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Track relocation fundings worry mayors Tate, Ringer

By Stephen Masters
Staff Writer

The mayors of College Station and Bryan expressed concern Wednesday about where the funds for relocating the railroad tracks along Wellborn Road would come.

In a June letter, Texas Secretary of State Jack Rains reported the details of an agreement for a relocation plan from a May 25 meeting in Austin to mayors Larry Ringer of College Station, Marvin Tate of Bryan and to County Judge Dick Holmgreen.

In the letter, Rains expressed his and Gov. Bill Clements' "interest in bringing this project (relocating the tracks) to fruition."
A memorandum accompanying the letter said the cost estimates on the project had increased to around \$50 million, to be divided 45 percent each for the federal and state governments and 5 percent each for local governments and the railroad.

This represents about \$2.5 million

to be split three ways between College Station, Bryan and Brazos County — around \$833,000 each.

Ringer pointed out College Station's current indebtedness when talking about the project.

"We (College Station) have a city debt of around \$25 million as of Wednesday morning," Ringer said. "This new debt would be one-tenth of this amount."

"There's no way we could handle this in one big hunk. What we'd most likely have to do is sell bonds, which requires voter approval."

"What we have to find out is if (moving the tracks) is that high of a priority for the people in College Station or if other things are more important when they consider there will be a tax increase involved."

Tate echoed Ringer's worries about where the money would come from.

"We are in the midst of a tough budgeting process," Tate said. "I don't know where we're going to

find the approximately \$800,000 this would require."

"We want to work with the University and other government entities. We want to do what we can, but we have to look at the price tag."

Holmgreen was not available for comment Thursday.

Ringer also was concerned with some citizens being taxed twice for the same project.

"If one-third comes from College Station, one-third comes from Bryan and one-third comes from Brazos County, that means people within the College Station city limits are going to have to pay twice," he said. "The way to solve that would be to carry the whole cost at the county level."

Tate added that the cities have not been a part of the decision so far.

"From the standpoint of the city of Bryan, this issue has not yet been addressed," Tate said. "At the meeting I attended, there was an indication that there were some monies for this at the federal level. I thought

then that the federal government was going to fund as much as 75 percent of the project."

Ringer agreed with this assessment.

"At this point, the cities have had very little input in the decision," he said.

Ringer said that in addition to the debt his city has incurred, the \$800,000 involved would represent about 6 percent of College Station's annual general revenues fund, which is \$13 million for 1987-88.

Tate said the cost would represent about 8 percent of Bryan's annual operating budget, which will be around \$11 to 12 million after budgeting.

Battalion file stories indicate problems and funding conflicts as far back as 1975 in moving the railroad tracks.

Infant mortality rate prompts research about prenatal care

By Anita Arnold
Reporter

The probability that an infant will live to his first birthday is higher in Singapore than in the United States.

This fact prompted a 10-state study conducted by Texas A&M which focused on identifying unmet needs for prenatal care. The study ended in a proposal to Congress to provide prenatal health care that could help reduce infant mortality to poor pregnant women.

Dr. Charles Johnson, director of the Public Policy Resources Lab at A&M, was the principal investigator for the study that was funded by the Division of Maternal & Child Health.

Johnson said he tried to find women who were having difficult pregnancies and deliveries caused by low income.

The sample included about 13,000 women from 10 states: Arizona, California, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Texas. These states account for 38 percent of all births in the nation and a similar proportion of infant deaths. A cross section of all pregnant women was used.

"This was the first study that really looked at the issue of how women paid for prenatal care," Johnson said. "We were interested in identifying women who did not have insurance or were not eligible for Medicaid, the government sponsored health aid for low-income people."

"The women might have a minimum-wage job, but they would have to pay for their own prenatal care."

"A consequence of this lack of funds is that the women do not get the care they need because they want to save money."

One of the strongest arguments for the proposal is its cost-effectiveness, Johnson said.

"If you have a low birth weight infant, under 5.5 pounds, and he ends up in an intensive care unit, the typical cost is about \$15,000 for that stay," he said. "Some of these cases could be prevented with a good prenatal care package which would cost about \$400."

However, Johnson said, this is not just a money issue.

"Forty thousand families a year have an infant die at birth, and it is not just the infant that suffers," Johnson said. "The family goes through many difficulties emotionally as a consequence."

Congress has not passed the proposal, but some changes already are taking place.

Johnson said Texas is considering making more pregnant women eligible to get care under Medicaid.

Johnson said that if people can be spared the agony of losing an infant, save money and have healthier babies, the proposal is worthwhile.

Donations for Burnett near goal

A little more than \$1,000 is needed to bring an injured College Station woman home from Germany. The donation total had risen to more than \$5,000 Thursday after six working days.

Laura Burnett, the daughter of Texas A&M marketing professor Dr. John Burnett, has been in a coma since being struck by an automobile in Munich, Germany on May 30. Both Dr. Burnett and Laura were participating in a Study Abroad program touring businesses in Germany prior to the accident.

A military airlift will cost \$6,540, but the expense is not covered by the Burnett's insurance.

Any donations should be sent to the Laura Burnett Fund in care of First Republic Bank A&M, P.O. Box 2860, College Station, Texas 77841. Donations should be marked to the attention of Lee Cargill.

Donations also are being taken in the lobby of the Blocker Building, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., where more than \$500 was collected Thursday.

Bill could lessen poverty with jobs

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Thursday passed a far-reaching welfare bill designed to help people break out of poverty through jobs, backing it almost unanimously after acceding to White House demands for stringent work requirements.

The five-year, \$2.8 billion Family Security Act requires stepped-up child support collections and creation of a comprehensive education, training and jobs program. Long-term welfare recipients or those likely to become long-term, such as teenage mothers, would receive particular attention.

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., who wrote the bill said it would make fundamental improvements in a system that has not changed in 53 years.

"This is the most important legislation of its kind and the first legislation of its kind since the welfare system was established in the 1930s," he said.

Moynihan said that under the current system, "One child in four in this country will be on welfare by age 18. That's where we were headed yesterday."

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas called the Moynihan bill "an opportunity . . . to set an entirely new direction for the outdated and ineffective system we have today."

And Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., described it as "the best hope" for lifting people out of poverty and restoring their dignity.

A bipartisan group of senators negotiated with White House officials throughout the week following word last Friday that Reagan would veto the Moynihan bill as it stood.

The main obstacle as the bill neared passage late Thursday was a White House demand that some welfare recipients be required to participate for 16 hours a week in "workfare," or community work projects, to work off their grants.

Governors of both parties opposed the provision to phase in mandatory workfare participation by one adult in each two-parent welfare household. But Dole offered it as a floor amendment and the Senate passed it.

Officials: Bank merger won't affect patrons, A&M payroll system

Plans to merge First Bank & Trust into a statewide branch network won't affect local customers or Texas A&M payroll services, bank and University officials said Thursday.

Nancy Wilkinson, assistant vice president at the bank, said there will be no changes for University employees who cash their payroll checks at the bank.

"It's going to be business as usual," she said.

Almost all University employees are paid through First Bank & Trust accounts.

and payroll services for A&M, said he didn't think the merger would cause any changes in the University's relationship with the bank. He said direct deposits will continue to be sent out as usual.

The plan to merge First Bank & Trust with five other Texas banks was announced Wednesday by its holding company, United Bankers Inc., of Waco.

Other banks to become branches in the United Bankers plan are in Austin, Commerce, Mesquite, Waco and Port Arthur.

IRA bomb claims 6 lives; Security lapse to blame

LISBURN, Northern Ireland (AP) — Officials admitted Thursday that a security lapse allowed an IRA guerrilla squad to kill six British soldiers by attaching a bomb to their van while they ran in a charity race.

The outlawed Irish Republican Army claimed responsibility for the bombing Wednesday and vowed "unceasing war" against British forces in the province.

A half-marathon for charity had just ended at the close of a warm, sunny day in this garrison town, headquarters for the British army in Northern Ireland. The exploding bomb turned the van into a fireball and scattered torn, burning bodies onto the street.

"I saw two bodies lying in the middle of the road," Nigel Sands, 19 said. "One of them had no legs, and one of them was burning. It was badly mutilated. It seems they were blown from the van. There was panic and people were running everywhere."

Ten civilians were wounded, including a 2-year-old

boy and a man of 80, but authorities said none was hurt seriously.

Political leaders in Britain and Ireland joined prominent Protestants and Roman Catholics of Northern Ireland on Thursday in denouncing the attack. Townspeople in Lisburn, seven miles from Belfast, gathered behind police barriers in small, silent groups to gaze at the gutted hulk of the van.

Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King, the government's top official in the province, conferred with army commanders in Lisburn before flying to London to report to Parliament.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said in the House of Commons the bombing was a "terrible atrocity" and reiterated the government's determination "to defeat the terrorism of the IRA, which shoot and bomb to kill."

Construction causes trees to lose limbs



Construction workers inspect scaffolding Thursday after trimming trees to clear the way for repair on the north side of Sterling C.

Evans Library. Some of the trees that were cut are nearly 50 years old.

By Stephen Masters
Staff Writer

Several limbs were cut off live oak trees north side of the Sterling C. Evans Library Thursday to make room for scaffolding needed for building repairs. Some of the trees are more than 50 years old.

"I have been out there working with the contractors all morning and we've tried to work around it, but there's just no other way to do it," said Eugene Ray, director of Texas A&M Grounds Maintenance.

"It's a Catch-22 situation," he said. "We have to put the scaffolding up to do the construction, but we sure don't want to hurt the trees in the process."

"These contractors have been working to adjust to this — more than any other contractor I've ever worked with. They are doing anything they can. There's just nothing else we can do," he said.

Charles McMullan, construction science assistant department head, said it is not unusual to have provisions written into contracts where contractors must use all "prudent methods to preserve" the landscape where they work, but minor alterations to the work area are sometimes unavoidable.

"In working with this type of height, about 12 scaffolding units, there cannot be any type of interference," he said.

David Kenyon, an A&M landscape architecture graduate student and registered landscape architect, said he thought the situation had been rushed and handled poorly.

"I think the type of scaffolding se-

lected is completely inappropriate for this type of work," he said. "Maybe it's all they had available, but one tree has been almost completely delimited."

"It probably took 30 to 40 years for those limbs to grow and they were taken out to put up a scaffold that probably won't stay up for six months. I just think it's a lousy trade-off," Kenyon said.

The repair of the of faulty brickwork that fell last August has begun and Ray said more trees may be damaged before the project is completed.

He said the trees on the north side of library will not be the worst problem area.

"The problem will be on the southeast corner," he said. "There will most likely be several major limbs that must be removed for the scaffolding to go up on that side, and we're not looking forward to it."

In addition to the trees at the library, Ray said that future utility constructions on the southside of campus may reduce the number of trees on campus.

Kenyon said he thinks there must be a way to complete the project without sacrificing more trees.

"I'm not an expert on scaffolding, but I just came from Europe where it is amazing the way they go around corners and over obstacles (with scaffolding). At a great engineering school like A&M, why can't we get something together and not shred these trees rather than take the fastest and cheapest route," he said.

Ray said the campus' about 1,900 live oaks date back to between 1910 and 1930.