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## Bullock warns tax hike could damage economy

AUSTIN (AP) — State Comptroller Bob Bullock said Tuesday the Texas economy is in its best shape of recent years but warned that another tax increase could throw a major roadblock in the path to continued recovery.

Bullock, in a speech to the Texas Association of Realtors, said another tax increase similar to those passed by the Legislature three times since 1984 could cause widespread economic damage.

"Our economy, the people in it, the businessmen and women in it,

need some breathing room in light of the huge tax bills imposed on them the last few years," Bullock said. "They need a breath of fresh air, free of higher taxes, while they put our economy back in order."

"I believe that new and higher taxes at this time would be... roadblocks, that they would have a depressing effect both real and psychological on present Texas taxpayers and on those who are giving Texas careful study."

what opportunities have come up. Bullock's official estimate of state government revenue for the 1990-91 budget period has forecast an additional \$1.6 billion for the Legislature to spend. But some lawmakers say that isn't enough to provide needed state services.

Bullock earlier unveiled a plan that would raise an additional \$1 billion for legislators to spend without a tax increase. This would be accomplished largely through bond-keeping measures among some 20 special state funds and transferring that cash to the state's all-purpose General Revenue Fund.

"Some say that such a funding mechanism would just prolong the problem, and that a tax bill is the proper vehicle to make up the shortage," he said.

"But I say there is a darn good reason to balance the budget without new or higher taxes by using the transfer method."

Bullock said such transfers are common in private business, and he said the Texas and other states had done it before.

"To those who say we are borrowing from the next budget, then I say so be it, because I for one believe that we will be in better shape to cover it in 1992-93 than we are now," he said.

## Drug lord connected to Colombians

EL PASO (AP) — A reputed Mexican marijuana kingpin who was arrested last week in Juarez is in league with Colombian traffickers who control the cocaine trade, U.S. officials believe.

Gilberto Ontiveros Lucero, who was arrested Jan. 9 and charged with drug and weapons violations, is what the Drug Enforcement Administration calls a "polydrug violator," said Phil Jordan, special agent in charge of the DEA's Dallas office.

He explained that Ontiveros is suspected of moving multi-ton quantities of marijuana across the U.S.-Mexican border as well as hundreds of pounds of cocaine and unknown quantities of heroin. Mexican authorities suspect he owned almost 8 tons of marijuana seized late last year in two Juarez-area warehouses.

Particularly worrisome to the DEA is Ontiveros' alleged relationship with Colombian cocaine traffickers who have seized control of much of that South American country's government and commerce.

"There has been an important partnership between the Colombian violators and the Mexican connection in regard to the movement of cocaine from Colombia to the U.S.," Jordan said Tuesday. "Whether one has a 50 percent or 49 percent interest in it, I couldn't tell you that. But there's definitely a partnership."

Ontiveros remains in a Juarez jail, where officials expect him to stay until he goes on trial. U.S. officials have notified their counterparts in Mexico City they would like to extradite Ontiveros to the United States for questioning and to make him answer to a 1986 federal indictment charging him with operating a continuing criminal enterprise. Formal extradition proceedings have not begun.

The comptroller, who is an announced Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor in 1990, said both the economy and the state's financial condition are "the best in years."

The recovery hasn't spread evenly to all economic sectors, Bullock said, with real estate, banking and construction "still in a shake-out period, for the most part."

But he said the rebound in other areas is solid "and its ripple effect is being felt every day in virtually every part of Texas."

Bullock said the recovery isn't due to the efforts of any political party or officeholder.

He said, "Basically, our recovery has come about because Texas businessmen and women have hung in there and changed their way of doing business to take advantage of

## Scientists: Ants pose no threat to collider

By Melissa Naumann  
Reporter

As the super collider's Waxahatchie site becomes official this week, Texas A&M scientists are examining a possible problem in the construction of the superconductor — fire ants.

Dr. Brad Vinson in the entomology department at A&M said the ants are attracted to electric fields in the superconductor.

Vinson said, "As electricity moves through wires it sets up fields and the ants seem to be attracted to these fields."

He said that while the ants are a possible hazard, treatments can be used to minimize any damage they might cause.

"Fire ants are a serious problem in many situations from air conditioners to relay switches," Vinson said. "And they could ultimately cause some problems with the superconductor."

"But although the ants can cause problems, they are not going to

cause the superconductor to be moved. We can use a number of treatments, including sealing the equipment."

Dr. Peter McIntyre in the physics department said the fire ants are a serious problem.

"This is just another highly technological undertaking," McIntyre said. "but on a bigger scale, it does attract many more fire ants than other projects that use electricity."

Dr. Fowden Maxwell, head of the entomology department, agrees that the ants pose no serious threat.

Maxwell said, "It is a far-fetched thing because, while the fire ants may be attracted to electric fields, the superconductor will be two feet underground surrounded by concrete and other materials."

McIntyre pointed out that other high-tech projects have been completed despite fire ants.

"If fire ants were such a threat, wouldn't be possible for General Dynamics to build the world's most sophisticated aircraft in Dallas-Fort Worth," he said.

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