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Sorority celebrates twentieth year

Omega Phi Alpha performs service for community

By KATHERINE COFFEY
Of The Battalion Staff

The first female organization to be recognized by Texas A&M is celebrating its twentieth year at the University.

Omega Phi Alpha, a service sorority which also was the first sorority to be recognized by the University, has about 58 members, including 37 actives and 21 pledges.

The women do at least one service for the community per week.

Friendship, leadership and service are the cardinal principles of this sorority, Patricia Scully, sorority president, said.

This sorority was formed in 1953 when a group of men in a service fraternity at Bowling Green State University in Ohio decided they needed another organization to help them with service projects.

Omega Phi Alpha was formed at A&M when women expressed an interest. In 1967 the organization became a national service sorority.

Scully, a senior biology major, said the Delta Chapter was formed at A&M in 1970. Since then the group has had active chapters formed at other universities.

She said the sorority still is expanding and has formed two new chapters within two years. One of the new chapters was formed at Georgia Tech by Ginger McGaritz, a graduate student there and a former A&M student who also was involved in OPA while at A&M.

Scully said the A&M chapter is one of the most active Omega Phi Alpha chapters in the United States.

"We are geared toward service for the community, but the sorority is also a good way to make friends and have fun," Scully said.

Most of the organization's activities are performed for the Bryan-College Station community. This semester activities have included blood



Photo by Scott D. Weaver

Stacy Prince, a sophomore accounting/finance major from Corpus Christi, puts up paper stream-

ers as the rest of her Omega Phi Alpha sisters blow up balloons to decorate the health center.

drives, Dance for Heart for the American Heart Association, All-Nite Fair, food drives for the Brazos County Food Bank, Big Event, Special Olympics, Adopt-A-Child, bonfire and March to the Brazos.

Scully said the group was one of the only organizations to work on the side of the road for the March to the Brazos.

Other activities they have done for charity purposes include making Valentine cards for Juan Basombrio, a 1989 honor graduate of A&M who died last January after being diagnosed with leukemia.

The Omega Phi Alphas also sent valentines to the U.S. Veterans Ad-

ministration, where they were distributed throughout the United States.

Members decorated the A.P. Beutal Health Center for Easter earlier this week, and the group has a car wash planned for 2 to 5:30 p.m. today in the Red Lobster parking lot.

An egg hunt is planned for Easter, and money will benefit the Saint Joseph Hospital Children's Ward.

Scully said members do at least one service a week, if not more.

"I think OPA unites us in the respect that we do services every week, which is our primary focus and objective," she said.

This past summer the chapter

hosted the annual national convention for Omega Phi Alpha on A&M's campus.

Senior landscape architecture major Maribel Mosqueda, OPA publicity chairman, said the group has about 10 "Omega Men" who are their big brothers. She said the men help out with services when needed, but they don't have to pay dues or work a certain amount of hours to be active members like the women.

Mosqueda said anyone can join the group, but they have to do 30 hours of service work while pledging

See Sorority/Page 8

Center scores Texas; economy fails test

WASHINGTON (AP) — Texas' tax system and regulatory environment do little to encourage growth, according to a private research organization that gave the state failing grades Thursday for a lackluster economic performance.

In its 1990 report card on the Texas economy, the Corporation for Enterprise Development said Texas' employment indicators are stagnant, and economic disparities persist between rich and poor areas and rural and urban areas.

Texas also lags behind most states in nearly every area of development policy, including international marketing, tax and regulatory environment, and infrastructure initiatives, the research center said.

The center gave Texas a grade of 'D' in both those categories — economic performance and state policy. The state fared better, however, in the remaining two categories — earning a C in business vitality and a B in development capacity.

In the area of business vitality, the research organization said Texas' industrial base has only average diversity and its existing industries maintain a weak competitive position. The state, however, has relatively healthy entrepreneurial activity.

In its ability to develop, the center said Texas has a high level and quality of financial and physical infrastructure resources, but its human resource needs — education and literacy — are great.

John Bender, a spokesman for the Texas Comptroller's Office, said there is a growing realization among state leaders "that all of these human needs and the level of education probably have more impact on the state's economy in the future than anything else."

In a first step in addressing

Third-World conditions along its border with Mexico, the Legislature last year agreed to provide \$100 million to help residents of colonies obtain running water and waste water connections.

"It is an indication that lawmakers understand the importance of addressing human needs and they understand that business and industry looks at the level of unmet human needs in a state when making a decision to relocate or expand their businesses," Bender said.

Texas' educational system, however, has been found discrim-

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inatory toward poor districts, and Bender said it ranks near the bottom in nearly every category of social services.

"The Legislature has made an effort in recent years, particularly in the last session, to raise the level of state assistance for health care, nutrition, child services — but as we found out just recently, the money is not there in the budget to provide for all of those needs," Bender said.

"Government and business leaders recognize Texas needs to do a better job in economic development than in the past," Bender said.

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