

# B-CS Chamber of Commerce has new start

By **LESLIE HEFFNER**  
Reporter

When Ed Brady took over as executive director of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, it marked a new beginning for the chamber and for Brady.

Brady began his job in July after serving more than six years as general manager of the Austin Chamber of Commerce. He says it was "time to look for new challenges, a new area to go to. I'd been watching this area for a while."

Brady says that the Bryan-College Station area is like Austin was 15 to 20 years ago.

"I want this area to be vibrant," he says, "so that if an A&M graduate wants to stay and work here, there will be a job available."

Brady plans to make Chamber of Commerce work his life-time career. He uses a favorite phrase to describe what he thinks a chamber of commerce does: "To make its commu-

nity a good place to live and to make a living."

With 1300 members and nine committee divisions, the chamber serves the community through civic services, special programs and economic growth support.

"The chamber is a quasi-public sort of organization, quasi meaning we do anything the community wants or needs," says Chamber President Randy Newman. "The chamber encourages the improvement of the quality of life in the community."

Brady says the chamber promotes community development by offering special programs that are not business oriented, but human oriented. He hopes to institute programs in Bryan-College Station that were successful in Austin.

One such program is "Adopt a School." Brady explained that the chamber recruits businesses to adopt schools. The business then contributes whatever the school may need — financial support, hired tutors, video recorders or labor to repair

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buildings. Brady says it gives the school children an opportunity to see the private enterprise system at work and it also gives businesses a good feeling to be involved in the education of children.

"Bryan-College Station in Action" is another program on Brady's agenda. The purpose is to match community groups who need volunteers with people who are willing to be volunteers. The chamber will ask businesses to take what Brady calls an "employee volunteer inventory of special interests." The chamber will then compile a list of possible volunteers for community groups to use.

The chamber also has begun a Brazos Leadership class. The program involves 40 young business

people who are considered potential leaders of the community. They participate in eight full days of seminars throughout the year. Mayors, judges, county commissioners and other community leaders discuss their jobs at the seminars. Newman says the goal of the program is to familiarize potential leaders about county and city jobs, so that they become interested in those jobs in the future.

"A good place to make a living," the last half of Brady's favorite phrase, could be defined as the economic side of the community. "To make a community a nice place to live and a good place to make a living," Brady says, the economy has to be strong. "We can't count on A&M

forever to strengthen our economy." Developing an overall marketing package that will attract target organizations to hold their conventions to Bryan-College Station is a goal of Brady.

The package will include: what is available in hotel rooms and meeting rooms, ideas on how to transport delegates to the area and what Bryan-College Station has to offer.

As for transportation an airport is going to be a key issue in the future, Brady says. A new airport would take only five to eight years to build, he says. He also plans to talk to the Texas A&M System Board of Regents about refurbishing either Easterwood Airport or the old Bryan Air Base.

Newman says one convention scheduled for College Station will bring 1,300 delegates to the area. That is the 1986 State Lulac convention. It should boost the economy by about \$850,000, Newman says.

Another way to strengthen the local economy is to recruit industry to the area, Brady says. "We can do

this by planning an economic development strategy for the future," he says.

Questions to be considered in developing a strategy, Brady said, include: "What kind of industry do we want to go after for the future? What do these industries look like? Can we provide what they want? What kind of marketing strategy should we use?"

Brady declined to discuss industries which are considering coming to this area because the industries insist on privacy until they have a final decision.

To attract conventions, industries and visitors to Bryan-College Station, the chamber has a special office, the tourist and convention bureau. The bureau will have a new office probably within six months at University Drive across the street from the Hilton Hotel, now under construction.

Brady sums up his primary goal as executive director this way: "To do what I can to keep Bryan-College Station working together to continue to grow in a healthy way."

## Better Business Bureau can answer students' questions

By **DOLORES HAJOVSKY**  
Reporter

When a student has a dispute over an apartment lease or a grievance with a local business, the Better Business Bureau may be able to help.

"The BBB investigates and acts on any kind of marketplace disagreement," says LeRoy Balmain, executive director of the bureau in Bryan.

"The BBB is the only place in town to check the reputation of a company. This service is free to consumers. All they have to do is call and inquire."

Balmain says the bureau will investigate any complaint a consumer makes about a company, in addition to investigating anything it notices out of the ordinary.

Balmain says the most common complaint the BBB hears from students is about apartment leases. A lease is legally binding to both parties, Balmain says.

"Many students say they didn't have time to read their leases," he says. "And that's a mistake. The student needs to read the lease carefully, fill in any blank spaces and be sure to get a copy of it."

Balmain says the manager can go back and put information in the blanks and the students are legally

bound because they signed the lease.

"The students need to look at the check-in sheet, also," Balmain says. "If there's one nail hole not reported they will be billed for it."

Balmain says apartment managers are in the business to make money and they will take advantage of the students' negligence.

"Consumers need to contact the BBB before they do business with anyone," Balmain says. "Once money is transacted it's difficult to do anything."

The bureau tries to settle disputes between consumers and companies informally and privately.

"It helps the little guy who can't afford a lawyer," Balmain says. Both parties sign a binding agreement to resolve the problem and follow the BBB's arbitration program.

"The judgment is legally binding but the BBB doesn't have any legal powers," Balmain says. "If a company doesn't comply with the BBB's decision, the matter is turned over to a county attorney, the attorney general or the Federal Trade Commission."

Balmain says the BBB puts out a membership directory of stores in the area that consumers can patronize with confidence. It's strictly vol-

untary, but most stores that do join report an increase in sales, Balmain says.

Balmain says consumers need to be aware of company policies because each store has its own method of handling refunds and exchanges.

Another major complaint the bureau receives from students, Balmain says, concerns their cars that have been towed from University Square. In most cases the shopping center is within its rights.

"Students will go into Skaggs and buy something," Balmain says. "They feel that since they were a customer of the shopping center, they have parking privileges and go to class."

"When the students return from class their cars have been towed."

The sign in the parking lot reads: "If you park and leave shopping center your vehicle is subject to be towed at owner's expense."

Balmain says the owners of the shopping center have spotters watch for students who park their cars and go to campus. Once the student crosses University Drive the spotters contact the tow trucks and the car is towed away, Balmain says.

It costs about \$40 to get a car back and not many students can afford that on a college budget, he says.

By **MICHAEL RAULERSON**  
Reporter

Artrain and five Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra performances are among events scheduled for the 1984-85 season of the Arts Council of Brazos Valley.

Artrain, originating from Michigan, is making its first appearance in Texas. It consists of five railroad cars carrying art displays and practicing Texan artists, Bonnie Yarbrough, Arts Council Executive Director, says. The displays contain art celebrating the past 100 years in Texas history, and the artists will demonstrate fine arts such as painting and pottery making, she says. The Artrain will be in College Station, one of only 10 Texas cities on its schedule, on Nov. 16-20. Temple and Austin also are scheduled, but the other seven haven't been finalized.

The Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra will feature the premier of conductor Franz Krager in November, Yarbrough says. Krager has selected Ossie Borosh, an A&M Consolidated High School student, as piano soloist. He will begin auditions for the rest of the orchestra in August.

With events such as these, the Arts Council is keeping in step with its cultural policy statement which says the "primary responsibility is the development and promotion of the arts and arts activ-

*"The arts haven't nearly kept pace with business and industry in this community. But they will."*

ities in the Brazos Valley." The Arts Council also is a central information center for art groups, Yarbrough says.

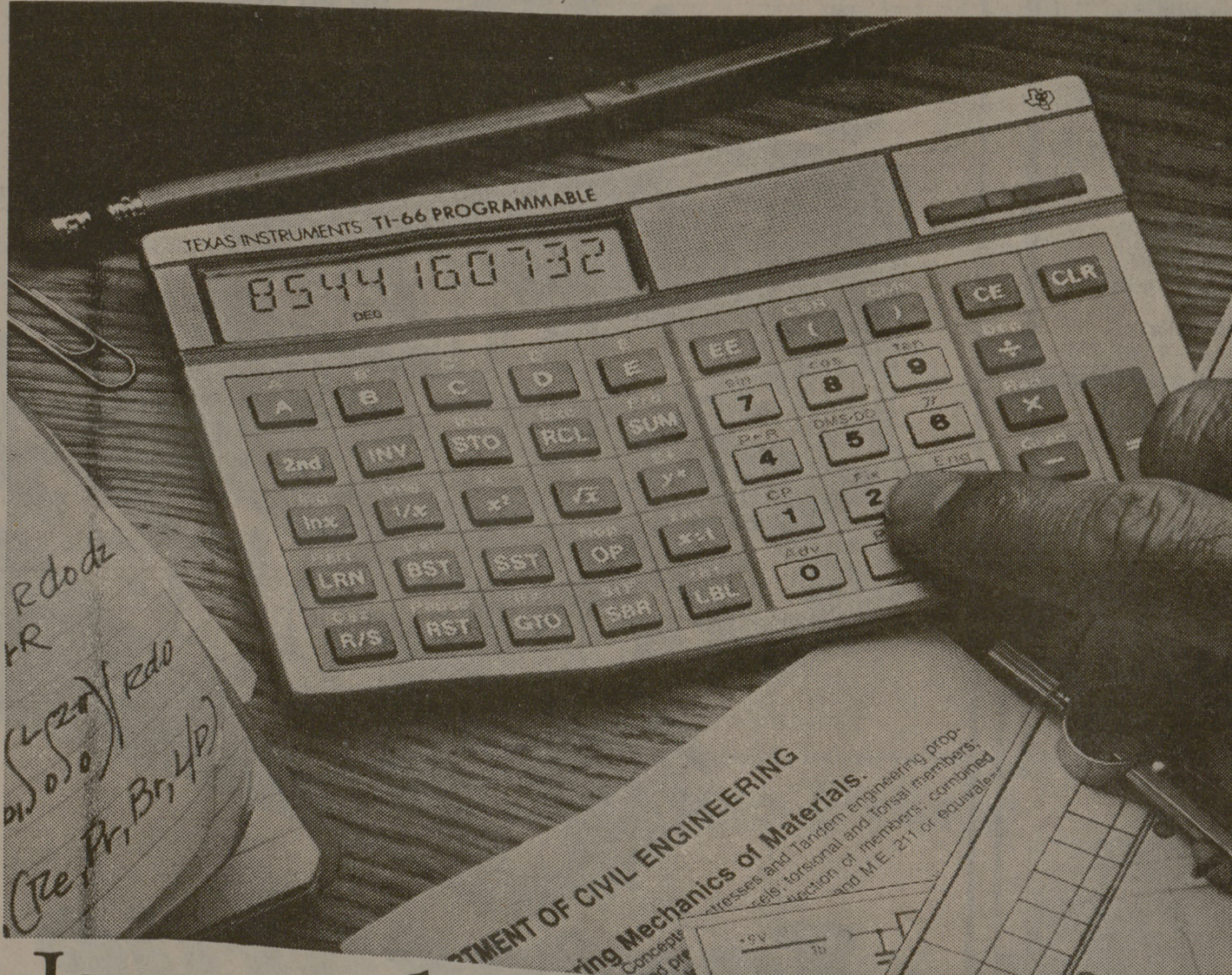
The Arts Council, an umbrella organization for 14 participating member groups, helps coordinate programs, gives technical assistance and helps fund programs for each of the groups, Yarbrough says. The participating member groups must have an active membership of 25 or more people. The groups are: Brazos Valley Art League, Brazos Valley Embroiderers Guild, Brazos Valley Museum, Friends of the Bryan Library, Community Singers, Brazos Valley Symphony Society, Bryan-College Station Po-

etry Society, Citizens for Historic Preservation, KAMU-TV-FM, Music Teachers Association of Bryan-College Station, Texas Designer/Craftsmen, Opera and Performing Arts Society and Stage Center.

Funds needed to support the Arts Council and its groups are acquired through several means, Yarbrough says. The majority of the funds come from private foundations, state agencies such as the Texas Commission on the Arts, federal agencies and Brazos County. A small percentage comes from the local hotel/motel tax. Individual and corporate memberships also comprise a portion of the income for the non-profit corporation.

Memberships, open to anyone interested in supporting the Council, are ranked according to the amount of contributions. For individuals, bronze, silver and gold memberships are given with a gift of \$30, \$50 and \$100, respectively.

"The arts haven't nearly kept pace with business and industry in this community," Yarbrough says. "But they will."



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