

Regents approve \$1 billion operating budget

By Stephanie Pattillo

THE BATTALION

Last week the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents approved a \$1.19 billion operating budget for the System, a 7.11 percent increase from last year.

Although every school in the system received an increase in their individual budgets in 1993, system representatives said the increases had to do with the institutions' name changes.

Effective Sept. 1, Texas A&I University became Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi State became Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Laredo State became Texas A&M International University.

The name changes were made to reflect the institutions' ties to the A&M System.

The name changes did not affect the budget for this year because they (name changes) are not final yet," Terri Parker, a system spokeswoman, said.

Robert Furgason, president of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, agreed that there was no direct relationship between the name changes and the increase in the 1994 budget.

"Since we have become part of the System, there is a strong desire to see our association through our name and capital," he said.

Texas A&M-Corpus Christi received a 44.03 percent increase in their budget from last year.

It received, along with Texas A&M University-Kingsville and Texas A&M International University, one of the greatest increases in the System, according to System reports.

This can be attributed to the South Texas Boarder Region Development Initiative, said Penny Beaumont, vice chancellor for commu-

nications.

The initiative was formed after criticism from state leaders and a lawsuit by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund stating that adequate funding in South Texas universities has not been provided.

"There was a feeling in the Legislature that higher education institutions in south Texas were traditionally under-served," Beaumont said.

"There is a growing population in this area with a need for higher education," Furgason said, "It was designed to build programs at the universities in south Texas that other universities take for granted, such as

a master's degree in history."

Because of the initiative, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Texas A&M International University will grow from two- to four-year institutions and will enroll freshman and sophomore students, not just upperclassmen.

Although the System budget for 1994 will total \$1.19 billion, up from \$1.11 billion, B.J. Crain, budgets office director, said the majority of the increase is a result of the dollars given through the south Texas initiative.

"It looks like a 7 percent increase is great, but then you have to stop and consider the south Texas money that is a big part of the increase," she said.

Crain said the other reason the increase for the System may not be as great as it appears is because the System continues to face requirements that cannot be funded.

Dr. William H. Mobley, A&M's newly appointed chancellor, said areas such as departmental operations, deferred maintenance, and utility costs are still underfunded.

"Overall, we will not be maintaining current service levels when we factor in inflation and enrollment growth," he said.

But, Crain said, she doesn't want to downplay the budget increase.

"We went into the legislative session this

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Convicted killer executed

The Associated Press

HUNTSVILLE — An ex-truck driver convicted of shooting to death one of two women he abducted was executed early Friday.

Johnny James, 39, had been convicted of abducting two women. Both were shot, sexually assaulted and left for dead in a rural roadside ditch in Southeast Texas.

One victim survived despite three bullet wounds, including two to the head that left her temporarily blind.

Chambers County District Attorney Michael Little said James deserved to be executed.

"He didn't have this long string of prior criminal acts that some on death row have, but he did have some very violent tendencies that we were able to show at trial," Little said. "I believe someone who carries on those types of activities forfeits his right to live," Little said.

James was pronounced dead at 12:17 a.m., eight minutes after the lethal drugs began flowing into his arm.

He had no final statement. He kept his eyes closed from the time witnesses arrived in the death chamber. He coughed once and gasped once.

Outside the prison, about two dozen demonstrators, including a handful of youths, sang "Happy Trails To You."

About a dozen of them were death penalty opponents, who carried candles.

The U.S. Supreme Court turned down two requests for a stay, with the last coming less than three hours before he was executed.

At 10:30 p.m. EDT Thursday, less than three hours before the lethal drugs were scheduled to begin flowing into James, the high court rejected a petition for a rehearing of an appeal.

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Yell leaders hope for safe celebration

By James Bernsen

THE BATTALION

Texas A&M University students will hold the first yell practice of the year tonight, and A&M leaders said they hope it will be in a better light than last year's first yell practice.

Mark Rollins, head yell leader, said last year's yell practice was marred by students attempting to harass Kyle Field, who were hit by members of the Corps Cadets and beaten.

"I think there were problems with some freshmen who didn't understand it was bad bull to run across the field," Rollins said.

The reason the Corps is there to keep people off the field."

Bob Wiatt, director of the University Police Department, said prior to last year's incident, UPD has had few problems at yell practice.

After last year's incident, he said, UPD officials sat down with Student Services and Corps representatives to prevent another incident.

Wiatt also said UPD will have

officers present to provide a deterrent but does not want to be oppressive.

"It's supposed to be a fun thing, but we will have officers there to maintain order and decorum," Wiatt said.

Wiatt said UPD will issue citations to minors and arrest people who are intoxicated before, during and after yell practice.

"It's no freebie where you can do whatever you want," Wiatt said.

"Anybody we see drunk, walking and driving, will be dealt with accordingly."

Rollins also said alcohol has been a problem at yell practice.

"A lot of times, people are drunk, and they're throwing up and making a scene," he said.

"That's a problem, especially when parents are there."

"Yell practice is basically a time to have fun," he said.

"The students must realize that they're in college and should have responsibility."

"The purpose of midnight yell is to generate spirit for the university in general, and for the football game the next day," Rollins said.

Boot-scootin' Aggie style



Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Brian Stevens (right) and Stampede perform before a crowd of about 250 people Thursday night at Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheatre. Steven, a former A&M student, and his band were the opening act for country music star T.J. Sheppard.

A&M nuclear reactors may shut down

By Geneen Pipher

THE BATTALION

Texas A&M University may be forced to shut the doors of its two nuclear reactors because of a new congressionally mandated licensing fee of \$62,100 on all university-run reactors.

The total bill from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for Texas A&M's nuclear engineering department comes to \$125,000 for its five-watt reactor located in the Zachry Engineering Building and its larger, one-megawatt reactor located west of campus.

Dan Reece, director of the Nuclear Science Center and associate professor of nuclear engineering, said university-run reactors have always been exempt from federal licensing fees.

"Thirty-five years ago, in an effort to reduce the deficit, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was supposed to collect licensing fees from all research reactors," Reece said.

"At the time, the NRC exempted university-run reactors because they cannot pass the fees on to anyone else, and they don't like to charge the students."

A lawsuit resulted in the canceling of exceptions for all non-profit university-run reactors said Reactor Supervisor Robert Berry.

"It was a lawsuit not directly related to university-run reactors, but it came down that all non-profit exemptions were canceled," he said.

Berry said he is not sure whether the A&M reactors will be granted an exemption under the new guidelines.

"The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is still formulating guidelines for exemptions," he said.

"Once they have figured out what they are, both reactors will file individually for exemptions. No one knows what the guidelines are yet so no one here knows what our chances are of getting exempted."

Reece said if the University is not granted an exemption, the reactor in Zachry would almost certainly close.

"The reactor would probably close instantly, if not sooner," he said.

"The other one might be able to stay open on the budget we have, but we would be looking at a two-year wind down."

"You have two years to institute a decommissioning, which is very expensive," Reece said.

"TU just spent \$5 million decommissioning shut down on their old reactor."

The Texas A&M Nuclear Engineering Department is supporting a petition submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission by Cornell University pledging to fight the licensing fees.

"All the universities with research reactors, including the University of Texas, have gotten together and are fighting this thing together," Berry said.

"There has been an article in Science Maga-

zine and an upcoming article in Nuclear News supporting our case."

In a letter to the secretary of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Dr. Kenneth L. Peddicord, interim dean of the College of Engineering and director of Texas Engineering Experiment Station, said students and teachers have toured the facility to learn about nuclear science, and 13 universities in Texas and the southwest are served by the A&M reactors.

Reece said the facilities are invaluable to the University and the approximately 200 undergraduate and graduate students who use them.

"Right now the nuclear engineering department is in the top 10 percent in the nation in nuclear engineering, principally because we have the two reactors," he said. "I think our ranking would fall if we were to close."

"I foresee that we could be number one or two in the nation if we keep on our present course," Reece said. "It would definitely affect the prestige of the University if they were to close."

Reece said he is hopeful the reactors will remain open, but he can't be sure.

"It would be a detriment to students and the University for the reactors to close," he said.

"You can't beat hands-on experience when it comes to this kind of thing, and that is what they get here."

Midnight Yell tonight



Texas A&M will continue an age-old tradition on Friday night with its first Midnight Yell Practice of the season.

The tradition, which occurs the night before a football game, will take place at Kyle Field.

A&M's football season will open tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 p.m. against Louisiana State at Kyle Field.

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A&M prepares to battle LSU in opener

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Pro/Con: Should America grant citizenship to U.S. born children of illegal aliens?

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WEATHER

•Friday: mostly cloudy, widely scattered showers

•Forecast for Saturday: nice and sunny for the game, highs in the 90s

•Extended forecast: partly cloudy and highs still in the 90s