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# Campus landscape may mirror effect of state funds deficiency

By Tesslyn R. Mustain  
Reporter

The budget crunch at A&M has meant tighter belts in most departments, but for grounds maintenance, cuts may adversely affect campus landscaping.

Gene Rey, a landscape architect and director of grounds maintenance since 1973, said funding cuts could mean bare spots and dead growth without money to prevent them.

Rey said grounds maintenance is funded by the state and his department submits a request for funding to maintain landscaping projects. The department determines the minimum amount of money it needs by using a formula it established 10 or 11 years ago, he said.

In 1980, the state cut funding from 100 percent of the formula, he said. The department received 60 percent of the amount derived by the formula this year, compared to 73 percent in 1984, he said.

Low funding levels have had a big impact on various sections of his department, Rey said. The grounds crew is planting much less around campus and cutting back on vegetation in the floral test garden. These areas are the easiest to restore if funding is refurbished, he said.

Equipment is not being replaced as often as it used to be and fewer parts are stocked for existing equipment, he said.

The cuts will also affect hiring, Rey said, and so they are using fewer landscape architecture students.

"We have one (architecture student) working now, working part-time," Rey said. "We had to drop one in the drafting and design department and made it a part-time position because of the budget cuts."

An on-going commitment is especially imperative in his department because they deal with nature, he said. Once an area is lost it is irretrievable without completely starting over, which is very costly.

Funds for initial landscaping are included as part of the total project cost for all new construction, Rey said. But it is wasteful to implement landscape designs without money to maintain them, he said.

His department is responsible for all landscape maintenance and 90 percent of landscape design and implementation on campus. Landscape includes all plant life as well as seating areas, walkways and trashcans, he said.

"We do the landscaping and irrigation around most new buildings," he said. "We also decided if we're going to embellish everything, we have to water it. Each new landscape plan has an irrigation plan with it to provide water (because of our climate)."

For larger projects, Rey said his department

contracts with firms that specialize in landscape architecture.

The department is organized by landscape areas, he said. The campus is divided into sections and one person is responsible for maintenance of each section. That person mows, weeds, waters and picks up all debris in each section, Rey said. Other employees do jobs such as mowing.

Rey said school officials take pride in the beauty of the campus.

Lane Marshall, head of the landscape architecture department, agreed. Marshall said it is unusual for a good university to emphasize landscape design. University officials take pride in the beauty of the campus, he said.

Rey said the real growth in landscape development occurred in 1974-75, when the university committed to campus beautification for its 100th anniversary. At that time, the university contracted with a landscape architecture firm, specializing in college campuses, to develop a master plan for six major projects. Money for each project then was sub-contracted to other firms for final planning.

Rey said these projects included the north dorm areas; the east plaza mall; the Chemistry Building and Harrington Center Complex; the campus perimeter entrances.

## Official defends land deals, shows Texas will profit

AUSTIN (AP) — Land Commissioner Garry Mauro's staff presented figures Tuesday showing that state land deals that have been questioned by a lawmaker are money-makers for the state.

In one of the deals — the swap of about 22,000 West Texas acres for about four Houston acres — the state did better in one year than it would have in 1,000 years of keeping the land, according to Steve Roberts, a deputy commissioner for asset review.

Mauro arranged the presentation for members of the School Land Board, on which he serves as chairman, in response to recent news stories raising questions about his program of trading large, but relatively low-priced, state land in West Texas for commercial property.

Income from the state land is used for public education.

"The public lands of Texas are going to be a partial solution to the fiscal crisis facing the state," Mauro said. "I'm proud of what our staff is doing."

The *Austin American-Statesman* last week published stories that included questions raised by state Rep. Randy Pennington, R-Houston, about a swap involving the West Texas and Houston tracts.

In that transaction, the state wound up with a four-acre tract near the Willowbrook Mall in northwest Houston. A developer who is leasing

the tract from the state has been delayed in his efforts to build a hotel on the site.

Mauro's staff said projections show the state would have made up to \$1.5 million during the next 50 years by keeping the West Texas land. The Houston tract could produce as much as \$104 million in that period, according to the projections.

## Telephone call reunites father, son after separation of 15 years

DALLAS (AP) — The day started like any other for 60-year-old John Kruse, but before it was over a telephone call would reunite him with a son he had not seen in 15 years.

On Friday, Kruse read a newspaper story about a DeSoto police officer whose car had been damaged in a chase and as he read, he slowly began to realize who the officer was.

Kruse leapt from the table, shouting, "It's him. It's got to be him."

Because he has a hearing problem, Kruse asked his daughter to telephone Officer Dennis Kruse. The phone call touched off a weekend of hugging and reminiscing.

The elder Kruse lost track of his son in 1971 after moving to California and taking a logging job in the

Sierra Nevada. He had given up hope of ever seeing his son again.

"He's my flesh and blood," Kruse said. "I thought about him constantly."

The two had been living only 40 miles apart for almost six years.

"What's so amazing is that we were so close together," said Dennis Kruse, 42. "I had forgotten how he looked. But looking into his face is like looking into a mirror."

Both father and son said they never stopped looking for each other.

At 8, Dennis Kruse lost touch with his father when his parents divorced. He grew up with his mother in northern California. After a stint in the Air Force he moved back to

the West Coast, took a job as an officer and set out to find his father.

At 25, Dennis Kruse found his father in California. But the reunion was brief. Dennis Kruse's father came terminally ill and died a few days after moving to Oklahoma so near her family.

The two kept in touch by exchanging letters for a time, but they were apart after the younger Kruse died.

By the time he found his father, the DeSoto police officer was 1974, Dennis Kruse had lost track of his father.

The weekend reunion was also reunited with his old grandson.

**What's up**

Wednesday

**LUBBOCK HOMETOWN CLUB:** will have a Christmas party at 7 p.m. Sunday at 4311 44th St. in Lubbock.

**MSC LITERARY ARTS:** is now accepting submissions for its literary magazine, "Litmus." Call 845-1315 for more information.

**PARENTS WEEKEND COMMITTEE:** Applications nominating 1987-88 Parents of the Year are available at the Commons, Sterling C. Evans Library, the Mason Student Center and the Pavilion.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no less than three working days prior to desired publication date.

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