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# Williams holds lead in most polls

AUSTIN (AP) — The traditional start of the political season began Labor Day with candidates in the featured governor's race crisscrossing the state after a summer of negative campaigning.

Republican gubernatorial nominee Clayton Williams holds roughly a 10-point lead in most polls over Democrat Ann Richards in the Nov. 6 general election.

But Richards, the state treasurer, says she is buoyed by the fact that there has been little movement in the polls despite a television advertising blitz by the Midland rancher and oilman.

"My feeling was that if we could hold our own against all of his wealth and his millions into television through Labor Day, then we're going to be competitive," Richards said at a dove hunt Saturday.

Meanwhile, Williams displayed the confidence of a front-runner drawing from an almost bottomless pit of campaign money as he stumped this weekend in west Texas with other Republican candidates.

"I'm not going to declare victory, but you know the part of the leader is to define your objectives and define your goals," Williams said. "And my goal is for these men and women to win in a landslide."

On Monday, Williams rode a horse in the Jaycee Jubilee Parade in Garland and then went on a campaign trip to South Padre Island.

Richards started the day at a labor group breakfast in Houston and then attended state Sen. Carl Parker's annual Labor Day picnic in Beaumont before jumping to west Texas.

Last spring, Williams was damaged by a series of gaffes while Richards has yet to form a coherent message for voters, according to many political analysts.

Williams compared being raped to bad weather, saying "if it's inevitable, just relax and enjoy it," and admitted to being "serviced" by prostitutes as a young man.

The Williams campaign has tried to paint Richards as a liberal, linking her to gays and lesbians and Hollywood actress Jane Fonda. The Richards campaign responded with television ads questioning Williams' business ethics.

Despite a state budget crisis on the horizon when the Legislature meets in January — estimates run from \$3 billion to \$5 billion budget shortfalls — both Williams and Richards have said new taxes are not needed.

Williams took the tax question a step further, saying that if elected governor, he would veto any tax increase.

At the top of the ballot, state Sen. Hugh Parmer, D-Fort Worth, faces an uphill struggle against U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm, a Republican.

Although, the governor's race has grabbed center stage, the outcome of other statewide races will mean new people in powerful positions of government.

State Comptroller Bob Bullock, Democrat, faces Republican Rob Mosbacher Jr. for lieutenant governor. Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby is not seeking re-election.

Democrat Dan Morales, a state representative from San Antonio, faces Republican J.E. "Buster" Brown, a state senator from Lake Jackson, for state attorney general.

## Your money is our money

# Company retrieves bonds, charges fee

DALLAS (AP) — A company here has earned thousands of dollars since April by finding forgotten money posted as bonds in now-closed criminal cases and retrieving it for a fee.

Some people don't like giving a 50 percent kickback for money that's already theirs.

The county is trying to curtail such financial opportunities, however legal, at the county jail.

Renetta Wilson of Dallas said she received a postcard from the company, called UCM. It offered to help her recover money it said was hers. When she contacted UCM, employees urged her to sign a contract without disclosing where the potential windfall might be coming from, she said.

After several calls, UCM officials told her the money was a \$200 cash bond she had posted to get a relative out of jail on a March 1988 drunken-driving charge that later was dismissed, she said.

The catch: UCM wanted half of the money as a finder's fee, she said. Unlike many UCM clients, Wilson refused to pay and reclaimed the bond herself.

"I had no idea I could get that money back," Wilson told the Dallas Morning News. "A lot of people who post bonds can't afford to give up a chunk of their money as a finder's fee."

The company continues to make money while the debate swells over its operations, the newspaper said.

"I would estimate we've claimed about \$100,000 for about 500 clients since April," when the company began operating, said founder Richard Eason, 48, of Hurst. He said he employs 10 workers in the Dallas office.

Eason said his commission varies averaging about \$82, or 41 percent on a typical \$200 misdemeanor county court-at-law bond. The company primarily works in Dallas County and has limited operations elsewhere in Texas, he said.

"I discovered through my research that there is a large body of unclaimed money in public funds," he said.

Eason said, and county officials confirmed, that the information on unclaimed bonds, while public, isn't available in one place. Finding the data requires research in various public files and computer records kept by the sheriff, the county clerk and district clerk.

## Fuel prices may hinder contract negotiations

DALLAS (AP) — Negotiators for American Airlines and the Allied Pilots Association will talk again Wednesday about a contract, nearly a year on the bargaining table, which is now in question because of fuel prices.

The Persian Gulf crisis has pushed up already-rising fuel costs, creating one more pressure on airline managements to bargain tough in hopes of controlling costs.

But the pilots, who agreed in 1983 to concessions that helped pay for American's successful seven-year expansion, say it's catch-up time and they point at Delta Air Lines.

Mediators for Delta and the pilots union reached an agreement one day before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait last month. The APA has said Delta has consistently led the industry in pilots' pay while maintaining a strong financial performance.

"We do not believe that standard pilot compensation is the key to corporate success," the APA's new bargaining committee argued in its opening remarks to American early last month in Boston.

American contends that it needs a favorable labor cost structure to continue its rapid growth. Management is acquiring aircraft and routes for a \$21 billion, five-year growth plan.

In 1990, the Fort Worth-based carrier reported a net loss of \$19.3 million in the first quarter, its first quarterly loss since 1987. In the second quarter, earnings were off 27 percent from a year earlier, and American recently advised analysts to cut their earnings estimates for the rest of the fiscal year.

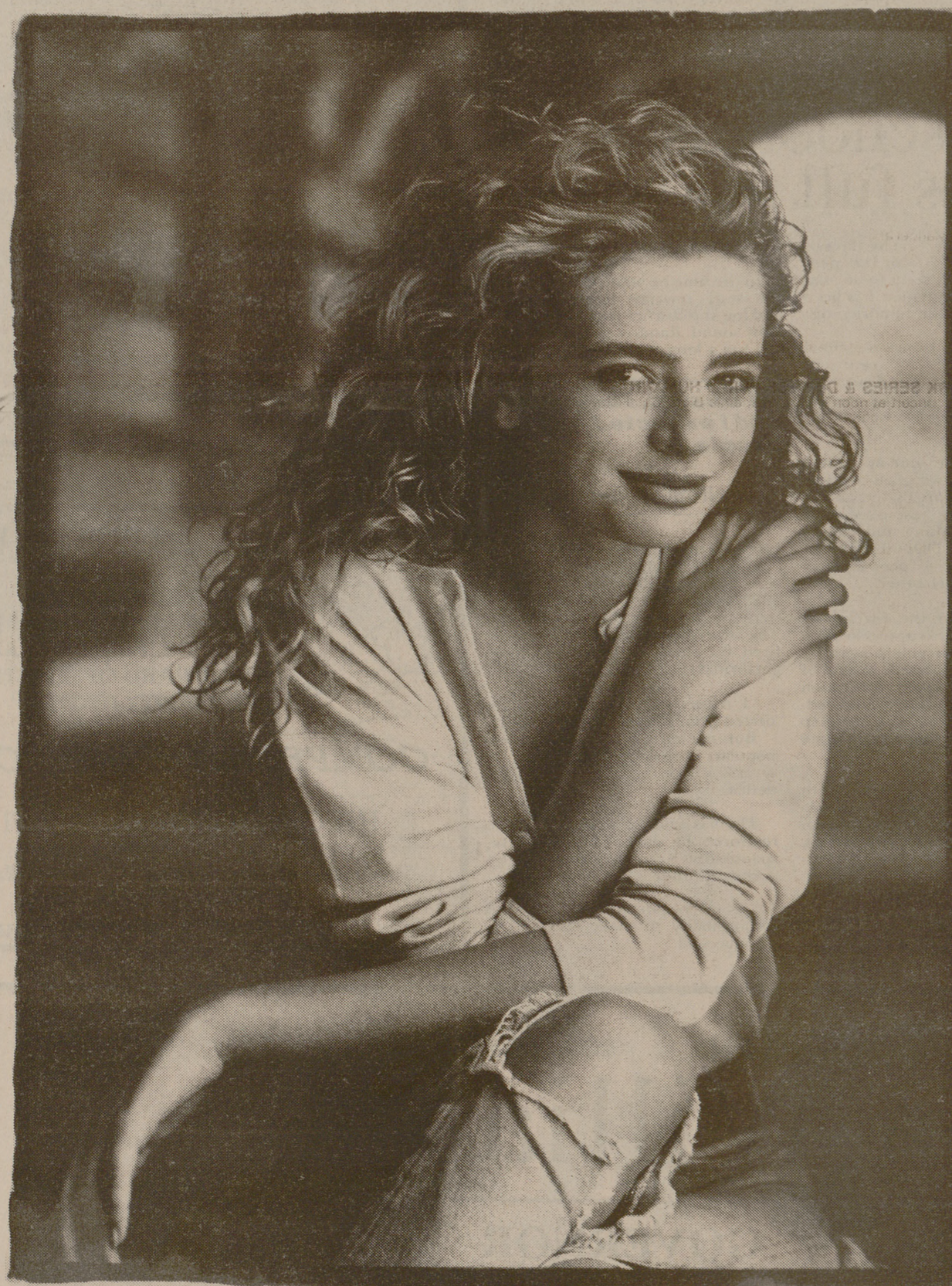
Fuel costs, which made up about 15 percent of 1989 operating expenses, are up 23 percent over 1988. The national economy is slowing down and airlines are among the first industries hurt by recession.

"In retrospect, they (American's 8,600 pilots) would have been better off coming to an agreement prior to the Kuwait invasion," analyst Martin E. Daugherty of Dean Witter Reynolds Inc. said.

"Now, higher fuel prices and increased risk of recession have reduced American's as well as the industry's profit opportunities significantly for the next six to 12 months," Daugherty said. "A lot of airlines are studying whether they should cut back on growth in capacity."

American's pilots say they can't afford to link their bargaining to recent financial events. They say that American had seven strong years before the current downturn. Executives saw their compensation rise sharply, as revenues doubled and operating income nearly tripled.

"We're going in with the hope and intention of continuing" negotiations, Scott Petersen, APA director



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