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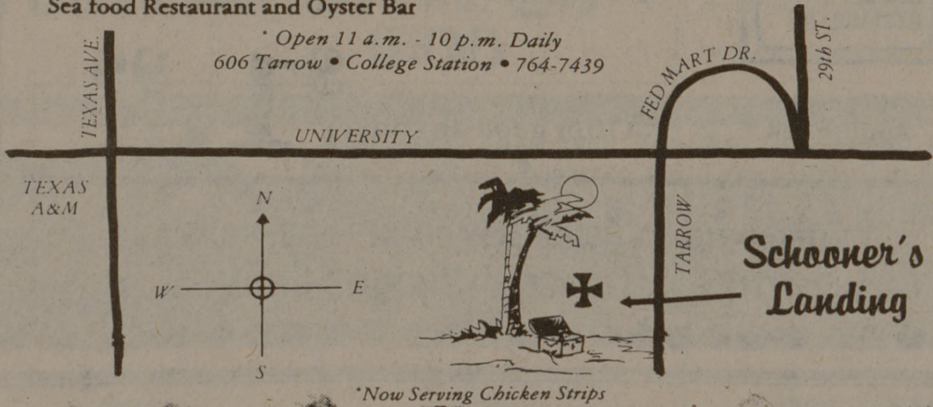
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Funds sought for reforms

Tax increases likely choice

United Press International
AUSTIN — Increases in the gasoline and sales taxes are the most likely choices to finance a \$1.6 billion plan to overhaul Texas' public school system, Gov. Mark White said Tuesday.

White said his tax plan, which he hopes to have finalized within a week to 10 days, may also include some new sin taxes on such luxury items as liquor and tobacco.

"Those two (gasoline and sales taxes) seem to have the greatest support at this time," he said during an impromptu news conference. "There's some reason to believe there will be some luxury taxes involved."

"I'm going to try to make sure we don't offer too many things to divert a consensus. We

want to make a proposal around which everyone can say yes."

White is expected to call a special session of the Texas Legislature in May or June to address education reforms recommended by H. Ross Perot's Select Committee on Public Education.

The committee, which has been studying the Texas public school system for 10 months, meets in Dallas Thursday to present the final draft of its proposals.

White said the tax plan being developed by his staff, in cooperation with Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and House Speaker Gib Lewis, would call for additional education expenditures over the next three years of about \$1.6 billion.

The state currently spends

about \$4 billion a year for education.

Comptroller Bob Bullock, a member of the Perot committee, had suggested earlier the education reforms would cost nearly \$20 billion.

But White said the proposals to which Bullock referred were "Cadillacs with fins on it," adding, "We're looking at what we consider the essentials of this education program."

White said the essentials include a pay raise for teachers, equalization aid to school districts, improved student-teacher ratios, language development, and additional remedial and advanced programs.

The governor said he will stick by his earlier recommendation that teachers receive a two-year, 24 percent pay hike.

Perot said Monday the Legislature does not represent elected 27-member state panel, all of the education reforms would be for

But White said although also supports an advisory board, Perot should understand the workings of the legislative process.

"I didn't get even asked for the Legislature," he said. "One thing you can't have it exactly the way you want it."

"You work from what you can do and what you want to try to accomplish what I hope he (Perot) should understand."

'Case closed' in coed death

United Press International
BOULDER, Colo. — Prosecutors say a man cleared by a jury Saturday in the strangulation death of a University of Colorado coed remains the only suspect and the case is closed.

After a 10 day murder trial, Keith Brown was found not guilty of the Oct. 13 strangulation death of his girlfriend, Kelly Lyn Watson, 21, of Carrollton, Texas. Her body was found in the front seat of Brown's car.

"From the standpoint of the district attorney's office, the case involving the death of Kelly Lyn Watson is over," prosecutor Phil Miller said Tuesday. "Mr. Brown was and is the only suspect."

Police Capt. Hal Nees said that police will interview Brown once more to find out if he has

any new information. "If any leads develop that information, we'll have completely and thoroughly investigated every information that was available to this point."

Brown has maintained he and Watson were out from a park and forested to a remote location, where Watson was killed.

Watson's mother, Jo Watson of Carrollton, said her daughter had told her she was having a break off her relationship with Brown. Brown also told her mother she was having a "uncontrollable" per, her mother said.

"I am suffering now and I do believe he's guilty and not going to pay for it," Watson said Tuesday.

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3 asbestos workers settle for \$433,000

United Press International
HOUSTON — Three asbestos workers who claimed they suffered health problems from long-term exposure to asbestos insulation reached an out-of-court settlement Tuesday with 11 out-of-state firms that manufacture the insulation, an attorney said.

Haril Hilton, 54, and Louis Dison, 61, both of Houston, and George King, 64, of Odessa, each had sought damages from the firms for lung respiratory problems which they claimed were caused by exposure to as-

bestos during their career as insulation workers.

The plaintiffs claimed the companies failed to warn workers of the hazards of working with asbestos and were negligent in its manufacture.

Rex Houston, an attorney who represented the three workers, said the workers agreed to settle the case for \$433,000 moments before trial began. King and Dison received \$70,000 in damages with Hilton receiving the remaining \$293,000, Houston said.

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IRS charges \$1,657 interest on 1 penny

United Press International
ARAPAHO, Okla. — Custer County was 1 cent short on its tax return and the Internal Revenue Service wants it to pay interest on the 1 cent — along with \$1,657.15 in interest, county officials said.

The county fell one cent short on its payment of \$50,784.56 to the government.

"I guess the moral of the story is just to add a nickel to your tax return so you don't have to pay this kind of interest," Custer County Clerk Vin Klein said.

He said the IRS computerized the county's tax return, programmed to charge 1 percent interest on the total if any portion is due.

Klein said the county had the taxes on employee's payroll well before the April 15 deadline, but "obviously had a miscalculation that rounded down the IRS had one that rounded up."

Klein said Custer County gladly pay its one penny but said it will not pay the interest.

"I'm not going authorizing county to pay out that kind of money," he said.

He said that when he called the IRS in Austin they would not return their phones.

"Well, I'm busy too and don't have time for this," Klein said.

"I'll tell you why they won't answer their phones," Klein said. "It's because computer can't talk."