

# THE BATTALION

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## A&M System braces for possible lawsuit

Tenneco contends that A&M owes \$63 million for a canceled power plant project.

By Wes Swift

A resolution passed by the Texas House on Saturday will allow Tenneco Power Co. to sue the Texas A&M University System for \$37 million over a canceled power plant project.

The resolution also requires that the suit be filed in Brazos County. The Texas Senate passed a similar resolution last month, but it did not limit any damages the Tenneco could receive.

Tenneco contends that the University owes \$63 million for a \$120 million co-generation plant project, which was scrapped by the Texas A&M Board of Regents in July 1994 after a conflict arose between the power company and the University about whether a plant was necessary.

The plant was designed to meet all of the University's power needs through 2012, and it would have been the largest capital construction project on the campus.

Dr. Barry Thompson, A&M chancellor, said that although Tenneco has been given the go-ahead to sue, he hopes the conflict will not reach the courtroom.

"We hope to resolve this situation without going to court," Thompson said. "But if it goes to court, we're prepared."

Thompson added that the University has been in constant communication with Tenneco.

Ed McIntosh, a Tenneco spokesperson, declined to comment, saying that they were still developing a course of action in response to the bill.

"We have just now been made aware of the situation," McIntosh said. "We're certainly going to look at it."

McIntosh said Tenneco will release a statement later this week.

Thompson declined to comment on how much the University believes Tenneco is

entitled to, but said that much of the truth has not been exposed.



**"If it [the suit] goes to court, we are prepared and will proceed with vigor."**

—Dr. Barry Thompson  
A&M chancellor

"Our stance has been that not all of the facts have been revealed," he said. "There is a lot of information that has not been brought to light."

In January 1994, state Rep. Steve Ogden, R-Bryan, who voted against the bill, said that giving Tenneco the right to sue A&M would

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## State legislature restores A&M utilities funding

Funds will also be redirected to the College of Medicine.

By Javier Hinojosa  
THE BATTALION

An appropriations bill passed by the Texas Legislature will redirect state funds, which will increase funds for the Physical Plant Department and the College of Medicine.

The Physical Plant Department will receive \$8 million for utilities, and the College of Medicine will receive \$2 million for programs.

Funding for Texas A&M utilities was proposed to be cut by

nine percent at the beginning of this year's legislative session.

However, Rep. Steve Ogden, R-Bryan, said a House and Senate conference committee worked on several funding issues that restored the total funding for Texas A&M.

Thomas Taylor, assistant vice president for budgeting and administrative planning, said the how the funds will be redirected is undecided.

"The money comes through a formula structure," he said. "In the end we should come out even."

Dr. Ray Bowen, Texas A&M president, said it is important for the students to know where

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## Campaign continues to raise money for scholarships, faculty position support

A&M officials hope the Capturing the Spirit campaign reaches its goal of raising \$500 million by the end of August 1996.

By Javier Hinojosa  
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M officials announced that fund-raising efforts for the University's Capturing the Spirit campaign is \$48 million from completing its goal.

Jim Palincsar, the Developmental Foundation capital campaign director, said the campaign was launched in September 1990 with the goal of raising \$500 million by August 31, 1996.

At the time, it was the largest fund-raising effort undertaken by any institution. The Universities of Illinois and Michigan have since announced billion dollar campaigns, he said.

"The Capturing the Spirit campaign for Texas A&M is a concerted university-wide fund-raising effort to ensure continued excellence in the University's performance."

Palincsar said it's multiple initiatives, including scholarships, faculty positions, student financial aid and program support.

Palincsar said \$75 million is targeted for scholarships, some of which have already been established and made available.

These scholarships include 70 Resident's Endowed scholarships, 43 Opportunity Awards and 140 Sul Ross scholarships.

About \$65 million of the \$75

million for scholarships is being used for departmental scholarships, graduate fellowships and the University Honors Program, he said.

Palincsar said the money is received in the forms of trust agreements, cash gifts, will provisions, equipment and real estate.

"What's wonderful is that \$4 million has been donated from the people who work here as staff and faculty," he said.

Dr. Ray Bowen, Texas A&M president, said the campaign is having great success.

"We've been trying to work real hard to help the Developmental Foundation reach their target," he said. "These people are just wonderful. They and the former students have worked so hard."

Mark Klemm, assistant director of development for the College of Engineering, said the scholarships and gifts being received through the Developmental Foundation have been helping a great deal.

"There are always more students in need than there are scholarships available," he said.

Klemm said the campaign has also donated necessary equipment and other non-cash gifts needed to continue turning out quality engineers.

"Without them, we flat out, cannot teach the things that are on the cutting edge," Klemm said.

## WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### Recycling center employees focus on abilities

Junction Five-O-Five gives disabled workers a chance to become functioning members of society.

By Libe Goad  
THE BATTALION

A woman diagnosed with multiple sclerosis watches late-afternoon television in her bathrobe. Her supportive friends have slowly faded from her life and left her alone to deal with a disabling disease and unemployment.

But the picture is different today.

Today, the woman arrives at work an hour early, lunch bag in hand, and she laughs and jokes with fellow workers until her day at Junction Five-O-Five begins.

Junction Five-O-Five fronts as a recycling center on College Main, but behind the glass bins and piles of compressed plastic, it is an employment center that gives people with disabilities a chance to become a functioning member of society.

Marsy Clarke, co-founder and board member of the company, said the center has provided therapy for the woman with multiple sclerosis.

"I asked her why she was here so early, and she said, 'You don't know what it means to me to have someone to talk to,'" Clarke said. "I think she got better just because of that."

Five-O-Five Employment Coordinator John Tammela said the center aims to get disabled people off their couches and into the working world. At work, they can focus on their abilities instead of their disabilities.

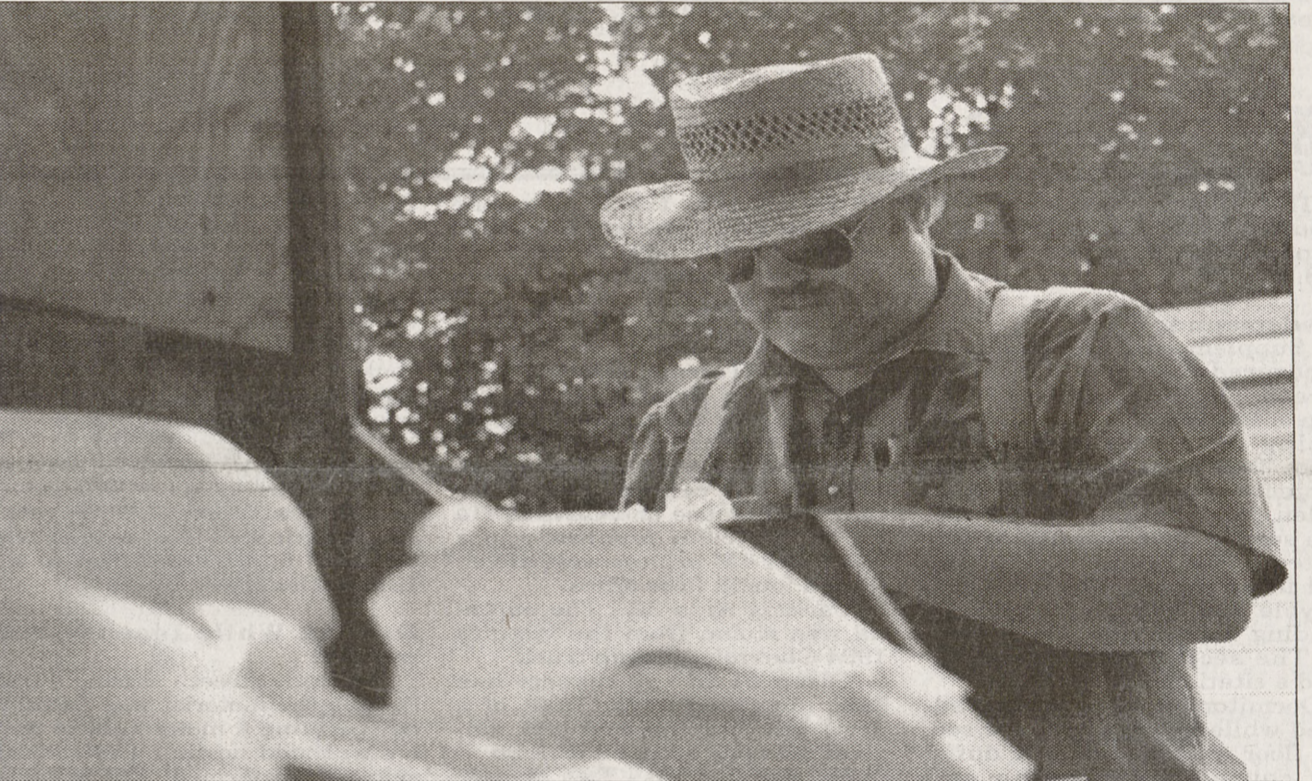
"We're more than a recycling center," Tammela said. "Junction is a crossroads in people's lives."

Logan Martin, operations manager, said Tammela and the Five-O-Five staff tries to set people on the road toward becoming functioning members of society.

The staff assesses the talents of each person that comes to the employment service and places them in jobs provided through Five-O-Five and other local businesses, including Texas A&M University.

"We're not looking at the disabilities at all," Martin said. "We're looking for the abilities."

After an initial interview, applicants have a three-day trial period when they perform services provided by Five-O-Five. In addition to working at the recycling center, employees of Five-O-Five may also



Eddy Wylie, THE BATTALION

Gary Iverson, a worker at Junction Five-O-Five, sorts plastic containers to prepare them for recycling.

work on a parks clean-up crew or a Five-O-Five assembly plant, the newest addition to the service.

Tammela said after a person successfully completes the trial period, a job coach takes over and helps them find a job that can meet and stretch their abilities.

"A person may have a desire to be a dishwasher," Tammela said. "So the job coach tries to find them a position as a dishwasher."

Marsy Clarke and Trish Barksdale founded the employment service in 1979 and called it Geranium Junction. Back then, the center helped rehabilitate disabled people by giving them jobs planting flowers.

"It started to give people permanent-type jobs to people that couldn't get a job," Clarke said.

The service struggled in their horticultural endeavors and evolved into a full-time employment service that also focuses on recycling and manufacturing.

Tammela said the employment agency has placed 400 people in jobs, and businesses call Five-O-Five for job placement assistance.

For instance, Tammela said McDonald's wanted to help a disabled person strengthen her abilities, and the manager called

Five-O-Five for help.

"They told her that she could make breakfast biscuits," Tammela said. "So I went in as job coach and worked with her making breakfast biscuits."

It only took two weeks before she surpassed McDonald's time requirements for making biscuits, Tammela said.

"I walked in there at the end of her second month," he said, "and she was on the register."

This year, the employment agency helped 68 get jobs and become functioning community members.

"They are so excited about being free to make their own decisions," Clarke said.

Joseph Burrow, senior mechanical engineer major, said students can help Five-O-Five help others. As a recycling center, the non-profit company serves as a stomping ground for environmentally conscious students.

"The nice thing about Junction Five-O-Five is they recycle plastic and the city doesn't," Burrow said.

The center accepts two types of plastics, newspapers, aluminum cans and glass.

"We're recycling people," Martin said, "as well as everything else."

## A&M to research possibility of allowing ASL to satisfy foreign language requirement

A resolution passed by the Faculty Senate asks the University to recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language in all colleges.

By Wes Swift  
THE BATTALION

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution asking the University to investigate the possibility of adding American Sign Language, ASL, classes that would fulfill the foreign language requirement for bachelor of arts degrees.

The resolution also requests that the University allow students with a proficiency in ASL to receive credit by examination. This would be similar to receiving credit by examination for experience in Spanish, German or Latin.

It also states that the classes would be similar to those taught at other universities. The University of Texas at Austin, the University of California and Harvard University currently teach classes in ASL

and accept them as foreign language credits.

Katherine A. Dettwyler, associate professor of anthropology and the senator who spearheaded the request, said she was approached by two students, one hearing impaired and the other an interpreter, who wanted their knowledge of ASL to fulfill their language requirements. One of the students had been denied credit; the other had been approved.

Dettwyler said that after she had learned more about the language, she realized that there may be some issues involving the American Disabilities Act of 1991. The American Disabilities Act requires all universities to make "reasonable accommodations" for handicapped students, including those with hearing impairments.

Dettwyler said that an important part of the resolution was the demand for a University-wide policy that would recognize ASL as a foreign language in all colleges at A&M.

"Right now, each student has to apply to the deans of each college," Dettwyler said.

Dettwyler added that the Texas Education Code has recognized American Sign Language since 1971.

But Dr. Steven Oberhelman, head of the department of modern and classical languages and faculty senator, said that he supports the bill. He said that as a member of the academic affairs committee that proposed the resolution, he became aware of the language's distinct cultural component.

However, he said, the Modern Language Association does not believe that ASL is a foreign language.

"The association believes that it does not have the cultural component that other modern languages have," Oberhelman said.

The academic affairs committee's report on ASL confirms that those who use ASL do have a different culture than those with regular hearing. The report states that the culture can be studied, analyzed and taught, and it cited several books and articles on the subject.

Oberhelman said that while the resolution has been passed, funding it may be a problem. He explained that although the University is tightening its belt, it was important that the Senate put out the recommendation to the administration.

"We appreciate that the University is strapped for money right now," Oberhelman said. "If they don't have the money for a year or two, so be it."

Dettwyler explained that ASL differs dramatically from Signed American English, which most people often associate with sign language. She said that ASL uses not only hand signals, but also posture, body positioning and facial expressions to communicate.

"If you watched someone use ASL, the hands only tell half of the information," Dettwyler said. "It's very difficult. The grammar is not the same; the syntax is not the same, like Signed American English."

Student organizations have also requested sign language classes. The Student Senate passed a bill

**The resolution also requests that the University allow students with a proficiency in ASL to receive credit by examination.**

in Spring 1994 asking that ASL classes be taught on campus. If their request is granted, then the Texas Education Code requires the University to accept it as a foreign language credit.