

New office to be shot in the arm for small business

United Press International
AUSTIN — A newly created arm of the governor's office is trying to boost the Texas economy by making healthy businesses even more prosperous and turning the dreams of budding entrepreneurs into profitable realities, and one branch of the program will be centered at Texas A&M.

Economic Development, created five months ago by Gov. Mark White, has begun several programs aimed at fueling the economy by beefing up existing small businesses and encouraging the creation of new ones. "We're trying to figure out how we can give entrepreneurship a boost in Texas," Director Harden Wiedemann said. "People think Texas is the last great bastion of capitalism

and entrepreneurship, and we sort of like that and believe that. Yet official state government support for small businesses has been next to nil." The Small Business Revitalization program is the office's first step toward providing direct state assistance to thriving, ongoing small businesses, Wiedemann said. "The program puts experts out into the state to help businesses apply for a 10 percent, fixed-interest, 20-year loan that will be used to expand their operations and put more people to work," he said. "The whole idea

behind the program is more jobs." The loans are funded jointly by local banks and public economic development funds, and Wiedemann predicts the program will bring to the state \$300 million in new capital and 30,000 new jobs over the next two or three years. Wiedemann's office also is trying to home-grow new industries through the Small Business Innovation Research Program, which consists of seminars that instruct people how to get federal research grants to turn their ideas into realities.

"What comes out of those grants is the inventors and entrepreneurs develop their ideas and then they start a new company," he said. He said only 1 percent of the available federal research grants are now awarded to Texas residents, but the state hopes to increase its share of the federal research money to 5 percent by 1987. Prospective entrepreneurs also can take their ideas to small business development centers that are being set up in branches of the University of Texas and Texas A&M.

and tell the entrepreneur whether it's good or bad, patentable, or just a pile of rubbish," Wiedemann said. The Office of Economic Development is also encouraging smaller businesses to think on an international scale by pointing out the benefits of exporting. Although Texas is third in the nation behind Florida and California in manufactured exports and second behind California in agricultural exports, Wiedemann says that's not good enough. "The potential for Texas in

international markets much greater," he said. "We have the third largest ports in the world in Houston and Corpus Christi and they're being utilized. We want to connect our businesses to the international marketplace as important as even more important than the domestic marketplace." The efforts to help businesses are aimed at the state's overall economic diversification away from traditional strongholds of oil and gas.

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Tower still refusing to endorse candidate

United Press International
EL PASO — U.S. Sen. John Tower will continue to refuse to endorse any of the four Republican candidates, including Phil Gramm of Bryan-College Station, seeking nomination for his seat in the May 5 primary, aides said Wednesday.

Tower, who has served as a Texas senator for 23 years, is scheduled to appear at a public rally in El Paso for the re-election of President Reagan and Vice President Bush. Tower is Texas chairman of the Reagan-Bush campaign. "We are having a healthy primary contest in both parties," Tower said recently in Austin. "We have some very fine candidates in the Republican primary, any one of which I could and will support for election." Republican spokeswoman Karen Parfitt-Hughes said Tower, who is resigning from the Senate at the end of his present term, is devoting all his en-

ergies to re-electing Reagan in Texas. While Tower ignores questions about the primary, a Houston pollster said the bid to occupy Tower's seat in the Senate has been earmarked as the race to watch in Texas. "There's little doubt that all eyes are on Texas when it comes to the Senate race," said Lance Tarrance. "Democrats and Republicans both want and need the seat badly." Lance views the race this way: "If Tower is succeeded by a Republican, particularly a

highly conservative member of the party, then the nation may be on a steady course toward increased military spending and a tough global defense policy. "If it is a Democrat who replaces Tower, then social change could be in the offing. Voters may be on the brink of overturning the administration's conservative policies in favor of at-home programs for the poor and middle class." Seeking election on the Republican ticket are candidates U.S. Rep. Phil Gramm, the front runner; U.S. Rep. Ron

Paul, a conservative libertarian leaning; U.S. Rep. Mossbacher Jr., 33, a talk-show host who served eight years in the Tennessee state legislature; and Sen. Howard Baker, a Democrat. Democrats include Sen. Lloyd Doggett; U.S. Rep. Hance; Harley Schlusman, Texas co-chairman of the National Democratic Political Action Committee; and businessman Young.

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Bentsen wants flowers

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Encouraging states to plant wildflowers instead of grass alongside highways will reduce mowing costs and amounts of litter while preserving America's natural beauty, Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, said Wednesday.

Bentsen, mentioning successful experimental wildflower plantings in Texas and Lady Bird Johnson's efforts to beautify America, said he plans to introduce legislation next week to encourage states to use wildflowers as groundcover. "The wildflowers would mean millions of dollars saved at a time when both state and federal governments are looking hard for ways to hold down spending," he said. The legislation, which Bentsen hopes to attach to highway legislation pending before the Senate Transportation Com-

mittee he serves on, would require that one-fourth of general landscaping funds be used to plant wildflowers as groundcover along highways. The Texas Highway Department has experimented with planting wildflowers on the new "s" highways in 24 counties. Bentsen said results indicate \$32 million spent annually on mowing could be cut by as much as 40 percent.

Baby boy sprayed with paint, two men arrested for injury

United Press International
EL PASO — Two men are in the county jail Wednesday, charged with deliberately exposing a 14-month-old boy to spray paint fumes while the mother was nearby, reportedly in a state of intoxication. Enrique Rivera, 24, and Genardo Trujillo, 18, were charged with injury to a child. Trujillo also was charged with possessing a marijuana cigarette which police said they found in his pocket. The mother, Corina Montanez, 31, originally was booked into jail on a charge of public in-

toxication, but the charge changed to possession of marijuana under two ounces after a jail matron allegedly found some narcotics during a routine search, police said. Patrolmen Pete Hernandez and Armando Molinar said they answered an anonymous call Tuesday, complaining of a baby's continuous crying. They said they found the two men, one of them holding the baby boy in his arms, and the other holding a soft drink can to the baby's face. Officers said the can had spray paint, a cause of intoxication, and that they detected an

odor of paint about the mouth and nose. Police said both the men were drunk. The mother of the child was found by officers in an apartment, also in a state of intoxication, police said. Welfare authorities took care of the baby. Hernandez said, "before we realized what we had, we thought they were drunk. They told us the baby was in the mother's arms." The baby was turned over to an aunt who was taken to a doctor to determine if the paint had done any permanent damage.

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