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Senator questions future B-CS high-speed rail

By Jan Higginbotham
The Battalion

The future of the Texas high-speed rail, which was scheduled to make a home in Bryan-College Station, is now in question.

State Senator Jim Turner recently sent a recommendation to the Texas High-Speed Rail Authority suggesting the revocation of the contract with the Texas TGV franchise, the group in charge of getting investors for the project.

Amy Kelley, a legislative aide for Turner, said the senator is upset with the job performance of Texas TGV.

"Based on their inability to meet their deadlines, he thinks they are in default of their responsibilities," Kelley said. "They weren't able to meet their deadline. He feels they did not prove their economic viability."

The Texas TGV franchise received a contract extension after they were unable to meet their 1992 deadline for producing project investors. Kelley said the group failed to meet that extension, so their contract is currently in question.

Kelley said the Texas High-Speed Rail Authority has referred the case to a judge who is reviewing the status of Texas TGV's contract. She said the judge will make suggestions to the board who will then decide the future of the contract.

Dr. Thomas Saving, a professor of economics at Texas A&M and the director of the Private Enterprise Research Center, said the future of high-speed rail will have little effect on the local economy.

"Having an actual stop here could have some impact on the desirability of Bryan-College Station," Saving said. "This could become a bedroom community for Houston. Business commuters could actually use the train. In that sense, it could have a positive affect on the economy."

Saving said the high-speed rail, realistically, would have little affect on this area because the train would make very few stops in Bryan-College Station.

"The economics part of it is that you would not stop here. The politics part is that you

would have to stop here," he said. "It will certainly be a significant benefit for people in Houston and Dallas."

Saving said the project will likely fail because it will be difficult to raise the needed \$6 billion.

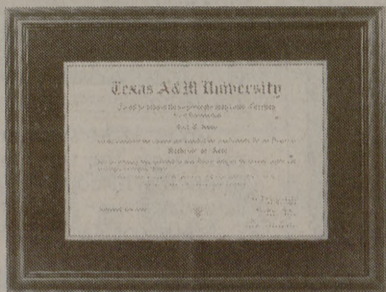
"I'm not convinced they could ever raise \$6 billion," he said. "I will be very surprised if it happens. They have a lot of competition, and even without the competition, that is a lot of money."

Correction

The pull-out quote in the story about an audit of the Texas A&M System in Thursday's issue of The Battalion was not said by Dr. E. Dean Gage, interim president of the University.

It was said by regent Raul Fernandez. The Battalion regrets the error.

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