



Photo by Tom Ownbey

## Busy Signal

John Hess and Karen Gibson spent three and a half hours waiting to preregister on the telephones at the Sterling C. Evans Library Monday night. Hess said his personal computer

had dialed the preregistration number over 2,000 times from his dorm room before he went to the library to try to register from the University's 845 telephone prefix.

# Star Tel announces chance for amnesty

## Offenders may settle bills for service misuse

By Christi Daugherty  
Staff Writer

Star Tel Inc. has announced a 15-day general amnesty period for all who have misused the service's long-distance access codes, including five Texas A&M football players who had been scheduled for arrest this week.

Dr. Ed Stephenson, Star Tel's chief executive officer, said that until Dec. 15, anyone who has made illegal calls can turn themselves in, either to Star Tel or to the University General Counsel, and receive amnesty by making full restitution for the calls made.

A&M President Frank Vandiver issued a statement applauding Star Tel officials for their decision.

The statement read, "We certainly do not condone action such as that alleged, and concur that the firm is entitled to restitution for any unauthorized use of its services. Our only concern all along was that some students were apparently being targeted as examples when, in fact, the problem is broad-based and certainly not limited to this campus or this community."

"It is our understanding that the company has withdrawn its complaints against those students and that no charges will be filed, and we are most appreciative of the company officials' reconsideration of this matter. We are confident that all of our involved students will take this opportunity to clear their records on an individual basis and avoid such situations in the future."

"We ardently encourage them to do so."

Stephenson said that all charges

filed last week or planned for this week have been dropped, including those against the athletes, and all legal action will be postponed until after the amnesty period.

Stephenson insisted that the fact that those to be charged were athletes had nothing to do with Star Tel's decision.

"No it didn't, they just happened to be the ones that we could prove and file charges against," he said. "In fact, we had several charges planned for today against non-athletes, and they were also dropped."

He said that until Star Tel actually started prosecuting, his company was unaware of the number of people committing the crime.

"After investigating and realizing the number of people involved, and the number to be charged with a felony, which carries a prison sentence of from two to 10 years, we realized a lot of these people didn't know the seriousness of their actions," Stephenson said.

He said the company decided to take the action based on a similar amnesty plan used by cable companies last summer.

"We didn't want anyone to go to prison or to have a prison record if we can get our message across another way," he said. "But after Dec. 15, we are going to pursue and prosecute anyone who hasn't come forward and made restitution."

Stephenson was unsure how the amnesty decision would affect the case of Archie Roberts, an A&M track athlete who was arrested two weeks ago and charged with theft of a service.

"My personal opinion is that if we

make amnesty available for some, we have to make it available for everybody, and I think he (Roberts) falls under that," he said. "But this will have to be a board decision, and we will have a board meeting next Monday."

Ted Hajovsky, University general counsel, said that those in his office will be working with Star Tel by assisting students who are unwilling to work directly with the long-distance service for some reason.

Some students don't want to volunteer their names, or are unable to pay extremely high bills all at once, he said. In that case, the counsel can be of help.

Hajovsky said that after a period of discussions between the counsel and Star Tel, the service volunteered the joint program to the A&M legal service, with the idea that under such a plan more students might be willing to come forward.

"My opinion is that Star Tel is not as interested in prosecuting students as they are in getting restitution for the calls," Hajovsky said.

He said that the amnesty is aimed at those who have made calls since Sept. 1, and that they must come forward before the Dec. 15 deadline.

"If nothing is done before that time, there's nothing I can do for them," he said.

Bob Wiatt, director of security and University Police, said that Star Tel's decision will not affect any cases the University Police Department currently is working on.

Although the company originally had issued complaints against the football players, Wiatt said, none had been arrested or charged.

# Reagan cuts operations of NSC pending review

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan ordered his National Security Council staff Monday not to conduct diplomatic, military or intelligence operations while a review board investigates the agency's role in the secret sale of arms to Iran and the diversion of profits to Nicaraguan rebels.

Saying that "I want all the facts to

come out," the president also said he would welcome appointment of a special prosecutor if recommended by the Justice Department to investigate possible wrongdoing.

Reagan reiterated that he had known nothing about the secret transfer of up to \$30 million to the Nicaraguan rebels, known as Contras.

In a statement, Reagan said, "You can tell them flat-out that I had no knowledge whatsoever of it until (Attorney General) Ed Meese briefed me on it Monday afternoon (Nov. 24)."

Meanwhile, the Senate Intelligence Committee went behind closed doors to begin its own investigation of the Iran-Contra affair.

A committee member, Sen. Thomas Eagleton, D-Mo., said former national security adviser Robert McFarlane testified under oath during the afternoon.

Earlier, the panel's incoming chairman, Sen. David Boren, D-Okla., told reporters, "I have not been surprised so far by what I've heard" from witnesses.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes said the administration "has raised no objection" to key figures in the case testifying before Congress. However, he said information that constitutes advice to the president "could come under the claim of executive privilege" and might be withheld.

## Drinking age appeal goes to high court

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court said Monday it will decide whether states may be denied some federal highway money if they fail to adopt a minimum drinking age of 21.

The justices, in a multi-million dollar dispute, will hear South Dakota's challenge to a federal law applying financial pressure for a national drinking age.

At issue in the drinking-age case is the constitutionality of a 1984 federal law aimed at reducing drunken driving by teen-agers, a major cause of death among that age group.

The law requires the secretary of transportation to withhold part of the federal money otherwise available to a state for highway construction if the state permits "the purchase or public possession . . . of any alcoholic beverage" by someone under 21.

Under the law, those states with a minimum drinking age under 21 lose 5 percent of the highway funds otherwise due for fiscal year 1987 and 10 percent of such funds during fiscal year 1988.

South Dakota, which permits people 19 and 20 years old to purchase and publicly possess beer containing a low percentage of alcohol, sued Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth H. Dole shortly after the law was passed by Congress and signed by President Reagan.

Lower courts ruled against South Dakota, discounting its argument that the 1984 law infringes constitutionally endowed state power to set drinking ages. The lower courts said states remain free to set those ages — at the risk of losing federal highway money.

# GM buys out Perot's EDS stock for \$700 million

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors Corp. on Monday agreed to buy back the stock of its largest shareholder and most vocal critic, Electronic Data Systems Corp. founder H. Ross Perot, and the feisty Texas billionaire agreed to resign as chairman of the GM subsidiary.

GM also said that EDS, which it bought two years ago for \$2.5 billion, will be incorporated into a new group along with subsidiaries Hughes Aircraft Co., Delco Electronics and GM's defense operations.

The announcement by GM Chair-

man Roger Smith followed a GM board meeting in New York, where members voted to buy out Perot in exchange for his resignation as EDS chairman and as a director on GM's board.

GM's board approved the purchase of all 12 million GM Class E shares owned by Perot and three other top EDS executives — Morton H. Meyerson, J. Thomas Walter Jr. and William K. Gayden — for \$33 a

share, or \$400 million. The board also agreed to pay contingencies, totaling \$350 million, agreed upon when GM bought EDS.

GM spokesman Cliff Merriott was unable to break down the package but said Perot's share came to \$700 million.

Merriott said Perot and the three EDS executives agreed neither to compete with GM for three years nor try to hire away EDS employees for 18 months.

In a statement released after the board meeting, Smith said, "Perot's

entrepreneurial spirit and visionary ideas have been of tremendous benefit to the company."

"We have always agreed on the primary goal: to be the leader in our industry and the most technologically advanced company in the world."

But in recent months, Perot has become increasingly vocal in his criticism of what he has said is GM's sluggishness, inefficiency and top-heavy management.

"We've got to nuke the GM system," Perot said recently.

# Budget cuts may affect TAEX in long run

*Editor's note: This is the first of a three-part series on the effects of state budget cuts and Texas' slumping oil economy on the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. Part 1 is an overview of the current budget situation at TAEX.*

By Bob Grube  
Staff Writer

The Texas Agricultural Extension Service is the economic and mental health guardian angel of thousands of farm families across the state, but recent budget cuts have clipped its wings a little bit.

While the TAEX's \$39.8 million budget was cut by about 8 percent — about \$3 million for the 1986-87 biennium — by the Texas Legislature, Ronald Jackson, fiscal and management affairs officer of the TAEX, says the budget cuts won't affect the TAEX as visibly as they might affect other state agencies.

"The cuts for TAEX are much less dramatic than what people expect," Jackson says. "When people think of budget cuts, they think of them in an industrial

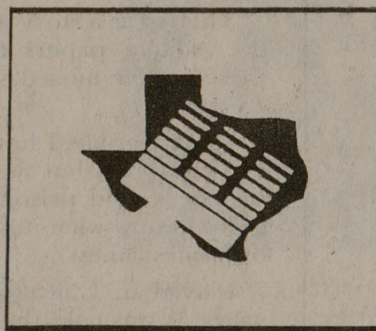
context, where 500 people get laid off."

"In educational cuts, you lose programs and quality, not people. The effects of the cuts are seen five years down the road."

The TAEX is different from many state agencies in that it receives money from three sources: the federal government, the state and the Texas' 254 counties. This multi-source funding gives the TAEX three funding problems.

The funds garnered from the federal government and the state are non-restricted funds. The TAEX has direct control over these funds. The county funds, about \$11 million, are not included in the TAEX budget because the counties control them.

Each state in the country has an extension service. The federal government allots a certain amount of funding for all 50 services and the monies are allocated to the states on a formula basis. This formula considers the number of rural farms in the state, the amount of crop production in each state and the size of each state.



These funds are kept in the U.S. Treasury and are disbursed when states submit vouchers to it.

"We do not get a lump sum of money at the beginning of each fiscal year," Jackson says. "We must draw it down on a letter of credit because the fed and the state have this money invested."

The TAEX has no control over the county funds and therefore, the budget cuts will affect this area of funding the most.

Jackson says federal and state budget cuts directly affect the county funding because the counties don't have surplus money to

take up the slack caused by decreased federal and state funds.

"County taxes are not able to cover everything," Jackson says. "We (TAEX) are not able to pick up the funding shortages. More is being expected of the counties with less money coming into them."

The added financial burden on the counties has forced many to either cut back services or cut out field agent positions.

Jackson says Dallas County recently had to cut \$100,000 from its extension service budget and Bexar County had to lay off two field agents.

Jackson says Gramm-Rudman cuts have affected only the federal funding in the TAEX budget. He says Gramm-Rudman cut federal funds by about 4.9 percent last year, but he didn't know what next year's cuts would be.

"We are still up in the air about our actual, final amount from the federal government," Jackson says, "because you rarely know until about five months into the fiscal year how much funding you will receive."

"With the state, you know before the fiscal year starts."

Jackson says the TAEX also helped itself in January by adhering to Gov. Mark White's request to implement a hiring freeze.

"We stopped filling vacant positions," Jackson says. "When the Legislature cut our funds in the second special session, it allowed us to carry forward the amount we saved during the freeze."

"This helped TAEX because normally, what is budgeted and not spent during a fiscal year goes back to the state treasury to be applied to other deficits. The carryover funds reduced our state budget cuts from 10.5 percent to about 8 percent."

Jackson says the TAEX has a basic staffing pattern of assigning at least one agricultural agent and one home economic agent to each county.

"This is the backbone of the TAEX because these agents have direct contact with the people who need help," Jackson says.

The field agents turn research

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