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Local merchants benefiting from repeal of blue law

By Mary Ann Harvey
Staff Writer

More than six months after the repeal of the Texas blue law, College Station merchants are showing a slight increase in business due to Sunday openings.

The Texas blue law, which restricted Sunday sales of 42 items, was lifted Sept. 1 with mixed reaction. Today, however, local businessmen say the repeal of the blue law has helped business.

Bill Earnheart, assistant manager of Foley's, says there is a definite positive effect by being open Sundays.

"Since Christmas, we've been doing about 10 percent of our business on Sunday, which makes it our third largest day of the week behind Friday and Saturday," he says.

Jim Loveless, manager of Sears, says 10 percent of his business also is done on Sunday, although he considers this only a slight increase in sales.

Craig Hall, manager of Beall's, says sales were good during the first couple of months because Sunday shopping was a novelty to consumers.

"Then the holiday season came and people really enjoyed having the

extra days to Christmas shop," Hall says.

Roy Phillips, manager of Dillard's, says opening on Sunday has taken away from Monday and Saturday sales. He says he thinks there's not much more business, just an additional day to work with.

"I don't think it's hurt us," Phillips says. "We've increased our expenses but the hours we've been open have been productive."

Seven to 9 percent of the week's business is done Sundays, he says.

Susan Daly, leasing public relations director of Culpepper Properties, says business has had a slight increase in business because of the Sunday opening. Daly says tenants of Manor East Mall and Culpepper Plaza voted on whether or not they wanted to open Sundays.

"It was decided by a merchant's vote," Daly says. "The popular vote among those merchants was to stay open."

Daly says the repeal has not been successful for some stores, though, and those that have had problems have decided to close again on Sundays.

Scott Dorris, manager of Al's Formal Wear in Culpepper Plaza, says

In Advance

MSC Council will discuss two endowments today

By Jeanne Isenberg
Staff Writer

The Memorial Student Center on Monday will discuss the acquisition of two endowments to Texas A&M at the last meeting of the 36th MSC Council, MSC President Denis Davis says.

The J.W. Runyeon Collection, consisting primarily of Southwestern Impressionist paintings, eventually will be housed in the MSC, Davis says. MSC Director Jim Reynolds and the council will discuss where the collection will be displayed and the amount of funds that may be needed to provide a display room for the paintings.

Reynolds also will discuss the Jordan Institute of International Awareness, an endowment designed to promote awareness of international cultures and overseas travel.

Robert Bisor, the MSC executive vice president of marketing and personnel, will talk about the remaining leadership positions in the MSC and the process of application, Davis says.

At the council's next meeting April 14, Bisor, the MSC president of the 37th Council, and the other newly-elected officers will assume their positions, Davis says.

Today's meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in 216T MSC.

the store only opened one Sunday with bad results.

"It is company policy to close on Sunday but we opened for the benefit of the whole plaza," Dorris says. "Not a soul came in."

Dorris says Culpepper Properties has asked him to reopen several times, but says he has no plans to reopen.

"The owners feel very strongly about staying closed on Sundays," Dorris says. "We try to promote a

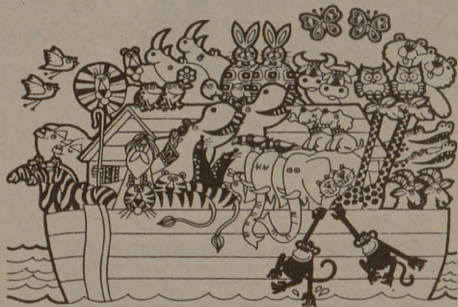
family environment and the owners feel that Sunday is a family day."

But other merchants believe clothing stores have benefited from the repeal of the blue law.

Mark Allen, assistant manager of Casa Ole in Post Oak Mall, says business definitely has increased.

"We rely on the traffic in the area as much as we do our reputation," Allen says. "We've always been open on Sundays but now more people have reasons to come out here."

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