

City proposes joint effort to beautify College Station

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city council noticed the landscape work A&M has done to improve its appearance and entrances to the University, and the council wanted to be a part of it.

"Our purpose is to compliment what's been done with the University and set the tone for visitors," he said.

Another main project of the streetscape proposal is widening Texas Avenue to three lanes going in either direction, plus a continuous left turn lane.

Ron Ragland, College Station city manager, said the widening of

Texas Avenue creates perfect timing to landscape the community.

"It's a truly pleasing, aesthetic treatment," Ragland said. "We're trying to integrate into the whole planning system."

Ash said, however, the plans have not been finalized.

"This is just a conceptual master plan," he said. "The only project in the process of being funded right now is the street widening."

Ash said the city may not be able to achieve all these goals and proposals in a first phase project.

"It depends on the funding," he said. "It may be phased in over the next few years."

Richards closes state school

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Ann Richards on Thursday approved closing the Travis State School for the mentally retarded but said the Mexia State School should be spared.

Instead, Richards said she would recommend that the Legislature approve converting the Fort Worth State School to a drug rehabilitation center for prison inmates.

Richards said she believed her decision would meet the requirement for settling a long-running

federal lawsuit against Texas' system of caring for the mentally retarded.

Closing two of the 13 state schools for the mentally retarded was called for in the settlement agreement.

A special task force had recommended closing Mexia and the Travis school, which is one of two located in Austin.

Richards noted that Travis State School also has been identified by state prison officials as a potential drug treatment facility.

Aggie Brigade defends regional title

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after the rope bridge), we were ready to go again."

The payoff was A&M's second consecutive U.S. Army Third Region Ranger Challenge Championship and its third in the six-year existence of the competition.

Young squad utilizes training, unity to win second straight championship

After the early competition, the team is trimmed to 11, with nine team members and two alternates. The team then starts preparing

and stamina during a 12-hour night patrol and is followed by the 10-K march. The cadets get about an hour-and-a-half of sleep between the night patrol and the march.



Rick Taylor, Aggie Brigade team leader and Commander of Troops for the Third Region.

The strength of the team rests in its intense training program or PT. The PT program is developed each year by the team leader after consultation with Michaelson and the rest of the team.

Jones, who likely will be next year's team leader, said the program developed by Taylor and Michaelson was the best for the team and they would continue to use it.

The Brigade trains four days a week in what Epting refers to as "early in the morning" and five days in the afternoon. Morning practices last an hour-and-a-half, while afternoon practices usually take two hours.

The team also takes every other weekend to work on orienteering or patrolling. However, as the regional competition neared, the team worked every weekend.

Participating in Ranger Challenge takes up most of the cadets' extra time, including time away from regular Corps formations. The Brigade usually misses out on PT with their units in the morning and on formations because they still are working on Ranger Challenge.

There's speculation among some of the Corps members that the only reason cadets participate in the Brigade is to get out of formation. Jones and other members quickly mention that Brigade workouts are not an easy way out.

"It's a little joke that if anyone says 'you're just doing it (Ranger Challenge) to get out of formation,' we'll just tell them to come out for some of our PT sessions sometime, and they usually drop the subject," Jones said.

The never-ending training continues on the 13-hour bus ride to Kansas with forced hydration and a healthy diet of bananas for potassium. The team was required to drink one quart of water every hour.

Epting said the procedure is required to ensure maximum performance from the team.

"It's done so they won't dehydrate themselves once they've

started an event," Epting said. "They'll sustain the same power from start to finish. It's the same way with their diet — it's pretty well-designed around a lot of potassium and fresh fruits, and they stay away from fats."

The team effort it takes to maintain a strict training and nutritional regimen carries over into how the team performs and how it deals with adversity. All say that there is not one individual who the team looks to for inspiration — they look to each other.

"The team had overall input into everything that was going on," Michaelson said. "It wasn't just one person's say-so. It was the whole team. He (Taylor) delegated the individual events and guys basically were in charge of that event. That was supposed to be their specialty, and they were to ensure the team was trained up to par for that event."

"It wasn't one or two leaders with six or seven guys following them around — it was the whole team leading everyone. Everybody leads in their own respect."

The ideal that the whole team leads is important for two reasons. First, the team never panics and starts pointing fingers when an event goes bad. They start looking ahead to the next challenge.

Second, with a high turnover rate of team members, it's easy to integrate new members over the course of a year if new members take an active role in leading the team.

Jones, Stewart, Compton and Donley are the only returnees for next year because other team members are taking staff positions within the Corps of Cadets or the strain of competition wears out the bodies of some members.

"The main reason it's hard for them to do both is, as staff members, they have to be there for formations," Jones said. "We're never at formation because we're out training."

Unity was needed more than ever this year as the Brigade was faced with defending their regional championship crown with only one year of combined team member experience. The championship team from 1991 had a combined 17 years of Ranger Challenge experience.

"There's a big difference there, as most can see," Epting said. "It's kind of a blinding glimpse of the obvious. They had a lot to overcome and a short amount of time to do it in. It was really a challenge."

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