

State and Local

Barton: Law won't 'devastate' economy

Gramm-Rudman in Brazos County

By FRANK SMITH
Staff Writer



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— Rep. Joe Barton

spending for the county will probably be cut from \$148 million to somewhere between \$135 million to \$140 million.

"There are a lot of programs that we can do without at the federal level," he said.

Barton asked his audience how many of them had rode on passenger trains, sought legal services counseling or tried to get a loan from the Small Business Administration in the past year. No

more than two people said they had done any of those things.

"Those are good programs," he said. "But if (the United States is) running \$200 billion a year in debt . . . we've got to do something. And that's what Gramm-Rudman does."

"It says that, over the next six years, we're going to go from borrowing 20 percent of our federal budget to balancing the budget." Barton was an original co-

sponsor of the Gramm-Rudman bill in the House of Representatives.

"I think it's a good law," he said. "I think it will help us. I don't think it's going to decimate the programs that we really need at the federal level. I do think it will make us take a closer look at how we're spending our money."

Barton said that overall, Brazos County's economic outlook for 1986 is good but not great.

The first-term congressman from Ennis acknowledged that plummeting oil prices are taking their toll on the area's economy.

But he said other economic indicators for the region look good.

"The inflation rate is below 4 percent, the prime (interest) rate is 9½ percent, (and) home mortgage rates are down around 10½ percent," Barton said. "Those are all lower than they were a year ago."

Commons snack bar renovation approved

By STEVE THOMAS
Reporter

The Texas A&M Board of Regents approved a \$286,000 renovation of the Commons snack bar at its previous meeting.

Col. Fred Dollar, director of the Food Services Department, says most of the snack bar's equipment needs to be replaced.

Construction is scheduled to begin this summer and the new snack bar should be completed by the fall semester, Dollar says.

During the facelift, the snack bar's rear wall will be moved back providing more space.

He says the bar will get a new paint job and brighter lighting to make it feel "like your favorite fast food restaurant."

The menu will also be revised. Pizza, chicken-fried steak, French fries and packaged sandwiches and salads will be added to the menu.

With the new improvements, Dollar says, the hours may be extended.

The snack bar currently is open from 7:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Dollar says when students come off a hard day of classes and need a place to relax and unwind, that place should be up to date and have an attractive atmosphere.

Dollar says another snack bar is on the drawing board for the northeastern part of campus.

There are plans to build a snack bar in conjunction with the new Civil Engineering/Texas Transportation Institute building near the Zachry Engineering Center, Dollar says.

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Mexican relief task force plans fund-raiser

Associated Press

AUSTIN — A state task force trying to help Mexico recover from devastating September earthquakes plans to send Texas schoolchildren to a groundbreaking for a Mexico City school to dramatize fund-raising efforts.

The Texas Response-Citizens for Mexican Relief set as its original goal in September \$15.5 million, or \$1 million every Texan.

Leaders of the volunteer task force estimate that \$5 million in cash, goods and services already has been donated by Texans, and it is seeking another \$5 million to build a school and a clinic-hospital in Mexico City.

It was reported Monday that \$24,365 has been donated toward

that goal without an organized fund-raising effort.

The school groundbreaking in March was presented as an opportunity to underscore the campaign to raise money.

Former congressman Bob Krueger, co-chairman of the task force, said Texas already has given more money to the Mexican earthquake relief effort than any other state, and he pledged that Texas would provide "concrete and visible symbols" of friendship between the two countries.

Betsy Todd of the Austin public relations firm GSD&M said, "We talked to people in the secretary of education office (in Mexico) about having a groundbreaking ceremony . . . and what we talked about was bringing some Texas public school-

children to Mexico and having those children break ground with their counterparts in Mexico City.

"They were excited about the possibility," Todd said.

Tom Walker, special assistant to Gov. Mark White, who organized the task force, said, "All of this is somewhat tentative, pending the (official) response of the secretary of education in Mexico City, which I expect we will have this week."

Krueger said he felt the groundbreaking would be important in "reviving the consciousness of the people of Texas."

According to the task force, earthquakes on Sept. 19-20 killed over 7,000 people and left 150,000 homeless. In Mexico City alone, 1,132 buildings were seriously damaged

and over 5,000, or 45 percent, of the city's hospital beds were destroyed.

Hundreds of schools were damaged.

"I wished we could have moved faster but the need is still great, and as long as there is a need I think the people of Texas will respond," Krueger said.

Walker, who visited Mexico City in January, said, "I'm impressed with the way Mexico is moving forward with its reconstruction efforts."

He said destruction of so many hospital beds, most of them in downtown Mexico City, had convinced Mexican health officials to decentralize and set up clinics in the "peripheral areas — get medical services closer to the people who need them."

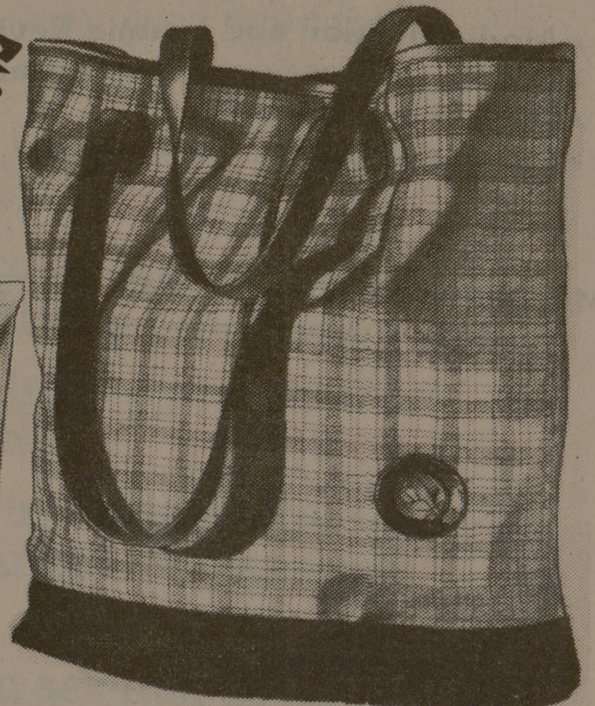
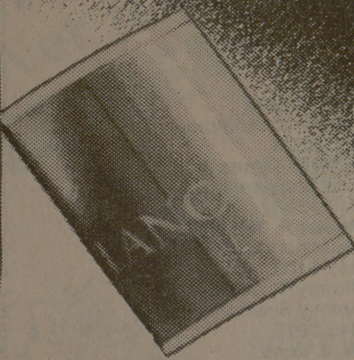


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