

State returns more sales tax money to cities, counties

AUSTIN (AP) — The state returned \$128.3 million in sales tax payments to Texas cities and counties Monday, a 9.3 percent increase over a year ago.

Comptroller John Sharp said the increase reflects a record number of Texans on the job and increasing consumer confidence.

The monthly rebates for September covered taxes collected on July sales. Sharp said that more than 226,000 new jobs were created since July 1993, putting an all-time high of 7.7 million Texas at work.

A total of 944 Texas cities received \$115.5 million of the rebates, a 9.2 percent increase from the \$105.7 million of September 1993, while 111 counties were sent \$12.8 million, a 9.4 percent rise.

Houston received \$15.5 million, the largest amount and a 2.6 percent increase over last year.

Dallas' rebate of \$10.2 million was a 9.7 percent jump. "The Dallas area again showed strong economic growth, adding 71,000 new jobs, more than any other major metro area in

the state," Sharp said.

San Antonio received the third-largest rebate, \$6.7 million, a 9.1 percent increase.

Austin, which received \$5.6 million, showed a 20.6 percent increase over September 1993. Sharp said the capital "remains the fastest-growing metro (area) in the state with sustained growth in all sectors of employment."

Fort Worth's \$3.4 million rebate showed the largest increase, 21.3 percent, of any metropolitan area. Arlington's \$3.5 million payment was up 13 percent. Sharp attributed the growth in part to 9,300 new service jobs in the Fort Worth-Arlington area.

The state also returned quarterly sales tax rebates to transit authorities in cities around the state. Those totaled \$163.9 million.

Increases were reported for the Houston, Dallas, Austin, Fort Worth and Corpus Christi mass transit authorities, and payments were up to the El Paso and Laredo city transit departments.

Reassignments

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either tell West an answer to the grievances or tell him that he needs more information.

"After reviewing it, I will make a decision about the grievances," he said, "or tell Mr. West if I need more information, which usually includes a hearing. The odds are, there will probably be a hearing."

Moore said he welcomes a hearing. "Somewhere down the line I hope the three of us have a chance to tell our side," Moore said.

Employees can file grievances with the University if they think the University was wrong when it has taken some formal action with respect to that employee. The University has a formal procedure to file grievances, which begins with the employee reporting its request to the Human Resources Department.

Normally when a grievance is filed with the University, the vice president who oversees the employee would hear the case and make a decision.

However, Smith was repeatedly named in the grievances so the case was turned over to Dr. Benton Cocanougher.

"In order to have an equitable hearing, one of the other vice presidents was appointed to hear it," Southerland said.

But because Cocanougher resigned in August as senior vice president and provost, A&M President Ray Bowen assigned the case to Southerland.

"The choice came down to any of the vice presidents because we didn't know who the provost was going to be," Bowen said. "I chose Dr. Southerland because he has experience in dealing with these things."

Moore said he is glad Southerland is hearing his case.

"I think he will be fair and honest," Moore said. "I have great respect for Dr. Southerland."

Casinos

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purposes of section 47 of Article III of the Texas Constitution, and accordingly, may not be authorized by the legislature in the absence of a constitutional amendment," Morales said.

Because the Texas Constitution currently prohibits gambling, with the exception of a state lottery, the Legislature cannot install the program without voters approving a gambling amendment.

Bo Armstrong, vice president of media relations for the College Republicans, said aside from the constitutional issue involved, it is also important to consider the impact of casinos on the community.

"If casino gambling is allowed everywhere, the only people who will be gambling will be those in the immediate communities," Armstrong said. "This is unfair to the communities and the lower and middle class who cannot afford gambling additions."

Aggie Democrat President Eric Gruetzner said casino gambling

might be beneficial for the state.

"If casino gambling is run as smoothly as the lottery is run, then it could be a huge economic asset," Gruetzner said.

Republican State Senate candidate Jerry Thornton said the issue should be given to voters.

"The party platform is opposed to casino gambling, and I tend to lean that direction with my opinions," Thornton said. "But if the constituents in my district want to vote on it, then I would push to put it on the ballot."

Dr. Gary Halter, a political science professor and adviser for the Aggie Democrats, said the voters and the legislature must ask a few important questions before approving such an amendment.

"There is only so much money people want to gamble with," Halter said. "We have to ask how much additional money could be brought in from gambling and how much of an economic benefit casinos could provide."

Current polls on the slot machine issue are even; 46 percent of Texans would approve casinos and 46 percent would not, Morales said.

Corps fish orders senior ring

Student earns credit for long list of 'firsts'

By Lisa Messer
THE BATTALION

Like a lot of A&M seniors, Eleanor Vessali will be picking up her Aggie ring Oct. 5. The big difference between Vessali and most A&M seniors, however, is this senior is only 17 years old.

Vessali, who has completed 108 hours, entered A&M when she was 15 with 36 hours of credit through advanced placement tests.

Sgt. Maj. Tom Epting, assistant recruiting officer for the Corps of Cadets, said 15 years old might be the youngest age anyone has ever entered the University.

"If Eleanor's not the youngest student to enter A&M, she's close to the youngest," Epting said.

Vessali said being younger than most people in her class is not a problem.

"The age difference has not been difficult at all," Vessali said. "I've adapted well in all situations."

"The hardest time I had was in high school," she said. "That was when everybody was getting their driver's license, and I couldn't."

Vessali said her education is two years ahead of most people her age because she entered kindergarten early and skipped the fourth grade.

"My mother started the French section of an international school in Houston," Vessali said. "I guess because of that and because I seemed mature enough, they let me start a year early."

"In elementary school, if I finished the second grade work, they'd have me start on the third grade's," she said. "By the end of the third grade, I had already finished all of the fourth grade work so they sent me to the fifth grade."

Vessali said she attended high school in New York but wanted to return to Texas for college.

"I was set on A&M," Vessali said. "I visited campus and fell in love. I had attended private school all my life, and I wanted something different. A&M is so down to earth."

Vessali, who is a freshman in the Corps this year, said joining A&M's Corps of Cadets had always been one of her goals.

"It's something I've always wanted to do," Vessali said. "I didn't join my first year at A&M because I was out of state and only 15 years old. My parents were not supportive at that time."

"I investigated the Corps my sophomore year," she said. "I wanted to be able to choose my outfit like any other guy could. In the past females could only go into integrated outfits."

Vessali is the first and only female



Senior biomedical science major Eleanor Vessali studies for one of her classes. Vessali is getting her Aggie ring at age 17.

cadet in Company P-2.

"They're tough on me, but they're tough on everybody else, too," Vessali said. "I'm very proud of them. They don't treat me any different."

Vessali said she will be able to complete her four years in the Corps because she intends on continuing her education at A&M after she graduates.

"I'll graduate in '96, but I hope to be in a master's program until '98," Vessali said. "If I don't get into a master's program, I'll double degree until '98. Either way I'll be able to finish my four years in the Corps."

Vessali said her goal of being an officer in the Marine Corps was not the reason for joining the Corps.

"I could've done it without joining the Corps," Vessali said. "I like the Corps offers. They're about traditions, and they're a real family."

Vessali said she is pleased with all the decisions she has made.

"Those decisions have given me the opportunity to stay in school two years longer than most people," Vessali said. "I'm very happy with everything I've done now. I love this school. I don't know what I'd do if I weren't here."

Senate

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the governor excused classes for that day, disrupting many class schedules.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is also now a University holiday.

Another reason for the new calendar was to equalize the number of class days in the fall and spring semesters and the number of class days for different sections held on different days of the week, Yasskin said.

It will equalize the number of Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes and Tuesday-Thursday classes by having students attend their Friday classes on the Thursday before Good Friday and their Friday classes on the Tuesday before finals.

"Unfortunately, it is confusing," Yasskin said. "We considered calling those days 'Aggie Days.'"

According to the new calendar, fall classes will begin on Thursday, exactly 13 weeks before Thanksgiving.

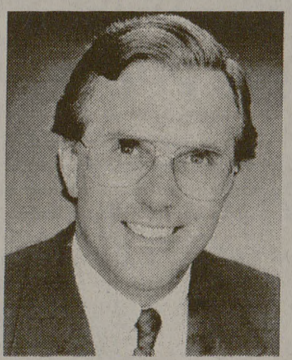
The Friday after Thanksgiving will be the last class day. Monday and

Tuesday would be reading days, and classes would begin Wednesday and the following Wednesday.

Spring classes will begin on Tuesday closest to Jan. 15, unless Martin Luther King, Jr. Day falls on the following Monday. In that case, classes will begin on Monday and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day will be observed the next Monday.

For the last week of classes, Thursday classes will meet on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday will be reading days, and finals will begin on Friday and continue Monday through Wednesday.

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