

State and Local

Official: New immigration law not without flaws, but workable

Experts analyze potential effects of U.S.-Mexico policy

By Robert Morris
Staff Writer

With the passage of the new immigration bill, the United States officially laid out the "Not Welcome" mat between the Texas-Mexico border.

On Nov. 6, 1986, it became illegal for U.S. businessmen to hire people without proof of employment eligibility — meaning illegal aliens.

This law and its political, social and cultural ramifications were the topic of discussion in a presentation sponsored by the MSC Committee For the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture and Political Forum.

Ronald Parra, district director of the Houston District Office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, lectured about the meaning of the law and its penalties, and compliance.

Dr. Jorge Bustamante, director of National University's Center for Border Studies of Northern Mexico presented the Mexican view of the law, including an analysis of its causes and effects.

Undocumented immigration from Mexico is a very old phenomenon, Bustamante said.

The phenomenon of immigration from Mexico to the United States stems from the labor demand of the United States on a foreign labor force, he said.

"The demand is as real as the supply," Bustamante said. "It is what shapes the phenomenon of undocumented immigration."

"This concept leads to a very important notion of the nature of the phenomenon, which is that we are talking about a bilateral phenomenon by definition," he said. "We are talking about a phenomenon that was produced by an interaction of factors, some in the U.S. and some in Mexico."

In periods of economic expansion,



Dr. Jorge Bustamante (left), speaks with Jose Juarez and Ronald Parra at a press conference Wednesday.

Photo by Doug LaRue

sion, the United States has been very aggressive in efforts to attract that labor force from Mexico, he said.

But the economic crisis of unemployment has caused the cur-

must verify two key points: the person who is going to be employed must provide proof of identity and proof of employment eligibility."

There are very compelling ad-

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— Ronald Parra of Houston Office of INS

rent approach of the United States — an approach that will, once again, be of little use once economic expansion begins anew, Bustamante said.

The immigration law has several different levels.

Parra said, "Any employer who hires an employee after that date

ministrative fines and sentences to back up those two basic requirements, he said.

"There is no liability factor on the part of the employer for any employee who was on payroll prior to Nov. 6, 1986," Parra said. "However, that does not relieve the employer from any further

encounter with immigration."

On June 1, 1987, the civil portion of employee sanctions goes into effect. "And that carries several penalties in the way of fines," he said. Those fines can range from \$250 for the first offense to \$10,000 for the third.

On June 1, 1988, the law will turn to criminal provisions as a deterrent, including a \$3,000 fine per alien and/or six months in prison, Parra said.

However, in Houston, the INS is predicting 95-percent compliance with the new law.

"The key, I think, in Houston and hopefully throughout the rest of the country, is that this law will be done in partnership with the community to make the transition as smooth as possible," Parra said.

Wiatt: Car-theft ring could be targeting sports cars at A&M

By Curtis Culberson
Staff Writer

Texas A&M students who drive Trans Ams, Camaros and other popular sports cars may find themselves the victims of speed and performance — the speed and performance of car thieves.

Four late-model sports cars have been stolen, and thieves have attempted to steal another from the Commons area parking lot using a "slam-hammer" device.

Director of University Police Bob Wiatt on Tuesday said, "The thieves put a slam hammer on the locks of the door, then they used it again on the ignitions and hot-wired the cars. They were in and out of there in less than a minute."

Two Chevrolet Camaros, a 1983 and a 1986, were stolen April 1 from the Commons lot. Someone broke the steering column of a 1982 Camaro Z-28 while attempting to steal it. Also, a 1986 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am was stolen April 14, and another Trans Am was stolen April 16 from the same lot.

The stolen Camaros and one of the Trans Ams were found stripped in Waller County.

"The interior of the cars were stripped clean — seats, stereos and any other accessories were removed," Wiatt said.

But there may not be a lot of students can do to prevent their cars from being taken. Wiatt said a slam hammer plucks the locks right off doors, allowing a thief to get into a car before an officer or anyone else notices any suspicious activity.

The odds are probably against the student who drives a late-model car with a popular body style, Wiatt said.

"The stolen cars had similar body styles — unfortunately, they are popular body styles — and the thieves probably have found a market for their parts in Houston," he said.

He theorizes that thefts are a "gang endeavor" and part of a stolen auto parts operation.

"There is a heavy demand in the Houston area for parts and accessories of these types of cars," Wiatt said. "The thieves have probably found a fence who passes the items along to buyers."

About a year ago, UPD cracked a similar car-theft ring. Five illegal aliens were arrested for stealing 20 cars. Officers found out through stakeouts that three or more of the car thieves would steal a car in Houston and then drive it to College Station where they would split up, steal two or more cars and meet later, Wiatt said.

"This may be similar to what is going on now," he said.

The department has been working diligently on the problem, Wiatt said, and added Wednesday that the department has received some interesting information that may be valuable in solving the case.

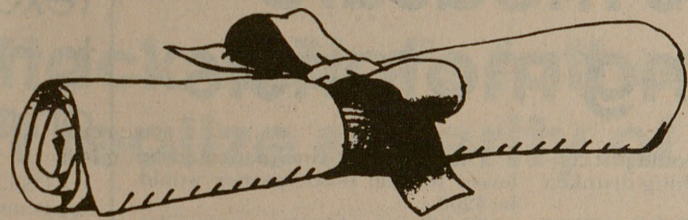
Governors along border plan meeting

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Bill Clements and the governors of the three other U.S. states that border Mexico are scheduled to meet next month in Phoenix, Ariz., Clements' office announced Wednesday.

The May 11 meeting at the offices of Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham is an organizing session to prepare for a conference expected between the U.S. and Mexican border state governors later this year, Clements said.

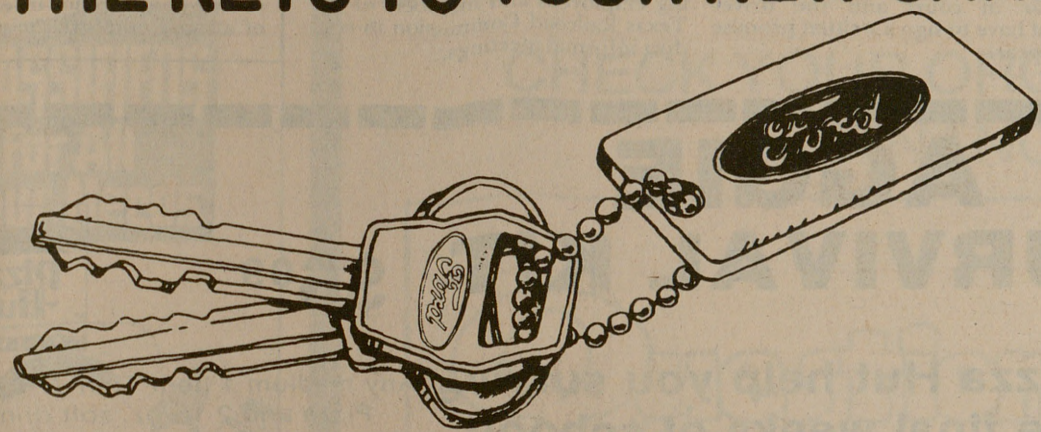
"We have mutual interests and mutual problems that cannot be ignored and warrant scrutiny from a collective group of leaders on both sides of the border," Clements said.

"This is one of those welcome situations where both sides can win," he said.



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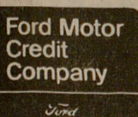
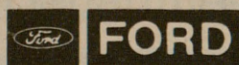
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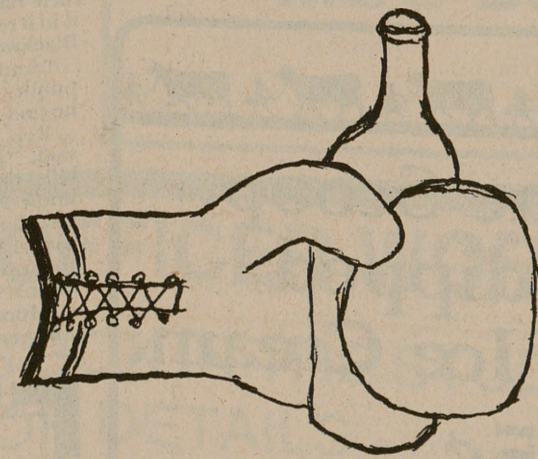


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