



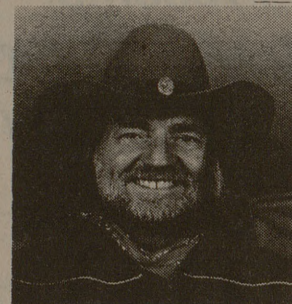
Stringing in the rain

Photo by MINDY HOBART

Pouring rain did not stop these workers from stringing lights and bringing an early Merry Christmas to the corner of University Drive and Texas Avenue Monday afternoon. The tree is sponsored by the Brazos Valley Rehabilitation Center.

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State to up mental patient/staff ratio

United Press International
AUSTIN — The state said Monday it will immediately hire 260 workers at five state mental hospitals as part of an agreement to comply with a federal court order on staffing.

The Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation signed an agreement June 4 that calls for an improved patient-worker ratio at the state hospitals. Under the stipulation, the state may hire more than 1,000 new workers or speed up the release of patients to community-based centers. "Even though the department is ahead of schedule in achieving court-ordered staff-to-patient ratios, we are adding employees now be-

cause their presence will represent a distinct benefit for our patients," said mental health Commissioner Gary Miller. The commissioner said the state also is complying with the court order by expanding community services, which reduces the number of patients admitted to hospitals. Funding for the new staff posi-

tions came from monies that ordinarily reverts to the general fund at the end of the fiscal year, transfers from other departmental funds, a department austerity program and retroactive payments from Medicare. The state faces an Aug. 31, 1985, deadline in achieving the staffing ratios in the 10-year-old lawsuit.

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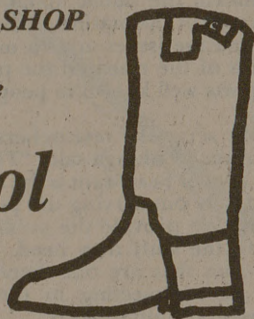
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