

Lawyer claims new prisons not needed

Associated Press

HOUSTON — The Texas Department of Corrections may be facing its own execution if it doesn't start building new prison facilities in line with guidelines imposed by a federal court, an attorney for inmates says.

TDC officials aren't panicking but acknowledge that the situation is serious because the state has failed twice to sell about 3,700 acres of land in the Houston area. The proceeds were earmarked by the Texas Legislature to finance prison construction.

The Texas prison system, the nation's second largest, needs \$125 million. Odds are, the state will be taking an alternate route — lease-purchase construction or swapping land for construction, if the latter is legal.

But, William Bennett Turner, attorney for inmates who won a case in which prison reforms were mandated a decade ago, doesn't think new prison facilities are necessary.

"We hope that no prison is ever built," he said. "It's just fine with us if they're not able to sell the land and if they're not able to build any new institutions." He contends about half of the 37,500 Texas inmates in the TDC are non-violent offenders.

He said the state could release prisoners and achieve a 25 percent to 40 percent reduction in population without touching more serious offenders.

Turner said he will oppose any move the state makes to extend court deadlines for new prison construction.

TDC board chairman Alfred Hughes of Austin said enough time exists to construct a \$60 million prison at Palestine for more than 2,200 inmates and trusty camps for another 2,000 prisoners, he said.

Hughes said the prison population must be reduced to about 34,000 in existing facilities by September 1989, with about half of that accomplished by September 1987.

Records show, inmates are being released at a rapid rate — 3,000 between Oct. 28 and Dec. 1. Most are on parole and mandatory supervision; the others are on conditional pardon, discharge or shock probation, according to TDC officials.

TSSA committee seeking role as education advisory panel

By FRANK SMITH

Staff Writer

A Texas State Student Association coalition might receive recognition as the official student advisory committee to Gov. Mark White's Select Committee on Higher Education, TSSA President John Hatch said Friday.

Hatch, a senior political science major at Texas A&M, said select committee member Bill Parsley of Lubbock contacted Texas Tech student government officer Allison Bennett about two weeks ago concerning the possibility of an official role for the TSSA committee. Bennett relayed the message to Hatch.

"He (Parsley) said he knew that we'd been at each meeting (of the select committee) so far and that he wanted to see us possibly take on the role of being the official student advisory committee," Hatch said.

The TSSA committee is trying to get back in contact with Parsley, he said, to see if he will nominate the group for the advisory role at the select committee's Dec. 19 meeting or if he thinks the action should wait.

"I think it's a matter of getting us on the agenda or getting someone to make the motion," Hatch said.

The TSSA committee, called the Student Coalition on Higher Education, was formed in November. Coalition Co-Chairman Jay McCullough said the intent of the group was to show that student leaders of Texas are concerned about the future of higher education.

McCullough said he hopes any recommendations the coalition might have would be received as

proof of their seriousness and commitment to keep Texas in the forefront of higher education.

Hatch said the number of issues researched will necessarily have to be somewhat limited.

"I'm trying to give (Mary Jo Peterman, chairwoman of the coalition) more or less free rein about what she wants to do," Hatch said. "(But) I have given her some specific guidelines as to where I'd like her to limit her resources, namely on the issues of financial aid, tuition and core curriculum.

"The select committee will meet every two weeks — they can study everything they want to study. But we're going to try to limit ourselves to the things we feel are more important to us and make recommendations based on that."

Following the planned addition of two more members, the coalition will be comprised of 13 members, each from a different member school of the TSSA. Serving on the committee from A&M will be Chris Gavras of the Legislative Study Group.

Peterman, of Texas Woman's University, and McCullough, of North Texas State University, attended the select committee's first public hearing, conducted Nov. 16 at Richland Community College in Dallas.

"Introducing them to us and hopefully getting a good response from them about us — that was our main objective," McCullough said. "We did get to introduce ourselves to Larry Temple (chairman of both the select committee and the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System), and we did get to introduce ourselves to the committee and to the public that was there, and we got a very good response."

The coalition conducted its first meeting Nov. 23 at TWU. At that time the members discussed the role and scope of the coalition.

The TSSA still will be an information network rather than a lobbying group, even if the coalition is granted the advisory role, Hatch said.

"A lobbyist is someone who goes and tries to get different things done — it's more like an external deal," Hatch said. "Well, this (the coalition, should it be granted the advisory role) is where we're actually part of the process.

"It'll be a part of TSSA, but it won't be the official feeling of TSSA because we can't take an official position . . . I think the thing I would like to see us do is utilize our ability to be on the inside so that we can spread the information to all these schools about what's going on so that if they want to make some recommendations they can go through us to make the recommendations.

Hatch said even if the coalition doesn't receive official advisory recognition, it will still pursue its original objectives.

"We've already decided that every time the select committee meets we want to be at each meeting," he said. "Now that was before we were approached about being the advisory panel — so I'm sure we'll try to be at every meeting anyway whether we're there as an advisory panel or just there to observe and then to relay the message of what happened back to the schools . . .

"We just want to be able to be there and help research the issues and offer the students' view — because that's what we do best."

Expansion of A&M health clinic to begin in 1986

By TAMARA BELL

Staff Writer

Renovation and enlargement of the A.P. Beutel Health Center will begin in January, says Dr. Claude Goswick, director of the center.

When health services moved into the center in October 1973, the space was just barely adequate for its needs, Goswick says. The center accommodates 20,000 students which was adequate when that was the enrollment.

But the enrollment has nearly doubled while the center's space has stayed the same, Goswick says. He says it's obvious that the center needs to be expanded.

The health center got the go ahead by the Board of Regents to expand in September 1983, he says.

Joe Williams, project manager for Facilities Planning and Construction, says 16,208 square feet will be added to the center. He says construction cost is more than \$1.6 million.

The contractor, Holley Brothers Enterprise, Inc. of Pasadena, should finish the job by Fall 1987, he says. Financing for the center will come from the building use fee which is earmarked for this purpose.

The center will stay open during construction, Goswick says. The addition to the center will be built first. Then, during the renovation of the current building, the center will operate from the annex, he says.

Williams says the construction will be in two stages. The annex will match the existing two stories and basement of the health center. It will fill in the L-shaped area on the southeast side of the building.

In the basement of the existing building, an x-ray unit, a lab waiting

room and an emergency square will be added, Goswick says.

"On the first floor there will be a larger orthopedic clinic," he says. "There also will be more space for record storage because we have records coming out of our eyes."

Goswick says the second floor will be an enlargement of the existing treatment area.

In the basement of the center there will be a new hyperbaric oxygen treatment area, Goswick says. He says one use for this treatment is to help diabetics, who have to heal, recover from lesions.

"The treatment was first used to treat the bends some years ago when diving," he says. "There is a chamber and the air pressure increases. He breathes 100 percent oxygen. The oxygen dissolves in the liquid blood which is good for chronic lesions that won't heal."

Goswick says Dr. Bill Fife, professor emeritus of biology, is experimenting with a chamber in town. Fife is donating a chamber to the center.

On the first floor of the center there will be new exam rooms and increased waiting areas, he says.

He says the waiting room throughout the center will be the department the patients go to and not in a central hallway like the existing waiting room.

"This will help because right now there could be someone who is waiting removed in the same area with someone who has a drip of blood," he says. "At the time, the person in front of removal will faint. Then we deal with that on top of the emergency. This arrangement makes things more smooth."

New hazardous waste storage facility to be built at A&M

By CRAIG RENFRO

Staff Writer

The construction of a new hazardous waste storage facility will begin at the first of the year, said Harry Stiteler, Texas A&M safety and health officer.

The construction site for the \$102,000 project, scheduled to be completed by March 1986, will be located one block north of the Agronomy road and F&B intersection, Stiteler said.

The facility will be divided into two areas, Stiteler said.

Part of the building will store 55-gallon drums and another section will hold small containers of chemicals gathered from campus laboratories.

A refrigerated section will be added to contain heat sensitive chemicals, he said.

"We go to different labs on campus and pick up hazardous waste from the labs," he said. "Once we pick them up they have to be stored per chemical specific requirements."

Ben Woods, director of the physical plant, said Rhodes Building Systems, from Somerville, will construct the 25-by-50 building which will house the waste.

Rhodes will be responsible for meeting safety requirements covered under the Toxic Waste Act, Woods said.

Stiteler said currently the waste is being stored at the Purchasing and Storage building on Agronomy road.

"(Purchasing and Storage) suffices for what we need now, but it just doesn't have much space," he said.

The waste cannot be stored for more than 90 days, he said.

Every 10 to 12 weeks a commercial service company takes the waste to authorized disposal facilities, Stiteler said.

"This is a serious project that has to be tagged and stored properly. The costs for waste disposal are becoming expensive, Stiteler said.

"Last year we spent \$100,000 on the costs keep going up."

Juniors, Seniors, Vets, Meds and Grads



LAST CHANCE

Your last chance to have your Yearbook photos taken is Dead Week (Dec. 9-13).

Photos will be taken at Yearbook Associate's studio located above Campus Photo Center at Northgate.

Office hours are 8:30-12 and 1-4:30.

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