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Announcements

Announcements

Announcements

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The Battalion

Senate passes bill to cut oil clean-up response time

AUSTIN (AP) — The Senate passed a bill Wednesday to protect Texas bays and estuaries by designating a single state agency, drawing from a fund of up to \$50 million, to respond immediately to clean up oil spills

Page 10

Bill sponsor Carl Parker said the measure, which was sent to the House on a 29-0 vote, would cut response time for cleaning up spills from days to hours.

"The bays and estuaries of the Gulf Coast represent some of our more precious assets in this state," Sen. Parker, D-Port Arthur, said. "They are the lifeline of the food chain for all of our shellfish, fish .. and all of the aquatic life and animal life on the Gulf Coast."

Parker cited such major oil spills as the Burmah Agate, which in 1979 dumped 10.7 million gallons off the Texas coast, and last summer when the tanker Mega Borg and an oil barge spilled a combined total of 4.4 million gallons of oil near Galveston.

"The largest problem we have in countering and responding to these spills is nobody has been in charge, no one has had access to adequate funding," Parker said. The bill would make the General

Land Office the state's lead agency for responding to oil spills or other pollutants in coastal waters.

day care centers

hoods

ence West said.

years on the council.'

Sexual business ban

from operating within 750 feet of schools, churches and

"This is really a major step forward for every citizen in Houston," said councilwoman Christin Hartung,

who has worked on getting the measure approved for

11/2 years. "It's the toughest battle I've had in my 12

The ordinance also outlaws such businesses from op-

erating within 1,000 feet of other sexually oriented businesses in an effort to get rid of what Hartung called "combat zones," or groups of adult-oriented businesses. In addition, such businesses would be prohibited

from operating in predominantly residential neighbor-

compliance with the new ordinance, city attorney Clar-

The businesses have three months to register for city permits and six months to continue operating to recoup their investment, West said. A business out of compli-

Only 17 of the 54 businesses affected appear to be in

It establishes a coastal protection fund of up to \$50 million by placing a fee on crude oil transported by vessel. The fee, either 2 cents or 4 cents a barrel, would depend on how much money was needed for the

The fund would pay for state cleanup costs, compensate people damaged by spills and pay for re-

The legislation also requires owners of oil terminal facilities and vessels with a capacity of 10,000 or more gallons of oil to maintain adequate insurance and develop spill Prevention and response plans. Criminal and civil penalties are provided for violations.

"Most importantly, it will be a great way to get out there and get this stuff cleaned up immediately," Parker said. "That's where the harm has been caused, by taking so long to get it cleaned up until it gets in the grasslands or to the beaches and the impact doubles.'

Under the legislation, the Texas Water Commission would still have responsibility for hazardous spills except for oil, Parker said.

Among several amendments were changes to maintain the Railroad Commission's role in regulating offshore wells and pipelines.

Officials call for tax hike to meet needs of hospitals

HOUSTON (AP) — Harris County Hospital District officials said they need a 31 percent in crease in their portion of county property taxes to meet rising emergency trauma cases and medical costs

Lois Moore, the hospital dis-trict's president, told Harris County commissioners Tuesday that the district could come up \$50 million short without the additional revenue.

To fund the hospital district, county residents now are assessed 16 cents per \$100 valuation. Moore said that should be in-creased 5 cents to 21 cents per \$100 valuation.

The tax hike would help the crowded emergency room situa-tion by allowing the district to re-open Quentin Mease Hospital, she said.

The hospital has been closed since January 1990 for asbestos removal. It was unable to reopen as scheduled last summer in part because of the budget shortfall.

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churches, schools or day care centers," Hartung said. The measure approved Wednesday adds adult book and video stores and X-rated movie theaters to the city's sexually oriented business code, which already regulates topless clubs and modeling shows

Vietnamese teens face racism, struggle with cultural differences, expectations

beaten and stomped by suspected skinheads last summer and later died of his injuries. But his death had a big impact on Nguyen and many other Vietnamese teen-agers in Houston.

Until then, Nguyen, the youngest

of nine children, had felt at home in

the United States. His assimilation

HOUSTON (AP) — Willie who is fond of telling jokes, had stand up for your rights. But all the Nguyen didn't know Hung Truong, the Vietnamese youth who was "I know it's out there, and I'm — with us."

aware of problems," Nguyen says. "But I guess it became much more

ong slaying among themselves and Of those who came in the first ware

The three Vietnamese teen-age

believe that in many ways they have had the best of both worlds — Amerapparent to me last summer." Since then, Nguyen and his friends have talked about the Tru-

How do w One way A salary c money tea

HOUSTON (AP) - The City Council unanimously ance then must move or cease operations unless it reapproved on Wednesday an ordinance that prohibits adult book and video stores and X-rated movie theaters ceives an exemption from the city. Some Houstonians blasted the council's action

Wednesday, saying it violated the First Amendment.

"This is a censorship ordinance," said Ray Hill, a free speech and gay rights activist. Hill predicted the amendment would be reversed if it is challenged in

Hartung said she expected lawyers for the businesse to challenge the law, but she added she is confident the measure can withstand a legal battle since it regulates location, not content

We feel we have taken our time, done the research dotted every 'I' and crossed every 'T'," she said. "W feel relatively comfortable about any court challenge."

"We're only regulating land use controls to ensur that these types of establishments are not close to



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had been free from the frustrations and fears faced by his older brothers and sisters and their parents when they arrived in 1975. The same is true for his friends Karen Doan and Ha Le, also the youngest in large families, and his classmates at Sharpstown High School.

Nguyen and his peers look at themselves as a new generation, born Vietnamese but raised American — comfortable with a range of experiences as varied as apple pie and spring rolls. It makes, they admit, for an interesting approach to

But this was the first time you to keep quiet, and it will go away. Nguyen, 17, a happy-go-lucky sort Like it's rude to make a scene or

with family members. They have read the accounts that suggest Truong might have survived if he had gone to a hospital earlier and if he had called his father instead of hiding his problems — a traditional Asian reaction.

Nguyen, Doan and Le acknowl-edge that "saving face" is important in their culture. In Vietnam, the perfect image was everything. But they say that their own reaction to Truong's death reflects how American they have become.

"I was mad about it at first," Nguyen says. "It seemed no matter what I wanted to do, it wouldn't help. A lot of times in the Vietnamese community, it seems they want

FINAL WINTER CLEARANCE

Just in time for spring break!

of refugees after the fall of Saigon in 1975, they feel most at home. By the time they were old enough to re member, their families had reco ered from the initial traumas of their mov

Only Doan, 16, who left in 1979, remembers Vietnam. Le and Nguyen left as babes in their moth-ers' arms. To them it is an exoticide - a place they might like to visit one day, but never home.

They have not forgotten the families' early struggles. Older brothers and sisters remind them of the sacrifices their parents made them. But often they feel trapped is a world of stereotypes: caugh be tween the image of the perfect Asian who gets all A's and the disaffected Asian who turns to gangs to find a identity.

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