

Three Texas communities spruce up in preparation for commission visit

Residents roll out the red, white and blue carpet for guests who will decide their towns' fate.

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — Homes to three Texas military bases spent Tuesday polishing their strategies to pour out patriotic charm and economic data on visitors who could decide to close those bases.

Crowds sporting bows and banners and balloons will greet members of a base-closure commission touring Lubbock, San Antonio and Texarkana throughout this week.

City leaders professed optimism that the displays would help save thousands of jobs on the line.

"The attitude is one of determination to make the best possible case that we can," Lubbock Mayor David Langston said Tuesday. "We would certainly like for the Air Force to know

how strong we feel."

Three Texas sites — Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, Brooks AFB in San Antonio and the Red River Army Depot in Texarkana — found themselves in a listing released Feb. 28 among installations the Pentagon intends to close.

But the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, known as BRAC, can re-

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— David Langston
Mayor, Lubbock

move or add bases to the Pentagon's list.

Members of the commission are visiting those targeted bases before sending a final closure list to President Clinton on July 1. Delegates were expected Wednesday in Lubbock, Thursday morning in San Antonio and complete their whirlwind tour Thursday afternoon in Texarkana.

Gov. George W. Bush wasn't scheduled to join any of those visits. But a spokeswoman said he plans to testify at a regional BRAC hearing April 19 which will be held in Dallas.

"He believes that national taxpayers get a great bargain for their defense dollars in Texas," Karen Hughes said. "We have very supportive communities, great weather and training conditions, highly skilled workers, and a low cost of living."

Lubbock residents were urged to wear yellow ribbons and shine their headlights during the day Wednesday.

Organizers of a "Stand Up for Reese" campaign said they hoped 30,000 supporters would turn out to wave at commission-

ers in a noon motorcade from South Plains Mall to Texas Tech University and the on to the downtown area.

Reese furnishes about 1,700 jobs and a \$163 million economic impact annually in its pilot-training mission.

Texarkana was making its pitch on billboards, bumper stickers and T-shirts. The base there employs about 4,100 people, most of whom are civilians.

"We definitely want the commission to realize that this community is truly supportive of Red River Army Depot — have been since they've been here in 1940 — and definitely want to keep it open," said Linda Crawford, economic development assistant for the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce.

In San Antonio, the mayor's office intends to ask for the retention of Brooks' most important missions: Armstrong Laboratory, the School of Aerospace Medicine and the Center for Environmental Excellence. Brooks employees 2,250 civilians and 1,800 military personnel.

LAWMAKERS SEEK TO ENACT 'TOUGH LOVE' RULE

Senate committee stalls juvenile crime bill

Dallas politician claims that the document's wording leaves loopholes around the rule's intended meaning.

AUSTIN (AP) — Legislation that aims to reform the state's juvenile justice system was held up in a Senate committee Tuesday by a lawmaker concerned that the bill is simply too severe.

"The bill needs to reflect tough love. But it needs to be tough and it also needs to show some love. Currently, it's just tough," said Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas.

"We're getting ready to radically change

how we handle juveniles in the state of Texas," West said. "I think that deserves more than just a cursory analysis."

The full Senate had been expected to consider the bill Thursday, however was left pending before the Senate Criminal Justice Committee in Austin.

The measure by Sen. Chris Harris, R-Arlington, retains many aspects of a juvenile crime reform bill passed by the House this past month.

It would lower the age at which a juvenile could be tried as an adult, from 15 to 14. The measure also expands the list of offenses for which youths could face fixed, or determinate, sentences.

Currently, youths are sentenced to Texas Youth Commission facilities for an unspecified

time unless they commit one of six offenses. These offenses include capital murder and murder.

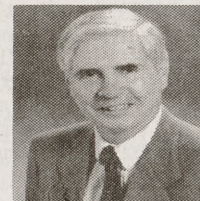
The bill would add several crimes to that list, including sexual assault, aggravated robbery and aggravated assault. Youths would face sentences between 10 and 40 years for those offenses and would have to serve a minimum of two years.

The bill also includes a provision that Harris characterized as "once certified ... always certified." A juvenile who is tried and convicted as an adult would remain certified as an adult for all subsequent offenses in the future, Harris said.

West questioned that provision, among others, saying the bill contained loopholes around the intended rule.

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