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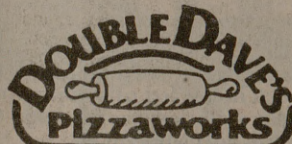
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Panel proposes plan to curb nurse shortage

AUSTIN (AP) - Texas faces a "critical shortage" of nurses...

The Special Committee on Post-Secondary Medical, Dental and Allied Health Education said...

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board should develop a master plan...

The committee also recommends the Legislature reduce 1989-90 non-resident tuition rates...

Resident rates for medical and dental schools for 1989-90 are \$5,463 and \$4,511, respectively...

Expanded loan repayment, scholarships and grant programs are needed for medical, dental, nursing and allied health students...

The Texas health education system includes eight medical schools, three dental schools, 69 registered nursing programs...

Health education components generate \$4.68 billion annually in economic activity...

The components provide \$474 million annually in indigent health care...

Texas Medicaid programs should be expanded and local governments should be required to provide increased levels of financial support...

The committee also suggests relief for health care liability costs of state-employed faculty and residents...

Experts: Texas keeps large house inventory despite smaller market

Associated Press

The number of houses for sale throughout Texas is shrinking but the inventory still is likely to be the third-highest on record...

In addition, the center reported Tuesday that, barring a strong market in the second half of 1988, the number of sales made in the state this year is likely to be smaller than in 1987.

"Assuming the sales pace seen in the first half of 1988 continues, this year will end with 1.4 percent fewer sales than last year," assistant economist Charles E. Gilliland said.

The 386,000 houses for sale, as provided by the Texas Multiple Listing Service, is down from 400,700 in 1987.

Although the inventory is down slightly, so is the average selling price. The first-quarter price of \$82,100 was 5.4 percent below the previous year.

"Housing is a function of supply and demand," Ted C. Jones, another research economist at the center said.

"When you've got tremendous surplus and a buyer's market, you have to work through that inventory. We think recovery indeed is taking place in Texas real estate."

"What we're saying, bottom line, is the Texas economy is improving and demand for Texas real estate is picking up. It is getting better. But it is slow."

Jones said the Real Estate Center tracks 26 Texas cities and sees bright pockets of housing activity.

"If we look at it, demand for housing is local in nature," he said. "The Houston Board of Realtors reported

in September and October more sales than ever."

Dallas, he said, also shows promise with the move of several large companies like J.C. Penney Co. Inc. and GTE Corp to the city...

"When you've got tremendous surplus and a buyer's market, you have to work through that inventory. We think recovery indeed is taking place in Texas real estate."

- Ted C. Jones, research economist

Austin, however, was a different story, he said. "For a city of its size, Austin has just so many doggone homes," Jones said.

Researchers caution that there are problems accurately determining the number of homes for sale because many houses now are serving as rentals until the owners feel prices increase enough to put them on the market.

"We get into a complex intermix of weak financial institutions that can't afford to hold on to the property and lending institutions are not in the business of rental properties," he said.

"But Houston has indicated in September and October that demand is coming back - at a snail's pace."

"We have a lot of good things going for us, but real estate is not going to recover until the economy recovers. But we've got President Bush coming, who's putting together a Texas cabinet. And we know the influence of that."

Atlantis' top-secret mission ends after 4 days in orbit

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. (AP) - Atlantis streaked out of orbit and glided to an afternoon landing Tuesday as a small band of spectators cheered the five astronauts' safe return from a secret spy satellite mission.

Navy Cmdr. Robert L. Gibson guided the 97-ton shuttle to a touchdown at 3:35 p.m. PST on a hard-packed clay runway after a flight of 4 days, 9 hours, 5 minutes.

"They have been given the welcome back call," Billie Deason at Mission Control in Houston said.

Two loud sonic booms crackled overhead as Atlantis descended through partly sunny skies and made its swooping approach to Rogers Dry Lake in the Mojave Desert.

One tire on the shuttle's left landing gear had a slow leak, but NASA said it was not a concern, and it did not seem to affect the smoothness of the touchdown.

It was only the seventh afternoon shuttle landing, the time apparently dictated by the orbit Atlantis followed in its classified mission that reportedly deployed a radar satellite to spy on the Soviet Union.

Because of the military secrecy, Tuesday's landing was closed to public viewing from the observation site on this military base 80 miles north of Los Angeles.

In contrast, hundreds of thousands of people had watched Discovery return in October from a flight that put Americans back in space for the first time since the Challenger tragedy.

Mission Control in Houston had lifted its curtain of secrecy on the flight to report, as it was happening, that Gibson had fired braking rockets to slow the spaceship's 17,400-mph speed by 2,283 mph and drop it out of orbit onto an hourlong fiery descent through the atmosphere.

NASA and the Air Force permitted live television coverage of the landing, as it did for Friday's launch from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Everything in between was blacked out, including the reported deployment of the satellite.

The flight was the 27th shuttle mission and the second since the 1986 Challenger explosion that killed seven astronauts and halted launchings for 32 months.

Rear Adm. Richard Truly, a former astronaut in charge of the shuttle program, called the current flight one of NASA's most important missions. "It's Atlantis' first flight after the standdown, and now you have two vehicles proven in flight," he said. "That's extremely important."

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