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Sept. 3 **Rush Smoker**, Kyle Field Press-box, 7 p.m. (Business Attire)

Sept. 4 **Happy Hour**, The Flying Tomato, 5 p.m.

Sept. 8 **Professional Seminar**, MSC 224, 7 p.m. (Business Attire)

Sept. 11 **Hawaiian Luau Party**, Walden Pond, 8 p.m.

For more information see table in Blocker

## Private developers provide last hope for troubled shops

HOUSTON (AP) — Merchants of a Hispanic shopping center are hopeful private developers will save the financially troubled El Mercado del Sol and prevent its closure scheduled for Sept. 30.

The developers met with city officials Wednesday and said they are still hoping to buy the property for continued operation if they can be assured of having tenants who can pay the rent.

"They were ready to walk from the deal," Mayor Kathy Whitmire said. "We let them know our intentions in seeing the project continue. It's just a matter of taking a difficult project in a difficult economy and making it work."

No deal, however, was made although developers planned another meeting with city officials in a few days.

El Mercado, the city's first venture into private redevelopment, opened in June 1985.

The shopping center was financed by a \$500,000 loan of federal Community Development funds through the city of Houston and a \$12.5 million loan from Mainland Savings Association.

Whitmire warned that the market's worried merchants do not yet have cause for celebration.

"The merchants have every reason to continue to be concerned," she said.

Merchants at the mall had been staying open on a month-to-month lease since the Federal Savings & Loan Insurance Corp. took over ownership in November 1986.

The FSLIC, which intervened after the failure of Mainland Savings Association, told tenants Tuesday that the building would close Sept. 30 and the 50 shopkeepers would have to move out.

In a letter to tenants, the FSLIC said efforts to find a buyer for the property had failed and that because of large monthly losses by the project, it was no longer in the best interests of creditors or the FSLIC to keep it open.

Houston shopping center developer Dennis Ranzau, with financial backing from boxing promoter Josephine Abercrombie, had been negotiating to buy the market and try to revive it. Ranzau, of Equity Fund Advisors, reportedly was negotiating to pay about \$4 million for the property.

Christopher M. Job, vice president in charge of retail leasing for Equity, said, "We're still hoping that something can be worked out. But we aren't ready to close the deal without further study. And while we want to buy and operate the property, we can do it only if we are confident that the job can be done in an economically viable manner."

El Mercado may have been on the verge of success as the opening of the nearby George R. Brown Convention Center would bring people close to the shopping center, said Alvin Herbert, spokesman for the city Planning and Development Department. The convention center will open Sept. 26.

## Lowest-paid teacher moves to new school near Mexican border

PROGRESO (AP) — Janice Herbranson, known as the nation's lowest-paid teacher before her one-room school closed in North Dakota, said she expects to learn a lot from her new job in this Mexican border town.

"If I had known that not one of my students could speak English, I don't know if I would have had the guts to come down here," Herbranson said Wednesday, while settling into the first week of classes at Progreso Elementary School, near the southern tip of Texas.

The 53-year-old teacher was making \$6,800 a year when her one-room schoolhouse in McLeod, N.D., closed in the spring of 1986 because there was only one student left in the ranching community.

"It was terribly sad because the parents and grandparents had gone to that school," she said.

Now her salary has better than tripled, to more than \$25,000, at the Progreso school, which is bordered by sugar cane fields and mesquite trees.

She speaks fluent Norwegian, but is just beginning to learn common Spanish vocabulary, like "muy bien" (very well), "bonito" (pretty), and various bathroom words from her 18 pre-kindergarten students.

She was waiting on a teaching job in Alaska when the Progreso Independent School District recruited her through Moorhead State University in Minnesota, where she was taking classes.

Courses she took made her eager to work with different cultures, she said.

"After I had signed the contract here, the people from the Hopi reservation (in Arizona) called and asked if I was still interested in a teaching job," Herbranson said.

She said she may stay a few years. "I'd like to get to where I know the people and the community," she said, but added she plans to return to North Dakota for Christmas and the summer break.

It's the first time she has moved from North Dakota, where she said cultural diversity is hard to find.

In a few years, she said, there may be enough children back home to re-open the schoolhouse where she taught for 16 years.

*"The kids needed a teacher and I was living there. I don't think there's a job in the world that's as rewarding as teaching. You see kids and their faces when they're learning. Money can't buy that."*

—Janice Herbranson, teacher

But she's also trying to get a job overseas, and said she hopes teaching in the border town of about 1,000 will help.

When it was discovered several years ago, her status as the country's lowest-paid teacher found her featured on national television and in various magazines in the United States and Europe.

"I got a letter from the president of the United States, and I'm not even a Republican," said Herbranson, a widow with three grown sons. "It was a nice letter, a beautiful letter."

She says she never considered herself as special as an international assortment of letter writers indicated.

"I never thought of it as that," the teacher said.

"The kids needed a teacher and I was living there."

"I don't think there's a job in the world that's as rewarding as teaching. You see kids and their faces when they're learning. Money can't buy that."

## Senator backs application for world trade zone status

MIDLAND (AP) — Sen. Phil Gramm said Thursday he would try to speed up Midland Regional Airport's application for international trade zone status.

"This concept has been successful in this state and around the country," Gramm said at an airport news conference. "There's no doubt world trade is bound to grow and we need to compete in that market."

The airport in July was granted international port of entry status by the U.S. Customs Service. It allows passengers and cargo to enter the country at the airport.

International trade zone status would allow the shipment of goods into and out of the country through the airport. Right now, cargo — and passengers — must check into another trade zone port when leaving

the country. The closest such port to Midland-Odessa is Lubbock International Airport.

Port of entry status is the first step toward trade-zone status.

Gramm said approval for the trade zone could take a year to 18 months but added he will do what he can to speed things up.

"This area of the state needs economic diversification," Gramm said. "I'm committed to getting this approved as quickly as possible."

"This has been a successful concept elsewhere. A new job base for the Permian Basin is vitally important."

Odessa Mayor Don Carter said the trade zone is necessary.

The Midland-Odessa area was hit hard by the drop in petroleum prices and decreased production.

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