

# Spring Break celeb

## Tourists offered choice of activities in East Texas

By LAURI REESE  
Staff Writer

Wait — before you reserve your spot on the beach or on the snowy slopes for Spring Break, consider East Texas — especially if you're interested in historical homes, lakes or hiking and camping in parks and forests.

Tourism is one of Texas' largest industries, second only to petroleum, according to a newsletter issued by the East Texas Chamber of Commerce, and East Texas tourism accounts for \$7.6 billion of the \$13.7 billion in state revenues that the industry produces.

In Austin, tourists can visit the massive, pink granite state capitol, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, or the LBJ Ranch, located 50 miles from the city.

Water recreation is a way of life along the 150-mile chain of seven lakes, the Highland Lakes of Central Texas.

Eight miles west of Huntsville on Farm Road 1374, also called Possum Walk Road, visitors will find the Bird and Butterfly Museum.

Over 25,000 butterflies are on display there, making the museum one of the largest butterfly collections in the United States, Sandy Wier, of the Huntsville Visitor and Convention Bureau, said.

Wier said the museum also features exotic birds mounted in beautiful settings, such as on trees or in gardens.

The Sam Houston Memorial Museum is in Huntsville, as are two of Houston's former homes that have been restored and Houston's grave.

The Sacred Gardens, seven acres of pine forest filled with religious shrines, each with its

own garden, can be found deep in the piney forest, east of New Waverly on U.S. Highway 150. Wier said almost every kind of tree that grows in East Texas is there.

Hikers might enjoy the Lone Star Hiking Trail or the Huntsville State Park, where they can hike, bike or rent paddle boats.

In Crockett, the fifth oldest town in Texas, tourists can visit historical homes, like the Downes-Aldrich house or the Monroe Crook House, and historical sites, like the San Francisco de Los Tejas Mission and the Rice Log Cabin.

Visitors can boat, fish, camp and go to the Davy Crockett National Forest or the Mission State Park.

On March 15 and 16, the Junior Livestock Show will be held in Jacksonville, at the Cherokee County Showbarn on Loop 456.

Peggy Renfro, of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, said fishing is excellent in Lake Jacksonville and students would probably enjoy Love's Lookout, a state park with hiking trails, on U.S. Highway 69 North.

Jacksonville is near Lake Striker and Lake Palestine and is the home of Fairchild State Forest, the Killough Monument, Lester-Hamlin Gardens and the Vanishing Texana Museum.

Jim Hogg, the first native-born governor of Texas, was born in the town of Rusk, which now brags of the nation's longest footbridge, the Rusk State Railroad Park, the Jim Hogg State Park, historical homes and hiking trails.

Everything's just starting to bloom in Palestine, Mary Barton, of the Palestine Convention and Visitors Bureau, said. It's beautiful countryside, she said.

Visitors to Palestine must see the John H. Reagan Memorial Center, with its shops, exhibits and Indian artifacts, Barton said.

Pat Boniface, of the Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce, said Lake Nacogdoches is good for fishing and boating, as is Toledo Bend Lake, only 20 miles from the city.

At Lake Murval, tourists can sail, fish, rent cabins and motor boats, and camp, Tommie Gates, of the Panola Chamber of Commerce, said.

Madeline Shelton, of the Groesbeck Chamber of Commerce, said visitors would probably enjoy the Red Stocking Follies, a play put on by the people of Groesbeck as a community fund raiser.

The play will be held March 16 and 17 at 8 p.m. at the Groesbeck High School Gym.

Other sites to see in East Texas include the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame in Waco, the Wax Museum of the Southwest and the Texas Sports Hall of Fame in Grand Prairie, and White Water, with two facilities in Grand Prairie and Garland, America's largest family recreation park.

To find out other recreational and sightseeing information in East Texas, get a copy of a 1984 East Texas Vacation Guide. It is free at any of the state's 12 tourists bureaus, at auto club offices all over the nation, and at more than 100 host cities, lakes, and attractions in the 71 counties of East Texas.

To write for a copy of the book, send \$1 to:

East Texas Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 1592  
Longview, TX 75606.

