

# Money

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tors pump millions of dollars into the economy.

One way students keep College Station's economy healthy is by eating out and buying groceries. During football season, businesses get an added boost.

On football game days, Double-Dave's experience a 10 percent increase in business.

"On game days, people don't have time to go out to eat," Jondahl said. "Instead, they order pizza."

"When the team wins, the students spend more the following week," he said. "I think it's because there is a buzz of excitement in the air and the students are celebrating the win all week."

Medearis said his store sells more party items — such as soda, beer, chips and ice — before home football games.

"Home games are treated as holidays," Medearis said. "I add to my orders to prepare for them."

Thanksgiving is a double holiday for Kroger if A&M and the University of Texas are playing at Kyle Field.

"When the game is played here, we sell 200 turkey dinners," Mederis said. "When the game is at Austin, we only sell 25."

When the game is played at Kyle Field, Medearis said he orders more products, holiday merchandise and displays.

Although Thanksgiving gives commercial stores added business biennially, Christmas rarely increases business.

"We run a lot of vacations of full-time employees during Christmas because business slows down so much," Medearis said.

Kroger advertises heavily to try to pull in more business during the holiday, he said, but so does the competition.

"I try to get the Christmas merchandise out early," Medearis said, "so the students will buy gift wrap and cards before they leave."

Jondahl said DoubleDave's deals with the Christmas decline by closing down the University Drive store for two weeks, and closing the Carter Creek store for a week. Those two store managers work at the Jersey store during this time.

Jondahl said, "We start out early in December to catch the family's eye. We advertise more to pull the town people in during the Christmas lull."

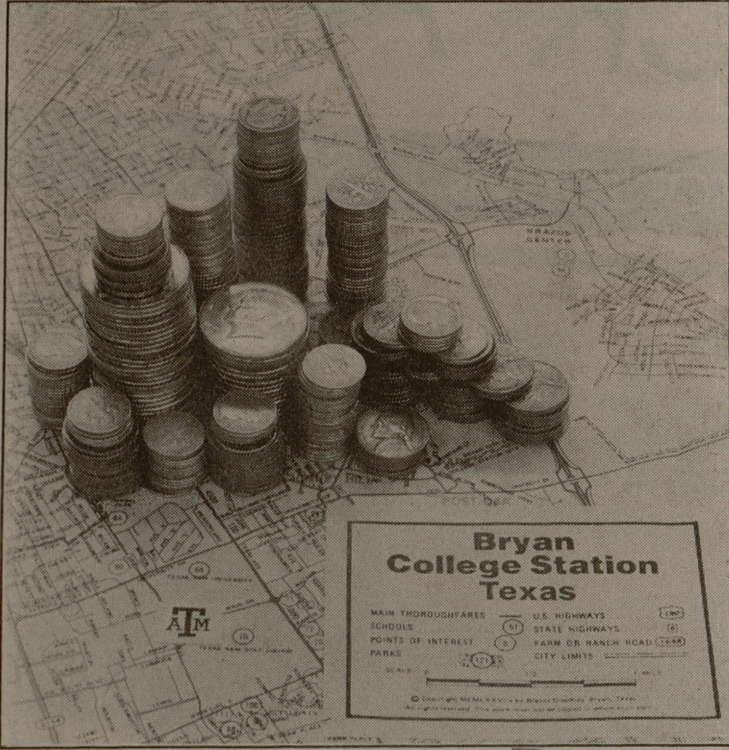
The commercial businesses deal with the summer decline the same way that they treat Christmas'.

Stores order less merchandise, give vacations and breathe easier. However, when the students return in August, everything changes.

Kroger increases its on-hand inventory by \$250,000 and rehires the 60 to 75 students who went home for the summer. Medearis said more working hours are added to the work schedules to deal with the sharp increase in business. The store fills with students stocking their pantries.

In the last week of August and in September, Jondahl said his restaurant has a 60 percent increase in business.

"This is mainly because students are moving into their apartments,"



Battalion file photo

he said, "Many do not have their electricity hooked up yet and do not want to go shopping in the crowds. After they get settled in, business levels off by 20 percent."

Bill Harrison, deputy finance director of College Station, said A&M is the city's largest provider and a major impact on the annual budget planning. Student enrollment size is an important factor. If enrollment size is large, more apartments are rented and more retail sales are made.

A&M plays a large part of the economy, Harrison said, because it employs 15,000 people from the city's population of 52,000. These people help the economy by buying houses, groceries and paying city taxes.

Glenn Schroeder, former deputy finance director of College Station, agreed.

"A large population of College Station is employed by A&M," he said. "What A&M does with its budget affects how we plan ours. Salary increases are important to the economy. If there are no salary increases, there will be no increased spending."

Schroeder said large decreases in student or faculty enrollment have a significant impact on the economy because money changes hands several times before leaving College Station.

"If you lose \$1, you actually lose \$3½ because that dollar could be used to pay someone," Schroeder said. "That person could use that dollar to go dancing, and the club could use that money to purchase supplies. The money turns over three or four different times before that dollar leaves College Station. If someone doesn't get that dollar, three or four other people don't either."

Schroeder said during the summer the city's pace slows down. In the summer, the police department gives most of their vacations because they are less busy, Schroeder said. They handle fewer calls

about loud parties and public intoxication.

During the summer many apartments' garbage is picked up only once a week because they have a high vacancy rate. Over one week-end the apartments fill up because students are moving in. Frequent collection is necessary because the garbage piles up quickly.

"When the students return, the garbage is collected two or three times, a day, compared to twice a week during the school year," Schroeder said. This increases the city's expenses because of the overtime and additional use of equipment."

Harrison said College Station Utilities sends letters to students who need to hook up their electricity to inform them how they can hook up by mail. This way the student does not have to wait in line when they return in August, and the city does not have such a sharp workload increase in August.

For the students who do not hook their electricity early, the city tries to make their wait as pleasant as possible.

"While the students wait in line we give them popcorn and lemonade and have a T.V. on so they can watch soap operas. We want their contact with the city to be as pleasant and as enjoyable as it can."

Schroeder said some temporaries are hired and utility employees work overtime to get all the students hooked up.

Although Schroeder realizes the university's contribution to the economy, he is annoyed by the school's tax-exempt status.

"The University is a major industry and employer, Schroeder said. "It is not a tax base, but the city still has to provide police and fire protection. We incur the costs, but don't get the revenue from the tax base."

Despite this drawback, A&M provides an added boost to the economy and businesses that clearly diminishes when the students leave and take their money with them.

# Entrepreneur

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would not make his store work.

"My whole business thrives on ideas — not capital," Flynn said.

And it has thrived. But Flynn remembers when he began as the only employee.

"I was purchasing, I was sales, I was the technician, I was everything."

Pushing further than Kingman had allowed him to go, Flynn purchased new computers to sell instead of working solely on consignment. Slowly, business increased. Finally, he knew it was time to hire help.

"I hired four people by January of 1987," he said. "That freed me up a lot."

With his new-found freedom, Flynn had a chance to use more of what he had learned at Texas A&M. However, this time he was going to use the knowledge he had acquired while minoring in management.

Flynn started going after large accounts from the campus across the street from his store.

"My whole market started out as the students and faculty and has grown from there," he said. Now, he said, virtually every department at Texas A&M has bought something from Computer Access.

His biggest customer is the City of College Station. To win that contract, Flynn had to outbid 21 vendors from across the state.

"I'm motivated to prove to (College Station officials) I can do the job," Flynn said.

*"I can't let age make a difference," Flynn said. "Sometimes I can make it work in my favor. . . . If I lost everything tomorrow, so what? I'd still be only 23 years old with my whole life ahead of me."*

— Computer Access owner John Flynn

Flynn believes his business success can be attributed to several factors. But he said his employees are the key component.

"I hire only students," he said, "or recent college graduates wanting to stay around College Station. They're cheap labor, and they're very into their jobs."

Mike Berryman, a salesman, has been working for Flynn for seven months.

"John is real demanding," he said, "but in a relaxed kind of way."

Sulyn Thomas, a senior accounting major and Flynn's bookkeeper, agrees.

"He pushes you hard, but only because he wants your best," she said.

Flynn said he likes his employees to be "computer enthusiasts." That way they can better serve their customers.

Setting goals has helped Flynn further his success.

"You have to make goals," he said. "It's the difference between people who make it and people who don't."

However, Flynn has surpassed his own goals.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think it (the business) would grow this big," he said.

Now it almost appears as if Computer Access is growing out of control. Gross sales for 1988 could climb over \$2 million. The walls of both stores are lined with computers. The new workroom is crowded with as many as three technicians constructing computers at one time. The office of the new store is shared by Flynn, Thomas and five sales people. In the old store, boxes are stacked from floor to ceiling.

"By opening the new store, I hope to be able to prove the way I'm marketing my products, the way I'm setting up my store, the way I'm purchasing products, and the way I hire my employees," Flynn said.

If he can run the second store without hurting the business at the original site, Flynn said, it could open the possibility of franchising.

Looking toward the future, the self-proclaimed "workaholic" said franchising is one of several possibilities, especially for a man unafraid of risk.

"If I lost everything tomorrow, so what?" he said. "I'd still be only 23 years old with my whole life ahead of me."

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