sign up when arriving for the fall semester.

Midwest Cable Co. will have new rates for this year. The College Station city council approved rate changes of \$4 to \$6 for regular service and \$2.50 to \$4 for the superstations.

Currently any rate increases requests must be approved by the city council. However, if Senate Bill 66 is approved, that may change. The controversial bill would

limit the authority of states and cities to regulate cable television.

The College Station City Council donated \$370 to the Texas Municipal League Cable Defense Fund to support its lobbying efforts against the bill.

A provision of the bill would allow the FCC to eliminate the cities' authority to restrict subscription rates for basic service if the commission determines there are "reasonably available alternatives to the basic service."

A provision of the bill is a redefinition of basic service. Previously, basic service included public, educational or governmental programming. It is now only defined as "the retransmission of broadcast signals."

Also, the bill would require cable systems with 20 or more channels to reserve 10 percent of available channels for use by public, educational or governmental programmers only.

Midwest Video Corp. will have a government access channel starting next month. The access channel will be 13, which now is a duplication of Channel 3 in Bryan. The gov-

ernment access channel be used for such things as announcing city council meetings and special elections. Midwest also has access to programming.

Not only viewers are concerned with what type of programming, FCC also is concerned. FCC has to be kept up to date on programming. "The FCC is not so concerned with what type of programs you are carrying it is with where you are carrying them," Midwest's assistant manager Steve Braz said. "Some bands are special things like area and if you leak into those signals you can get it and possibly have your license taken away."

Cable companies do not have to have a license; also have to be franchised by the city council. Midwest is franchised by the council every ten years, for re-franchising in 1985.

"I don't anticipate a problem in having our franchise renewed," Braz said. "We try to keep in touch with the city council about programs and any problem that they might see. The one reason I think we do have any trouble getting rate increase."

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## Chamber

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meet visiting celebrities who come to Texas A&M. "The community information committee is an effort to form a bridge between Texas A&M and the rest of the community," Bell said. The College Station branch also plans the Brazos De Dios Rodeo and festival scheduled for April 19-21 and the Texas Triathlon, a competition involving swimming, running and cycling that is co-sponsored by the Texas A&M Extramurals Department. The Bryan branch of the Chamber of Commerce is geared more toward the business community. Besides the seminars pro-

vided by the small business council, the Bryan branch is involved in stimulating growth in agriculture, industry and education for Bryan-College Station. The agriculture division secures buyers for the Brazos County Youth Livestock Show held each March. The division also provides information to area farmers and ranchers on improving the quality and quantity of hay and beef. Pat Siegert, agricultural division vice president, said the object of his division for 1983 is to provide recognition for the agricultural community in the Bryan-College Station area. He said he also wants to enhance the role agriculture plays in the local economy and encourage community's youth to careers in agriculture. The industrial division coordinates the efforts of the Brazos County Industrial Foundation, the Bryan Development Foundation, the College Station Industrial Development Foundation and Texas A&M in bringing new industries to the area. Ben Hardeman, vice president commercial division, said the primary goal of his division is to increase involvement and awareness of the small business community in the chamber activities. A second goal, he said, is to increase minority business participation and produce the Brazos Valley Economic Development Conference for

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