

Budget cuts

Texas loses \$2.4 billion in federal funds

United Press International

AUSTIN — Federal budget cuts sponsored by U.S. Rep. Phil Gramm of College Station during the Reagan administration has cost Texas more than \$2.4 billion in public assistance funds, according to a study released Tuesday.

The report by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees said if Reagan's 1985 budget is adopted by Congress, Texas will lose another \$1.2 billion in money for social programs.

"The Reagan years have brought on difficult fiscal times for Texas state and local government," the report concluded.

The budget cuts have cost Brazos County more than \$7 million or \$77 per person annually for people on welfare, said Peter Fears of AFSCME Local 1624, which represents about 10,000 public workers in Texas.

Gramm originally was elected as a Democrat, but resigned and ran as a Republican and won his current seat. AFSCME has endorsed Democrat Walter Mondale and Gramm's Democratic opponent in the U.S. Senate race, state senator Lloyd Doggett.

Fears said the budget cuts have forced local and state government to raise taxes to partially offset the loss of federal funds.

"Texas' middle income families are also adversely affected as local taxes increase to meet the gaps in services cut by the Reagan administration," Fears said. "People have been hurt across the economic spectrum."

The study of the effect of budget cuts in Texas was undertaken by AFSCME as part of a \$20,000 study of eight states, Fears said. The Texas study detailed 62 of Texas' counties, representing 80 percent of the state population.

The study said the most severe reduction in direct assistance to individuals came in the food stamp program, which was cut by nearly 6 percent.

Among the hardest hit counties were La Salle, Starr, Edwards, Zavala, Real, Willacy, Zapata, Kinney, Maverick and Dimmit.

Among the examples cited in the report were:

— In the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, benefits were eliminated for 8,119 recipients and reduced for another 4,050.

— Medicaid benefits were denied to 30,000 recipients.

— Aid for child nutrition programs was cut in a range from 6 percent to 86 percent.

— More than 6,800 public service employment jobs were eliminated.

— Compensatory education assistance was eliminated for 65,000 children.

Jury awards damages to coach

United Press International

DALLAS — A high school football coach, who was awarded \$850,000 in damages by a jury that ruled he was fired from his job at a predominantly black school because he is white, said he is ready to coach again.

A federal court jury decided Monday that Norman Jett was unfairly dismissed in March 1983 as coach and athletic director at South Oak Cliff High School because of his race. He was replaced by a black coach.

The jury also ruled that Jett was

denied his constitutional right to due process.

Jett had asked for a minimum of \$150,000 in damages, but the jury awarded him \$650,000 in actual damages from the Dallas Independent School District, and \$150,000 in punitive damages from principal Frederick Todd, who recommended Jett be replaced.

"It was pretty evident that the coach was railroaded," said jury foreman David Burton. "There was no evidence to substantiate his firing."

Since turning down a position as freshman coach at Thomas Jefferson High School in the fall 1983, Jett has worked as a building contractor. He said he did not want to pursue another coaching position until the legal case was settled.

Jett had been at South Oak Cliff for 21 years and was head coach there for 13 years. Twenty of Jett's former players have made it to the pros, including Dallas Cowboys Harvey Martin and Michael Downs, and San Diego Chargers running back Wayne Morris.

American Airlines to contend court ruling

United Press International

NEW ORLEANS — American Airlines vowed Tuesday to ask the Supreme Court to free it and its president from facing charges in an alleged conspiracy to fix fares with Braniff in 1982.

Spokesman Al Becker said company lawyers would ask the high court to throw out a ruling by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which cleared the way for prosecution of the airline and president Robert Crandall.

The 5th Circuit said Monday agreement by two parties was not necessary for the government to bring suit under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Both airlines are based in Dallas, though Braniff is now owned by a company headquartered in Chicago.

The court overturned dismissal of the anti-trust complaint, saying the government sufficiently presented charges that if proven would constitute an attempt to create a monopoly.

"The better reasoned authorities support a view that a highly verbal crime such as attempted monopolization may be established by proof of a solicitation along with the requisite intent," wrote Judge W. Eugene Davis.

Former Braniff Chairman Howard Putnam did not raise his airline's rates after the telephone conversation with Crandall. Instead, he turned a tape recording of the conversation over to the federal government.

In September 1983, U.S. District Judge Robert M. Hill of Dallas ruled that because Putnam never agreed to raise Braniff's

rates, no attempt at a monopoly took place.

The government's lawsuit asked that Crandall be removed as American's president for two years and the company be prohibited from discussing prices with competitors for the same length of time.

The 5th Circuit said Braniff and American together enjoyed a market share higher than 90 percent on nonstop flights between Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport and eight major cities when the conversation took place in February 1982.

American and Braniff were vying fiercely for business, a situation Crandall's phone call allegedly sought to remedy.

"I have a suggestion for you," the American president was quoted as saying. "Raise your goddamn fares 20 percent. I'll raise mine the next morning." When Putnam insisted the subject was illegal, Crandall allegedly fired back, "We can talk about any goddamn thing we want to talk about."

According to the 5th Circuit, other federal courts have generally rejected a rigid approach to anti-trust prosecution, choosing instead to consider a case's particulars.

In encouraging prosecution to move ahead, the appeals panel rejected contention by lawyers for American such cases would hold companies and executives liable for ambiguous or "intemperate words." The intent of the words must be clear, said the 5th Circuit.

Gas, oil tank leaks ruin water

United Press International

SAN ANTONIO — Up to 5 percent of the nation's underground storage tanks are leaking oil, gas, other chemicals and are threatening to pollute drinking water, an environmentalist said Tuesday.

"These leaks, if unchecked, could contribute to a water crisis in the 1980s to make the 1970s energy crunch look small in comparison," said Reginald Ray, president of Hunter Environmental Services in Malvern, Pa.

At a meeting of the Petroleum Equipment Institute, Ray said from 2 to 5 percent of the nation's 1.5 million underground storage tanks are leaking.

"Even the smallest leak is a powerful polluter," he said. "The big problem is finding leaks because they cause an environmental nightmare."

Citing EPA figures, Ray said drinking water for half the United States population was already 10 percent polluted. The situation worsened unless the leaks are promptly repaired, he said.

However, Ray said the petroleum industry, which owns and operates 40 percent of the underground storage tanks, has accepted tank testing and repair as a primary responsibility.

The oil industry will invest \$1 billion in tank testing during the next few years, he said.

Ray also said he was encouraged by new tank testing regulations. "The combination of responsible industry, regulations to set standards and technology makes testing practical and averts the water crisis," he said.

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