

STATE AND LOCAL

White pushes court user fees, lower TDC costs

By JERRY OSLIN
Staff Writer

People who use the court system should shoulder more of the burden in paying for it, Gov. Mark White told a state conference of county judges and commissioners Thursday at the College Station Ramada Inn.

White said he will ask the Texas Legislature to create special user fees for those who use the state court system.

"The court system is a \$100 million dollar item in the biennial budget of Texas," he said. "We need to make sure that those people who use the courts help pay for the courts. Too often we have shouldered that responsibility and burden on those people who have never been in court."

White also said the state should do more to reduce the cost of housing convicted criminals.

"Right now it costs the state \$7,800 a year to keep and house an inmate," he said. "The Texas Department of Corrections needed \$600 million the last two years to house its prisoners and they are asking for \$1 billion for the next two years."

White said the best way to cut

TDC costs is to help inmates stay out of jail.

"We need to bring the Texas Employment Commission in and help match an inmate with a job," he said. "We need to give them some hope and give them some opportunity. That's the best way to cut costs."

White also said he would continue to fight against the establishment of high-level nuclear waste dumps in Texas.

"Department of Energy officials said they were going to dig up 20 million tons of salt near Hereford to make room for a nuclear waste dump and they were going to put it out on the open plains," he said. "They were going to build precipitation ponds to make sure the salt didn't get into the ground water. West Texas' biggest problem isn't precipitation. The problem might be the wind blowing the salt all over west Texas."

White said that the proposal convinced him the Department of Energy did not do the "scientific homework" that was needed to create a high-level nuclear waste dump.



Photo by ANTHONY S. CASPER

Gov. Mark White arrives at Easterwood Airport Thursday.

Signs

CS council approves restrictive ordinance

By MICHAEL CRAWFORD
Staff Writer

In an effort to promote an attractive community, the College Station City Council adopted an ordinance Thursday which regulates height, location and size of future signs within city limits.

The ordinance prohibits portable, trailer and painted rooftop signs as well as banners in residential areas and signs with flashing, blinking or traveling lights. However, time and temperature signs are permitted if they meet height and setback requirements.

Free-standing signs along the Highway 6 bypass may be 50 feet in height if the property on which they are located has 100 feet in highway frontage. All other signs within city limits may not exceed 35 feet in height. No sign may be closer than 10 feet to the curb. Political signs may not display a commercial message and must be removed within 10 days after the election.

Permits are now required for apartment, attached, development, freestanding, roof and subdivision signs.

The new ordinance does not re-

quire signs already built to be brought into compliance, but any new sign not in compliance may be removed by a city zoning official.

Mayor Gary Halter said it was unfortunate the ordinance does not require signs in violation to be brought into compliance, but he said he was in the minority.

A similar ordinance was tabled by the council a month ago pending changes recommended by the council and a special committee.

In other business, the council approved the rezoning of 14 lots on Spring Loop, behind the Woodbine Financial Center, from low-density apartments to general commercial use. The rezoning was approved over the objections of Townhouse developer Phyllis Hobson who owns four townhomes at the corner of Spring Loop and Tarrow Street. Hobson said the rezoning would leave her with "a piece of property that has become a misfit."

Woodbine wants to construct additional parking places on the rezoned land. According to the city, the Woodbine building lacks 33 spaces required by city ordinance. The building is still under construction.

Pari-mutuel betting bill off and running

Associated Press

AUSTIN — A House committee Wednesday night voted 11-1 to send to the House floor a proposed horse racing bill that includes referendum provisions favored by Gov. Mark White.

The Urban Affairs Committee approved a substitute to House Bill 440, sponsored by Rep. Hugo Berlanga, D-Corpus Christi, that also includes provisions on minority track ownership, the issuing of minority building contracts, charity days and a statewide referendum.

"I'm real pleased with the outcome," said Berlanga, who sported a monogrammed "HB 440" on his shirt pocket. "It shows we're moving right along. We hope to get to the House within a couple of weeks."

White has said he would veto any horse racing bill that doesn't have a statewide referendum, local option election and a provision controlling organized crime. The bill endorsed by the committee has all three provisions.

The bill would establish an eight-member horse racing commission. Six would be appointed by the governor and two would be ex-officio members, the state comptroller and a Texas Department of Public Safety official.

The bill also calls for 15 percent of the track's construction or renovations be allocated to minority contractors. A 15 percent minority ownership provision is also included.

Climber shows slides of Everest ascent

By MEG CADIGAN
Reporter

"When you're doing a big thing, don't worry about the big thing; worry about the first step," said Dr. Bill March, leader of the 1982 Canadian Mount Everest climb.

This is the philosophy that guided the expedition to the top of Mount Everest in October 1982. March narrated a slide presentation of the climb during the Fourth Annual Outdoor Horizons Conference Thursday.

Mount Everest, the highest point

on Earth, is about the size of 207 Rudder Towers stacked on top of each other.

March said the group climbed Mount Everest in a series of steps. He said the first major step was climbing the Khumbu Icefall, the most dangerous part of the mountain.

"What you're really doing is making a little highway up the glacier," March said.

He said the icefall is the most dangerous place because avalanches occur there, and it moves about one

meter a day. It was in this icefall that four members of the team were killed. Three died in an avalanche, and another was crushed between two iceblocks.

"I told the group that anyone who wanted to leave, should leave," he said.

At that level of risk it was not a decision I could make for them, March said. He said he decided to continue even though the team had been unlucky.

"The only reason to leave was an emotional one, and I didn't see this as a valid reason," he said.

With a group reduced to eight climbers and 12 Sherpas, a group of native mountain climbers, March continued up the mountain.

He said those who kept going were extremely committed to finishing the climb.

Why climb Mount Everest?

March said the climb was worth the danger and discomfort because of its lasting effects.

"After surviving in a really dangerous environment, the legacy that lasts is friendship," March said.

AGGIE CINEMA

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