

Splish splash, I was takin' a bath

While walking around campus Tuesday with his parents, Clinton Wisniewski, 3, of Edmond, Okla., takes a break to splash in the fountain in front of the Chemistry Building.

Photo by Kathy Haveman

Report says B-CS utility bills comparable despite averages

By Scot Walker
Staff Writer

Those moving from Bryan to College Station may be surprised to receive a higher monthly electric bill. But according to a statewide report, total utility costs in the two cities are about the same.

An average month's residential electric usage in Bryan costs \$75.67. The same usage (1,000 kilowatt-hours) in College Station costs \$86.42. But Bruce Albright, utility office manager for College Station Utilities, said that despite the difference in electric rates, it's not true that College Station is a more expensive place to live.

"When you add it all up, and include water and sewer and taxes and so on, it's really pretty close," Albright said.

A report published by College Station Utilities this year compares utility and property tax rates in College Station with those in 12 other cities across Texas. According to that report, an average monthly utility billing in College Station is \$141.44, while in Bryan the same bill, covering electricity, water, sewer, sanitation and property taxes is slightly higher, at \$142.85.

Both cities rank in the middle of the comparison with other cities, including Austin, Brownsville, Waco and Lubbock.

However, most Texas A&M students rent their homes or apartments and are not directly responsible for paying property taxes. When property taxes are excluded from the utility bill, a College Station resident pays almost \$10 more a month than his counterpart in Bryan, primarily because of the difference in electric rates.

Albright said the difference is mostly attributable to the cities' different approaches to providing power to residents.

Albright said College Station Utilities has a contract to purchase electricity from Gulf States Utilities. He said a monthly residential electric bill is calculated by taking a \$6.50 base and adding an energy charge for the number of kilowatt-hours used. A kilowatt-hour, or kwh, is the amount of electrical energy consumed when 1,000 watts are used for one hour.

The charge per kwh in College Station varies with the volume of electricity used. The first 100 kwh are charged at \$0.1009 each. The next 400 kwh cost \$0.0709 apiece, while anything more than 500 kwh is charged at \$0.0639 per kwh in the summer months May through October and \$0.0558 per kwh at winter rates November through April.

The final calculation of the bill is based on a fuel cost adjustment, Albright said. It varies from month to month, and is based on the what the city has to pay GSU for the electricity.

"The fuel cost adjustment is one month behind," Albright said. "We charge extra or less in October according to the rates that we pay for the electricity in September."

A different formula is used in Bryan because Bryan Utilities is a member of the Texas Municipal Power Agency, a coalition of four cities (Bryan, Greenville, Denton and Garland) that have joined to generate their own electricity through the Given's Creek Lignite Plant.

Because Bryan is part owner of the plant that supplies the city with electricity, the cost to a Bryan resident depends on the price of the fuel that the TMAPA

has to purchase to generate the electricity.

Daphne Harrelson, customer account supervisor for Bryan Utilities, said that the customer's bill is based on a \$6.00 service charge, a usage charge of \$0.04884 per kwh to cover overhead, and a fuel charge of \$0.01500 per kwh. Bryan rates, like those in College Station, are slightly higher during the summer months because of an increased demand for electricity to cool homes during the hotter weather.

Both utility companies are owned by the taxpayers of the city, and Harrelson said that all of the employees work hard to keep costs down.

"We have to go to our homes and pay electric bills like everyone else, so we don't want to do anything to make them higher," Harrelson said.

Albright said that many residents moving within the College Station city limits wonder why it costs \$40 to transfer electrical service from one address to another.

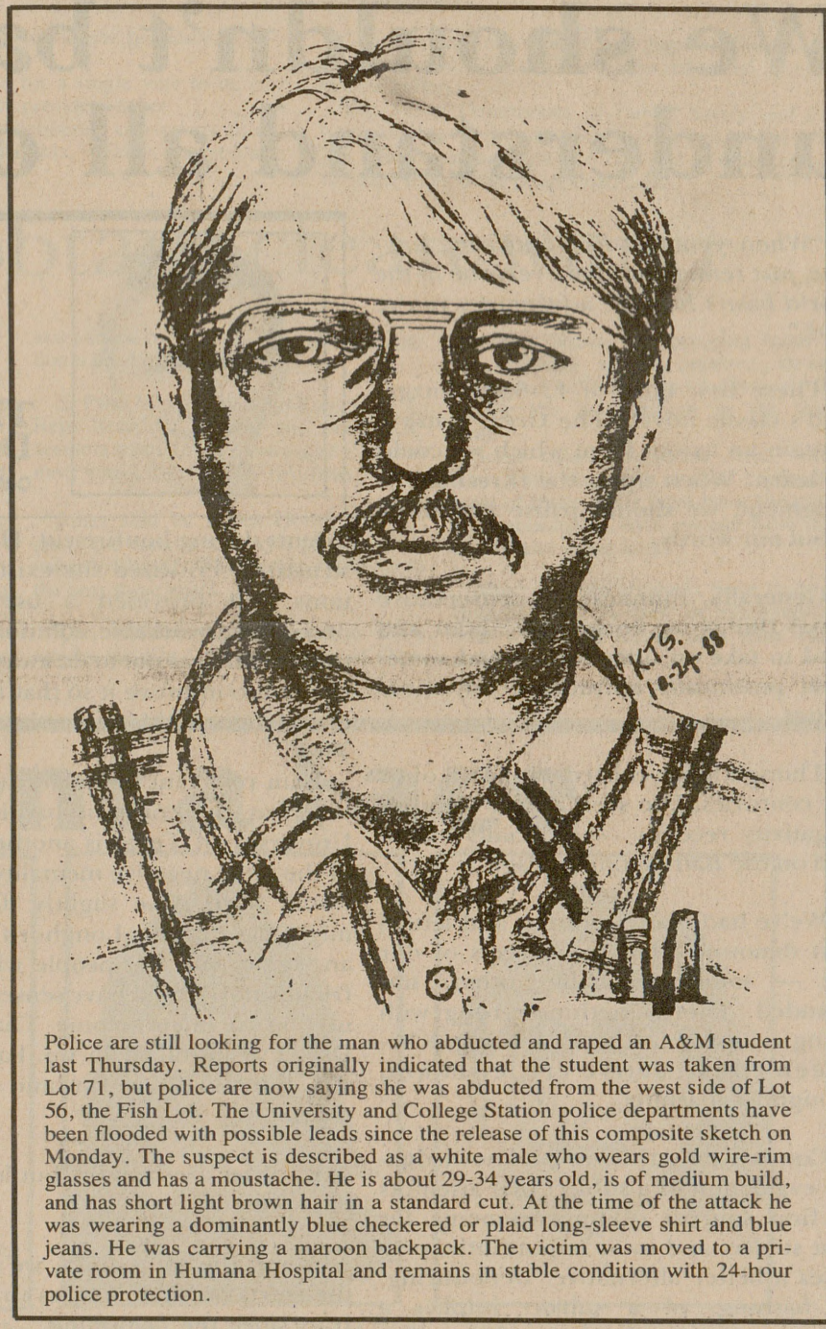
"There is a lot more involved than just flipping a switch or pushing a button,"

Albright said. "We have to send a worker out to the old address to take out the meter and put it in the disconnect position, and then another worker has to go to the new address and activate that meter. And after that we still have to make sure the deposit and balance from the old address are transferred to the new one."

Harrelson said that no specific charge is levied for transferring to another address in Bryan as long as the deposit transfers and no outstanding balances remain at the old address. She said that the cost of connecting and disconnecting is added to the monthly bills.

Albright said that a security deposit is held on each account and applied against the final bill. The amount of the deposit is set by city ordinance. In Bryan, the deposits are \$145 for electricity and \$10 for water at a rental property, and in College Station they are \$105 for electricity and \$30 for water.

"The purpose of the deposit is to protect all those people who pay their bills every month from higher rates because of those who don't," Albright said.



Police are still looking for the man who abducted and raped an A&M student last Thursday. Reports originally indicated that the student was taken from Lot 71, but police are now saying she was abducted from the west side of Lot 56, the Fish Lot. The University and College Station police departments have been flooded with possible leads since the release of this composite sketch on Monday. The suspect is described as a white male who wears gold wire-rim glasses and has a moustache. He is about 29-34 years old, is of medium build, and has short light brown hair in a standard cut. At the time of the attack he was wearing a dominantly blue checkered or plaid long-sleeve shirt and blue jeans. He was carrying a maroon backpack. The victim was moved to a private room in Humana Hospital and remains in stable condition with 24-hour police protection.

'Uzi Man' remains jailed for drug-related killings

HOUSTON (AP) — An ex-convict known on the street as "Uzi Man" and suspected in the drug-related slayings of two men and the attempted murder of another man remained jailed Tuesday.

Backsher Sheldon Booker, 24, who was wanted on an arrest warrant for a murder charge filed in August, was jailed in lieu of \$50,000 bond.

Additional charges, including a capital murder charge, may be filed against Booker, who also is suspected in several robberies, investigators said.

A tip from an acquaintance of Booker led investigators, assisted by a SWAT team, to a south Houston hotel early Monday, where Booker was arrested, Houston homicide Sgt. Terri Ross said.

Booker had checked into the hotel about midnight Sunday with a female acquaintance and another man who checked into a separate room, she said.

A SWAT team was called to assist investigators because of Booker's reputation for being armed with an Uzi submachine gun, a .357-caliber Magnum pistol and a .38-caliber pistol, investigators said.

SWAT negotiators called Booker's room and ordered him out, Ross said.

Booker told negotiators his name was Marcus Brown, she said. "They said, 'Well, if you're Marcus Brown, come out anyway.'" Shortly after 5 a.m., Booker surrendered without incident.

Police found a .25-caliber automatic pistol and a semiauto-

matic machine pistol, similar to an Uzi, under the bed, Ross said. They also recovered a plastic bag containing a substance thought to be cocaine, she said.

They later recovered an Uzi along with an ammunition clip for it and a box of ammunition for the .25-caliber pistol from the trunk of a car the trio had been using, Ross said.

The status of his two acquaintances was pending further investigation, she said.

Described as a major drug dealer in Houston, Booker is charged in the Aug. 11 death of Aaron Ealy, 32, who was gunned down over a \$10 drug dispute outside a reputed crack house in southeast Houston.

Witnesses also have positively identified him as the gunman in the shooting deaths of two other men and the attempted murder of another, investigators said.

On Sept. 24, police say, Booker used the Uzi to fatally wound Michael Doris Conner, 28, outside an abandoned apartment complex in north Houston. The location is reported to be a haven for drug dealers, police said.

Earlier that day, another man was shot at the same complex during a narcotics altercation, investigators said. That victim survived.

In mid-October, witnesses identified Booker as the man who shot Terry Dilworth, 25, to death in a vacant lot in northwest Houston.

According to witnesses, Dilworth was a bystander to a gun-battle in what is reported to be a well-known drug-dealing spot, police said. Before Dilworth was shot, a woman and a man had been engaged in a shoot-out.

Baptist convention delegates vote moderate

AUSTIN (AP) — An initial challenge by so-called fundamentalists for control of the Texas Baptist General Convention was repelled Tuesday, as delegates voted for a moderate for first vice president.

Earlier, the Rev. Joel Gregory, a Fort Worth pastor and self-described centrist, was re-elected by acclamation to a

second term as president. Gregory, who is not aligned in the rift between moderates and fundamentalists, is expected to deliver a speech later calling for an end to the feuding in the 2.4 million member convention.

"I am not a card-carrying member of

the moderates or fundamentalists," Gregory said.

Fundamentalists have accused the current state Baptist leadership of drifting away from a strict interpretation of the Bible.

The convention attracted about 6,000 people, about 3,400 of whom are "mes-

sengers" or convention delegates.

In the election for first vice president, fundamentalists nominated Gordon Graham, pastor of the First Baptist Church in New Braunfels, while moderates nominated Phil Lineberger, pastor at the Richardson Heights Baptist Church in Richardson.

Lineberger defeated Graham. The vote totals were not immediately available.

Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Bible College in Dallas and leader of the fundamentalist movement, said his group would also make a challenge in the second vice presidential race.

Even if they won, however, they would lack the necessary votes among the top officers to establish their agenda. The president and vice presidential positions control numerous appointments to Baylor University and to other Baptist institutions in the state.

The major target of the fundamentalists is Baylor University, the largest Baptist college in the country with an enrollment in 1988 of almost 12,000.

Patterson complained that religion instructors at the Waco school do not believe in the strict interpretation of the Bible. He also said he was upset that a Mormon has been allowed to teach Spanish at the university.

"We are in the midst of seeing a drift in a leftward direction," Patterson said.

Gregory, at a news conference after his election as president, said, "I would oppose the dismissal of any professors in the religion department." But he said, as positions become open, he would prefer to see those positions filled with evangel-

ical scholars rather than with scholars of differing faiths.

Gregory also said he would oppose the kind of changes, which have been a decisive swing toward the fundamentalist ideology, seen in the Southern Baptist Convention applied to the Texas Baptist Conventions.

"There's no great secret. (Houston Judge Paul) Pressler and Patterson both have said they're going to take Texas and they're going to take Baylor."

"It certainly is an objective that would allow them to have a tremendous, a profound influence on Baptist life if they were able to do that."

"We have been under scrutiny and surveillance and microscopic examination, week after week, month after month, and year after year, and from my own perspective they have come up with precious little."

— Hebert Reynolds
Baylor University president

Fundamentalists have held the top office of the national Southern Baptist Convention for nearly a decade, while there has been a growing influence of the fundamentalist philosophy on the boards of trustees, as well.

Earlier at the convention, Baylor University president Herbert H. Reynolds blasted the college's critics.

"We have been under scrutiny and surveillance and microscopic examination, week after week, month after month, and year after year, and from my own perspective they have come up with precious little," Reynolds said.

"I have tried to stand toe-to-toe with them and never underestimate them," he said. "The fundamentalists have demonstrated they are capable of taking over."

Reynolds said the fundamentalists are determined to gain control of the university.

Patterson said he didn't want to take over the university, but that he wanted to put more conservative Biblical teachers in the religion department. He said the teachings of some of the current Biblical scholars stray from the beliefs the fundamentalists hold.

Reynolds' news conference was called in response to accusations by the fundamentalists that Baylor had refused admission of Paige Patterson's daughter to Baylor.

Reynolds dismissed the allegation, saying her application was treated just like everyone else's and that she was admitted to the school, but never responded to the acceptance notification.

Patterson declined to elaborate on the situation concerning his daughter, only to say, "I regret my family is dragged into something like this."

Officials look for cause of fires at Parsons' green

By Denise Thompson
Staff Writer

Two fires on opposite sides of Parsons' Mounted Cavalry green on FM 2818 were extinguished by College Station firefighters Tuesday.

An investigation is underway to determine the cause of the fires, Capt. Tim Fickey of the College Station Fire Department said.

"I wouldn't say they'll ever find a cause for the fire because it's grass and dirt out there," he said. "If someone did start it, we'll probably never find out."

Fickey said the fires are being considered "fires of a suspicious nature." He said the station received many phone calls at 1:27 p.m. about the fires.

Five fire units were dispatched to the site about one mile north of Eastwood Airport at the corner of F and B Road and FM 2818.

Fickey said the fires destroyed about two acres of the field.

James Moore, 1st Sgt. of the Parsons' Mounted Cavalry, also received calls about the fires and went to the scene.

"We heard it was heading for the barn, and we just got about 140 bales of hay in," Moore said. "When I got here, the horses were standing in a field where one of the fires was, and we moved them out of there. The horses weren't panicking or anything, they were just standing there staring at it."

"Really, the only damage I can see so far is that the fires burned some of

the fence posts and ruined fence lines."

Cathy Schwab, a first-year veterinary student, lives on F and B road directly across from where one of the fires was burning.

"I came down the road and saw all the smoke, and I thought somebody was burning brush," she said. "I couldn't believe someone would be doing that, but then I saw the fire trucks and realized it wasn't someone burning brush."

"I was concerned about the fire crossing the street, so I went out and found a water hose. It's just really strange," Fickey would not comment on whether he suspected foul play, but said a report will be available today or Thursday from the College Station Fire Marshal.