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A&M provides CS with economic lifeline

Student spending provides city with over \$110 million

By Jackie Feldman
Reporter

When Texas A&M students leave College Station for Christmas and the summer, the city experiences a drastic change in the flow of money.

The latest study done by A&M's Office of Public Information found that A&M contributed \$365.7 million to the local economy in 1986. Students spent \$110.6 million with the majority going for rent, utilities, food and clothing. When students leave College Station, they take their money with them.

Store owners and managers know this. During school vacations, they see a substantial drop in business and profits.

Students make up 70 percent of the business at DoubleDave's Pizzaworks on South Jersey Street, store manager Tom Jondahl said.

"More students than families eat pizza regularly," he said. "When the students leave for the summer, we lose about 40 percent of our business."

Jondahl said the reason business does not drop by 70 percent is because the family business increases.

"Families like to eat here more in the summer because they don't have to fight the traffic," he said, "but also because during the summer the store is quieter and less crowded."

Jondahl said the amount of free time during the summer is the biggest change from the school year.

"During the school year, it doesn't seem like we have enough time to prepare the food," Jondahl said.

"During the summer, we have too much time to sit around because there are less people and less to do."

Larry Medearis, manager of the College Station Kroger, also realizes students contribute to his business.

Kroger's business and profits increase 20 percent during the school year, Medearis said, because of student business. Profits are higher than the average supermarket because the overall sales increase.

Medearis said, "During the summer our business slows down considerably. In the summer the flow of customers is steadier and easier to manage."

Northgate experiences a noticeable lull in business during the summer.

Don Ganter, owner of the Dixie Chicken in Northgate said a different type of crowd gathers there during the summer.

"Blue-collar workers, such as construction workers, come to the Chicken when the students leave for the summer," Ganter said.

Despite this summer crowd, the Chicken is only half-full on Fridays and Saturdays, the Chicken's busiest days during the school year.

Ganter said he prepares for the drop in business by building up a "nest egg" during the school year.

Medearis said he makes adjustments to the business drop by hiring less people and giving his employees less hours.

Medearis said, "During the summer, expenses go up. We employ a lot less people and use a lot less hours. We try to become better operators during the summer as far as wages and expenses go."

Businesses such as restaurants, liquor stores, record stores and apartments are also hit hard during the summer.

Ray Knotek, manager of Bennigan's, said his business loses \$5,000 to \$10,000 a week in liquor sales when the students go home for the summer.



Photo by Jay Janner

Workers begin construction of a Taco Cabana restaurant on Texas Avenue. Texas A&M pumps millions of dollars into the Bryan-College Station economy, including money for restaurants and retail establishments.

Dave Dean, manager of Dave's Liquor store, said his store loses over 50 percent of its keg sales and 30 percent of its hard liquor sales. Packaged beer sales do increase, however, because of the summer heat.

Jill Love, manager of Hasting's Books and Records on South Texas Avenue, said her store loses 20 percent of its business and has little need to reorder merchandise.

Apartment complexes rent only

one-half to three-quarters of their units. These units are rented at lower rates, while their maintenance and utilities costs stay the same.

Businesses survive the summer's loss of income by setting aside some

of the profits made during the school year, when students and visit-

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