

State and Local

A&M's shot at boosting research New space-grant law increases

By Janet Goode
Reporter

President Reagan on Friday signed into law legislation creating space-grant universities and a fellowship program to support graduate students doing space research.

The legislation, initiated by Texas A&M President Frank Vandiver, was originally patterned after the land- and sea-grant concepts, which focus on research and dissemination of the findings to benefit the public.

Vandiver has been dubbed "father of the space-grant program" by Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, who introduced the legislation into Congress.

The National Aeronautic and Space Administration will administer the program and set

guidelines for space-grant university charters. Vandiver has said A&M will be first in line to apply when the federal guidelines are set.

Chris Peacock, Bentsen's assistant press secretary, said, "A&M has distinguished itself already in the area of space, so they are in a good position for obtaining this designation."

A&M is already designated as a land- and sea-grant university and has been involved in space-related research for more than 25 years, Vandiver said in a previous *Battalion* interview.

More than 100 scientists, engineers and graduate students are now involved in space research here, primarily through the Texas Engineering Experiment Station Space Research Center.

Vandiver said becoming a space-grant university would mean more money for research, which

would bring more industry to the area.

Bentsen said NASA has a graduate research program which provides funds for about 80 new scholars each year. In the 1960s, by contrast, NASA supported an average of 500 doctoral students a year, he said.

"This created a natural intellectual resource on which we have drawn ever since," Bentsen said.

More than 56 percent of NASA's scientists and engineers are now over 45 years old, he said.

"The space-grant and fellowship programs will help us train a new generation of space scientists," he said.

Vandiver has said if A&M is selected to be a space-grant university, it would be the only institution to have all three types of programs.

Basic cable rates may be lowered in College Station

By Jill Radenbaugh
Reporter

Concern about College Station's basic cable television package has raised the possibility of a new franchise agreement that could lower the price of the city's basic package.

Bryan has a basic cable package of five channels for \$4.50 a month, but College Station's basic cable package is 30 channels for \$16.95 a month.

age because they thought it would benefit more people."

A base package is the only decision a city is allowed to make about the rates of the cable company because of deregulation, Calliham said.

"College Station chose the larger package because they thought it would keep the cable

"If enough people are concerned about the (cable) matter, then we will take a look at changing our base package."

— College Station Mayor Larry Ringer

College Station residents don't have the option to buy a package with less than 30 channels.

College Station Mayor Larry Ringer said he has had some complaints about the difference in rates between the two cities.

"We're trying to get a better feel for exactly how many people really want a smaller cable package," Ringer said. "If enough people are concerned about the matter, then we will take a look at changing our base package."

Ringer said when McCaw Communications Inc., now Cooke Cablevision, in 1984 took over Community Cablevision and Midwest Video, the city renewed their franchise agreement and chose not to have the five-channel package as its base package. At that time, the five channels didn't even include the three major networks.

"The opinion at that time was that the package would not benefit the majority," Ringer said. "About 90 percent of the people in College Station would not be happy."

The issue of cable rates in the two cities is quite confusing, Peggy Calliham, College Station public information officer, said.

"As I understand it, College Station decided on the base rate for cable first," Calliham said. "They decided on a larger pack-

company from raising the rates too much," Calliham said. "By choosing a larger package, the city was able to regulate the price of what they thought was the most popular package. Whereas, if they chose the smaller package as a base package, the cable company would be able to regulate the price for the larger, more common packages."

Where cable is concerned, it appears that the city has little room to say anything because of all the deregulation laws, Ringer said.

College Station had no idea what Bryan would decide for their base rate for cable, Calliham said. But in effect, Bryan got a better deal, she said.

John Southard, systems manager of Cooke Cablevision, said only about 2 percent of Bryan cable subscribers have chosen the five-channel package.

"The five-channel package is not really a popular one," Southard said. "We only have about 400 subscribers for that package."

Man dies after falling off tower

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A construction worker fell 290 feet from a television tower to his death and officials are investigating whether the man unhooked his harness, authorities said.

Robert William Lawrence, believed to be in his late 20s, was pronounced dead at the scene about 5:30 p.m. Tuesday.

"Nobody actually saw it happen," medical examiner's investigator Eva Hickman said. "They just heard him scream and saw him falling."

Lawrence, who lived in Anniston, Ala., had been wearing a harness, and it appeared to be undamaged, but sheriff's investigators did not know if it had been hooked to the tower.

Sheriff's Sgt. Roger Sauseda, said, "It's intact. It's not torn or anything."

Sheriff Harlon Copelan said investigators had not been able to determine what caused the fall, but said it appeared to have been an accident.

Texas economy has affect on voter decisions at polls

AUSTIN (AP) — Tough economic times seemed to be on the minds of Texas voters who said yes to pari-mutuel betting and no to several economic development proposals.

Gambling at the race track was legalized for the first time in half a century Tuesday, and supporters and critics agreed the promise of jobs in a new racing industry was a powerful lure.

"The people of the state realize that the breeding and raising of horses is big money," said Sen. O.H. "Ike" Harris, R-Dallas, a legislative sponsor of horse-race betting since 1975.

The racing industry also boasted new job possibilities.

One of the opponents of the measure, Gary McNeil of the Baptist Christian Life Commission, said: "We could not overcome the message about jobs."

Pari-mutuel wagering was one of two referendums tacked on to a record-long ballot of 25 proposed

amendments, which exceeded the previous high of 16 in 1966.

Fifteen of the amendments were approved, eight failed and two were uncertain with the election count of a surprisingly high turnout still short of 100 percent Wednesday.

Gov. Bill Clements said he voted for every proposal on the ballot, and he pledged to make the racing system "second to none."

With 98 percent of the precincts reporting, pari-mutuel betting on horses and dogs had been approved statewide by a 57 percent to 43 margin, 1,224,809 to 927,868.

The other referendum did not fare as well. Dallas billionaire H. Ross Perot, a leader in Texas' education reform movement, said Wednesday that higher-than-expected voter turnout in rural Texas defeated the push to keep the State Board of Education appointed.

"We talk about a big turnout, and it's only 20 percent," — actually 30 percent — Perot said. "Eight out of 10 who could have voted didn't do

so," Perot said. "That's the saddest part of all."

The outcome means the 15 board of education races will be on the ballot next year, with the winners taking office in January 1989. The board had been an elected panel from 1949 until the education reform bill of 1984, which was shepherded through the Legislature by Perot.

Perot's group spent about \$1 million on the campaign in which Perot and several state leaders contended the appointed board would be more likely to continue the efforts of the education reform movement.

Sharing attention with track wagering and the education board were eight proposed amendments grouped under the unofficial heading of "Build Texas." The basis for the amendments was to create jobs through the issuance of \$1.9 billion in bonds for local public works-type projects and private enterprises, as well as prisons, mental health facilities and water development.



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