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Officials concerned about high-speed rail

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AUSTIN — Railroad Commissioner Bob Krueger said Thursday that the state should quickly "pull the plug" on the high-speed rail project if it can't be shown to work properly and pay for itself.

"I think very often the charitable thing, if somebody is really in a terminal situation — and I had it with my own mother — the charitable thing is finally to pull the plug," Krueger said.

He serves on the Texas High Speed Rail Authority, which oversees the proposed "bullet" train franchise awarded to a group of French and American investors.

Rep. Ed Kuempel, R-Seguin, said he's ready to take such action and suggested that the Legislature be given a second chance to look at the project during the

1993 session before the authority takes any further action.

"If indeed we have a problem, before we have a bigger problem, I would certainly like for the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate to look at this to make sure that we don't have a fiasco on our hands," Kuempel told the House High-Speed Rail Subcommittee.

A number of lawmakers believed the project would follow existing railroad routes more closely than it apparently will, Kuempel said.

The proposed 200 mph train would link major Texas cities. Rural residents have complained about the land being carved up for the fenced-in rail lines.

Although current Texas law forbids state money from being spent on the train, several lawmakers said they fear they may be asked to step in and finish the project if it gets started but private funding stalls.

Lawmakers noted there's been talk

extension.

Biggs said a ridership study started later than scheduled. The company, called the Texas High Speed Rail Corp., won't have enough time to review the study with investment bankers before the financing deadline, he said. The study is not expected to be ready until mid-November.

Krueger, who opposes an extension, said the corporation hasn't shown it can meet its financial commitment.

But another authority member, Fort Worth lawyer Hershel Payne, said he'd see no problem with a small delay.

Rep. Parker McCollough, D-Georgetown, said, "Many of us are seeing this as just a whole series of broken promises

and lies and misrepresentations regarding this project."

Payne said he wouldn't call an extension a broken promise, noting that it is common in law to amend contracts and that it's important to get results of the ridership study.

Biggs said the project won't go forward unless private investors can be convinced of its worth.

"There was a time when everybody said, 'Let's don't have cable television, ... And yet, cable television is an integral part of the communications system today,'" he said.

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—Glenn Biggs, corporation chairman

Lawmakers unveil plans to reduce gang activities

Subcommittee proposes 30 measures to eliminate violence

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — State lawmakers Thursday unveiled recommendations to eliminate gangs, but they rejected an earlier proposal to tax bullets and use the revenue to help children at risk of joining gangs.

Rep. Eddie de la Garza said the bullet tax idea was met with stiff opposition from the public and the National Rifle Association.

"It doesn't appear to be one that has much support statewide," de la Garza, D-Edinburg, said of the bullet-tax.

But his legislative subcommittee is pushing some 30 ways to reduce gang activity.

The recommendations range from increasing penalties for drive-by shooting to establishing drug-free and weapon-free zones around schools.

He said the subcommittee report, which will be considered by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee next week, would have a "major impact" on reducing crime.

The cost of the plan has not

been determined, but providing a couple of the recommendations would be about \$40 million, de la Garza said.

He said many of the programs could be funded through fees on persons convicted of crimes and diverting 25 percent of money forfeited by criminals to a special fund to reduce gangs.

Currently there are about 13,000 gang members in the state's eight largest cities, lawmakers said.

Gang activity has also spread to many suburban and rural areas, according to state Rep. Parker McCollough, chairman of the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.

McCollough said he was not worried that increasing penalties for gang activity would further burden the overcrowded prison system.

But, he said, increasing the penalty for a drive-by shooting from a misdemeanor to a felony "sends a strong signal that if you're going to participate in this and you are apprehended, and convicted, the punishment is going to be a serious punishment."

Other recommendations by the subcommittee include:

- Setting up alternative schools for expelled students.
- Making gang areas eligible for enterprise zones.
- Dispersing grants for programs such as mentoring, recreation, job training, parenting skills classes, and educational needs.
- Increasing communication between police, courts, and schools concerning violent juveniles.
- Allowing violent juvenile offenders' criminal records to follow him into adulthood.
- Purchasing a national computerized gang tracking data base.
- Starting a long term study of the juvenile justice system.

Poverty increases during recession

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The tightening recession dumped more than 2 million Americans into poverty in 1991, the Census Bureau said Thursday. The number of Americans officially categorized by the government as poor reached a 27-year high.

Last year, during the depths of the recession, 35.7 million Americans were listed as poor. In 1991, poor Americans comprised 14.2 percent of the population, up from 13.5 percent the year before.

The governments counts people as poor if their income falls below the national poverty line. Last year a family of four earning \$13,924 was poor. So was an individual earning \$6,932 or less.

Americans in general earned less in 1991 than the year before. The government said median household income declined by 3.5 percent, to \$30,126, after adjusting for inflation.

The poverty numbers immediately became ammunition in the presidential campaigns.

The Republican Bush administration defended its record.

"Certainly I think we have to expect that the recession would have a significant and serious impact on income and on poverty levels," said White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater. "We have tried to

target a number of programs in the last couple of years particularly to those problems, knowing that the recession would have a deleterious effect."

Democratic presidential nominee Bill Clinton attacked.

"Today's poverty figures are yet another terrible indication of the devastation of 12 years of Republican rule," said Clinton spokesman George Stephanopoulos. "Working Americans are becoming poorer because George Bush is doing nothing for them."

Your chances of being poor increased if you:

- Were black or Hispanic.
- Hadh't yet celebrated your 18th birthday.
- Lived outside the suburbs.
- Hailed from the South.
- Lived alone.

Graduating from high school was the surest way to avoid poverty, said Daniel Weinberg, the Census Bureau's housing and household economics chief. "Additional education seems to have the biggest impact on their later earnings. The second thing is to get married and have the spouse work. And if you do those two things, you'll be okay."

Two poor Americans out of five age 15 and older worked. But fewer than one in 10 held a full-time, year-round job.



Juan Galino, a sophomore marketing/finance major from El Salvador, shows his bus pass to "Ol Sarge" bus driver Lynn Selzer on Thursday.

Bus services offers students on- and off-campus routes

By MONIQUE LUNSFORD

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Convenient on- and off-campus bus services are offered at a number of locations on the A&M campus and throughout the Bryan-College Station area.

For many students, finding a bus at just the right time can make the difference between having a smooth ride or an energy-draining walk across the tracks or to any other distant location on or around the University.

The main on-campus bus routes run from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on regular class days with stops ranging from academic buildings to well-defined bus stops.

These on-campus bus services are free at the exact time of use, but according to Tom Williams, director of the Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services, funding of the transportation is provided through student service fees and parking revenues.

From one student's perspective, A&M bus services can be a campus traveler's relief.

"So far, I like riding the bus because I park across the tracks on the west side of campus, and it's a lot easier to park over there and catch the bus over here than to try to find a place on campus," Cher Sanderman, a sophomore elementary educa-

tion major said.

According to Trey Poage, a sophomore science major, there is room for improvement with the student bus services.

"I think it's just way too congested. The bus service just needs to open up a little bit. You can't count on the buses for anything like getting to class on time. You just have to try to wing it."

Dial-A-Ride, an on- or off-campus bus service, is available for students who have to travel in the evenings or late at night. This service serves campus locations between 6:30 p.m. and 2 a.m. Sunday through Thursday, and between 6:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Fridays.

The off-campus Dial-A-Ride schedule is a regular late night service from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., on Fridays, the bus runs from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The off-campus shuttle buses operate until 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, but they have fewer routes available after 6:30 p.m.

For students who need to purchase bus passes, the fee is \$110 for both the fall and spring semesters, but this charge is prorated each month throughout the year. The bus fee for the summer is \$55.

Students can obtain detailed bus schedules and information at the Department of Parking Traffic and Transit Services.

President, counsel warn Corps about harassment

By MARK EVANS

Staff Writer of THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Corps of Cadets had the law laid down before them Thursday evening as President William Mobley and an attorney for the Texas A&M University System told cadets that hazing and harassment will not be tolerated at Texas A&M.

"There can be no tolerance for hazing or harassment. You cannot afford, the Corps cannot afford, this University cannot afford any aberrations of this," Mobley told the cadets.

"Everyone of us at this University is an Aggie. Everyone has the right to be here and the right to succeed."

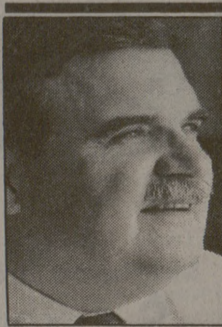
Genevieve Stubbs, first assistant general counsel for the Sys-

tem, expressed dissatisfaction with the hazing and harassment incidents over the past few years.

"It's (Corps) very existence is threatened because of a few individuals, a small minority, who think that their interpretation of what is right is better than that of the legislature, the courts and the Congress," she said.

To survive, the Corps must operate within the confines of the law, Stubbs said. The hazing law in the Texas Education Code prohibits any knowing or reckless act, directed against a student, which endangers the physical or mental health of that person for the purpose of initiation into an organization.

Stubbs recounted the hazing death of Bruce Goodrich several



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—President William Mobley

years ago. Cadet Goodrich died on the floor of a shower after collapsing following a "training" activity at 3 a.m.

"I'm afraid you guys have forgotten about Cadet Goodrich," she said. "When it happened, when I was in the middle of it, I was hoping you never would (for-

get) our University down with you."

Cadets live under a microscope, she said. Their mistakes are seen by everyone.

"Your actions and words are being watched by friends and foes alike," Stubbs said. "It's not fair, but you've got to be better than best."

Mobley reminded the cadets of the responsibilities that come with being a member of the Corps. As leaders on the A&M campus and representatives of the University, it is up to the members of the Corps to conduct themselves with the pride and professionalism which A&M symbolizes, Mobley said.

"The fact that the Corps is so visible heightens your responsibility," he told them, "because everyone on this campus looks to

the Corps for leadership and expects the highest standards."

The world is made up of diverse groups of people, Mobley said. Women and minorities play significant roles in society. Those people who can best work with diverse people will benefit the most after graduation. The Corps has the influence to set this tone for the entire campus.

"There's a lot riding on the choices you're going to make this year," Stubbs told the cadets. "Please Ags, make the right ones."

"It would be one of the saddest days in the history of Texas for the Corps to disappear because some of its members figured that they knew more about what was best for the Corps than the University — and it turned out that they were wrong," Stubbs said.