

Texas A&M The Battalion

Vol. 90 No. 105 USPS 045360 10 Pages

College Station, Texas

Friday, March 1, 1991

Local bank fails

First American buys United Citizen Bank

By Jayme Blaschke
The Battalion

Texas A&M students and local residents that normally do their banking at United Citizens Bank will find themselves customers of First American Bank today.

United Citizens Bank was declared insolvent Thursday and acquired at 4 p.m. by First American bank from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Don Adam, chairman of the board of First American, said he was pleased to be able to work with United Citizens' former customers.

First American also has acquired several other failed banks in the local area over the past several years.

"We think we've done an excellent job of providing banking services to former First Bank and Trust customers and University National Bank customers," Adam said. "We want to make certain it is clear the United Citizens locations will reopen tomorrow uninterrupted."

He said all operations will be managed by First American Bank and all United Citizens checks written will be honored until they are changed over to First American.

Other financial institutions placed bids with the FDIC for United Citizens, he said.

Despite the acquisition of three failed financial institutions since 1989, Adam said First American Bank is not losing its solvency.

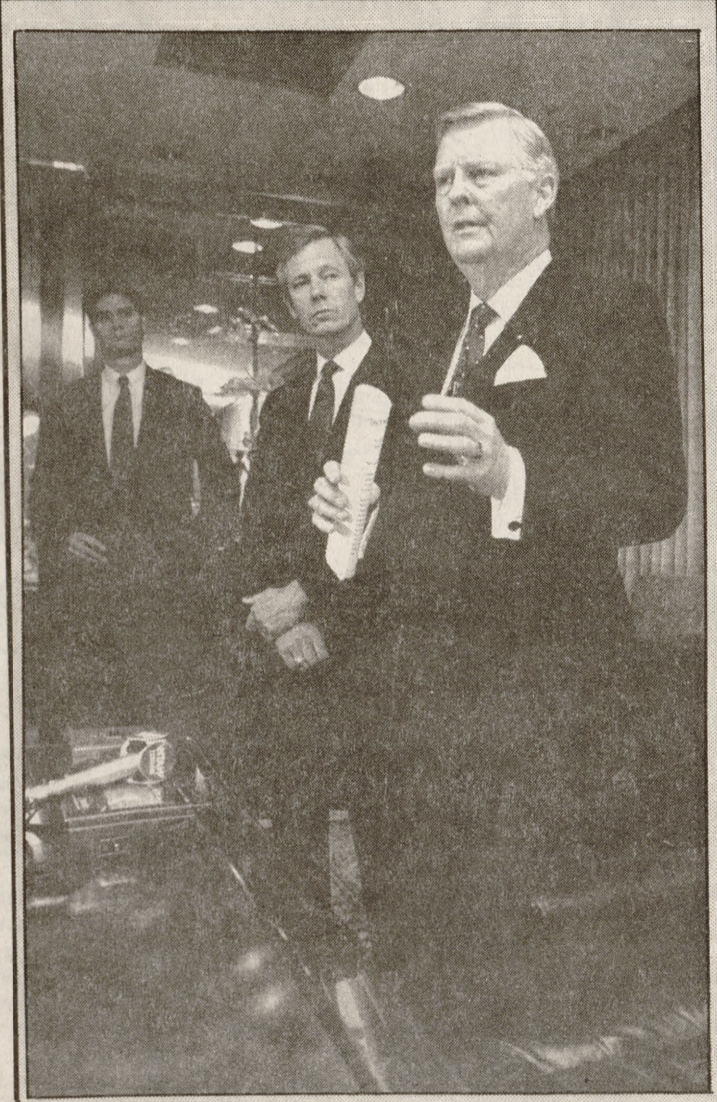
"We have grown in net deposits since February 1989 in excess of \$60 million," he said. "Obviously the people of Bryan-College Station appreciate the services to customers (of failed banks)."

John Willingham, president of First American Bank, said operations will be business as usual.

"One thing we're trying to do is minimize the effect this has on the customers," Willingham said.

He said the bank also was trying to keep the insolvency from affecting United Citizens employees. Most of the employees will keep their jobs under the new management.

Adams also announced plans for First American to break ground for a new location at the intersection of



FREDRICK D. JOE/The Battalion

Don A. Adam, chairman of the board of First American Bank, speaks to reporters concerning Thursday's First American takeover of United Citizens Bank. John Willingham, president of First American, also spoke to reporters. The press conference was held in Adam's third floor office in the First American Bank Building on Briarcrest.

Farm-to-Market Road 2818 and service bank," Adams said.

He said it will be the premier banking location in College Station because of the future extension of FM 2818 to the Highway 6 bypass.

Symposium promotes science

By Greg Mt. Joy
The Battalion

Several Texas A&M scientists hope the fourth annual Science, Technology and Youth Symposium Saturday can help prevent a shortage of scientists predicted by the year 2000.

Dr. Bob James, a professor of science education and director of the symposium, says this year's event will bring about 1,400 high school teachers and students to A&M to experience the latest advancements in science and engineering.

The symposium, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Rudder Tower, is sponsored by the Texas Alliance and the colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Education, Engineering, Geosciences, Medicine, Science and Veterinary Medicine.

"The symposium has been effectively allowing students and teachers to interface with scientists and engineers," James says. "The students certainly leave feeling positive and excited about science and engineering, as well as A&M."

"We think we can avoid the predicted shortage of scientists if we do our best to get more people to consider careers in science," he says.

About 40 science presentations in the morning and a series of workshops and tours in the afternoon will highlight the day's events.

Presentations range from veterinary anatomy professor Dr. Bill Klemm's display of computerized techniques for mapping brain waves, to the Chairman of the Texas Space Grant Consortium Oran Nicks' session on the opportunities for careers in space.

"We have some marvelous tours to follow the presentations," James says. "Some examples are Jorge Martinez' tour of the University's windtunnel and Bill Ward's orientation to the College of Medicine."

James says attendance has increased by more than 50 percent from the previous symposium and this year's event is full. No on-site registration will be available.

"Recent advances in science, from the bedroom to the kitchen to the

workplace, have caused a renewed interest in science," he says. "People realize they need the knowledge to understand and make use of these advances."

James says there also is a great deal of pressure on educators to motivate students to do their best in math and science.

"We realize the citizen of the future will have to make decisions in the voting booth deciding the future of our science and technology," he says. "We need to make certain they all make informed decisions, and we believe the symposium goes a long way toward pointing students in the right direction."

James says the symposium has drawn students from as far as Dallas and San Antonio.

"We actually had to turn groups away this year, the response was so great," James says. "We definitely will have to enlarge the program next year."

James says the Texas Alliance has been trying to encourage other universities to sponsor programs and expansion could begin next fall.

An All-Night Affair

MSC event offers games, contests Saturday

By Jayme Blaschke
The Battalion

Although the All-Night Fair will not actually last all night Saturday, Texas A&M students still can have fun with dozens of games and contests in the MSC.

Committee chairman Robert Graham, a senior pre-med major from Brownsville, says All-Night Fair — from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. Saturday — serves many purposes.

Some people look at it as a fund-raising activity for different campus organizations, while others see it as a form of cheap entertainment, he says.

No matter how a person views it, All-Night Fair offers something for everyone, Graham says.

"This is a small carnival," he says. "There are no rides, but there are lots of games. It makes for a cheap date."

More than 60 organizations are taking part in this year's fair. Graham says there is much more interest in the event this year than last year.

He says because of construction, All-Night Fair was in Duncan Dining Hall last year, and the move hurt the annual event's attendance.

"A lot of people thought that because it was held in Duncan last year, it was strictly a Corps event," he says. "Also, many students didn't know where Duncan even is, where the MSC is much more accessible."

Denis Koch, adviser for All-Night Fair, says planning for the event is going better than expected.

"Everything is moving along right on schedule," Koch says. "In fact, it's moving so smoothly that we're starting to get worried that we're leaving something out."

He says this year's All-Night Fair will be successful. "This is a great group of officers running things this year," he says. "They have taken care of everything and kept the group's morale high."



"All-Night Fair is probably one of the hardest committees to work on because they have only one event all year," Koch says. "Focusing that much can burn people out."

Graham says a wide variety of events will keep the more than 4,000 expected attendees entertained.

"There are going to be groups selling cotton candy, popcorn and snow cones," Graham says. "Recreation is holding a giant twister game, and some members of the Corps are going to be putting people in jail."

Stacy Feducia, a sophomore English major from Shreveport, La., says the MSC Literary Arts program is holding a date auction.

"We are going to auction off a number of campus celebrities to go out on a date," she says. "We have some football players, Reveille and a lot of others."

"Fajita Rita's, Cenari's, and many more restaurants have donated free dinners for the dates," she says. "That's one of the incentives for bidding on a date."

Lee Snaples, chairman of MSC NOVA, says his committee is sponsoring a "cat toss."

"We have a hole in a wall where people throw stuffed cats," Snaples said. "If they throw it through the hole, everyone hears blender sounds and other gross stuff."

"It was popular last year," he says.

Official recommends mulching

By Mack Harrison
The Battalion

Bryan-College Station residents can immediately cut down on the amount of solid waste they produce by recycling grass clippings, a Bryan city official says.

Ed Ilchner, director of public works for the city of Bryan, says homeowners should mulch their lawn clippings — return them to the yard as fertilizer — instead of bagging them for pickup by the city.

"The greatest contribution within our grasp is in yard waste," he says.

Ilchner says people often overlook the consequences of bagging grass clippings. He says yard waste uses 30 to 45 percent of all landfill space.

Recycling lawn clippings saves money as well as space, Ilchner says. Cities do not have to pay as much in landfill dumping fees if yard waste is recycled.

Bryan-College Station officials created the Brazos Valley Solid

Waste Management Agency in May to consolidate trash pickup for the two cities.

The Rock Prairie Road landfill, in use since 1981, and the unopened Pleasant Hills Road landfill each should last another 10 years, Ilchner says.

Recycling will help extend the landfills' lives. For example, if residents reduce solid waste generation by 25 percent, it will add five years of use to BVSWMA landfills, he says.

Mulching also directly benefits the yard. Ilchner says nutrients go to the tips of grass blades. When the grass is cut and falls to the ground, the nutrients go back into the yard.

Ilchner says he practices what he preaches. He did not bag his clippings last year.

"My yard looked better than any in the neighborhood," he says. "I don't plan to bag this year."

B-CS officials started the "Don't Bag It" campaign last year to edu-

cate residents about the consequences of dumping yard waste.

The program, however, was not a huge success. Ilchner says about 40 households, including his, participated in the project.

Ilchner says "Don't Bag It" did not get the support it needed. He says one problem was the equipment requirement.

Mulching requires either special mowers or adaptors for regular mowers. Local hardware stores did not carry much of the special equipment, Ilchner says.

Residents also were unaware of the extra effort involved, he says. Mulching requires mowing every four to five days, rather than once a week, so grass clippings are small enough to decay into fertilizer.

Ilchner says one way to decrease yard waste is for customers to change the policies of lawn service companies. Customers should request yard workers to mulch the clippings instead of bag them, he says.

Inside

2 Truesdale column 4 What's Up
5 Cartoons 9 dp

Focus

1991 Lady Aggie softball preview page 7



RICHARD S. JAMES/The Battalion

Sign of the times

Ed Rothen, a freshman political science major, tears down a peace sign from the Sul Ross statue Thursday as Hugh Stearns looks on. Stearns, who was speaking at a peace rally, put the sign up earlier after a University Police officer took down the first one.

Education finance plan shifts local property tax dollars from rich to poor

House approves 'Robin Hood' reform bill

From Staff and Wire Reports

The Texas House approved an education finance plan Thursday that would shift local property tax money from wealthier to poorer school districts to meet a state Supreme Court order for reform.

The bill was approved on a 103-35 vote after 4½ hours of debate.

State Rep. Steve Ogden, R-Bryan, voted against the bill.

"The bill that was passed today is unconstitutional and fiscally irresponsible," Ogden said in a phone interview Thursday.

The house bill likely is headed for a conference committee to work out differences with a similar "Robin Hood" measure passed by the Sen-

ate, legislative leaders said.

"This is probably as good a bill as you could get out of the legislative process," House Speaker Gib Lewis, D-Fort Worth, said.

House Public Education Committee Chairwoman Ernestine Glossbrenner has objected to the term "Robin Hood," calling her bill the "family plan" because it shares local wealth to benefit all the state's school children.

However, Ogden said the new educational reform bill does not address the Supreme Court's orders for a balanced tax base for public education.

"We need to tax property in Texas at substantially similar rates if we're going to use property taxes to fund public education," Ogden said.

"This bill does not require that."

The present system includes wide swings in education funding among school districts because of disparities in property wealth.

Lewis and Glossbrenner said they expect the Legislature to meet the Supreme Court's April 1 deadline to pass a reform plan. The court threatened to halt state education spending if the deadline is not met.

Justices unanimously ruled that the present \$14 billion-a-year school finance system, which relies on state aid, local property taxes and some federal money, is unconstitutional.

The bill sponsored by Glossbrenner would address funding disparities by creating about 200 education taxing regions, drawn largely along county lines.

Some local tax money would be redistributed among school districts within those regions.

Ogden said the new bill would have little impact on school districts in Brazos County.

He said if the bill was signed into law in its present form, the College Station Independent School District would lose a small amount of funds, while Bryan Independent School District would be granted a small increase.

The bill would set a minimum local property tax rate of 60 cents per \$100 valuation, climbing to 80 cents in four years. Every school district would be guaranteed about \$3,400 per student at the minimum rate.