



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Construction started during the first week of summer school to resurface the street and sidewalks on College Main across the street from campus (above). Merchants say they expect the improvements and lack of construction to improve business (below).



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## Northgate in transition

### Summer construction on College Main is only the beginning of area's facelift

By Rachel Barry and Brad Russell  
THE BATTALION

While many of its patrons were gone for the summer, College Main endured heavy machinery and mud pits as part of revitalization plans that will eventually change the entire Northgate area.

The construction has given way to brick sidewalks and crosswalks and new pavement for College Main between University Drive and Church Street. The construction began when most students were leaving for summer vacation, but the complete renovation plans may not end for another forty years.

Todd McDaniel, Northgate project coordinator, said the recent construction signals the "renaissance of the Northgate area."

Several plans are going to be considered by a committee of merchants and city officials. Some minor improvements — such as remodeling the storefronts and putting in new lighting — may only take a few months.

Organizers say that when one of the three options currently under consideration is chosen to serve as the "master plan" for Northgate, it could take up to 40 years for completion. One such plan includes a hotel, nationally franchised restaurants and a branch library.

"I believe that Northgate has enormous potential to become the entertainment center of College Station," McDaniel said.

Before this "entertainment center" can become a reality, Northgate merchants must recoup from problems stemming from recent construction to College Main. Some merchants were forced to close their doors for a portion of the summer.

Dave Atkinson, owner of Dead Lazlo's coffee house, said the construction has hurt his business and forced him to close for the month of July.

"Our business quickly dropped to one-fifth of what it was before," Atkinson said. "People didn't realize we were open or didn't want to park two blocks away and walk."

Business has slowly picked up at Dead Lazlo's. Atkinson said he hopes publicity plans for the fall will increase the traffic to Dead Lazlo's.

Although Lacey's, a jewelry store on College Main, was also forced to close for part of the summer Manager Deena McKindles said the construction is beneficial.

"Our store only stands to gain from this because we are a retail store," McKindles said. "In our minds, staying here this summer was an investment into what it's going to be in the future."

Aggies International, a Northgate international grocery store, was forced to

cut its business hours in half during the summer. Business became so bad that the store was forced to permanently close.

Residents of the neighborhood behind Northgate were also affected by the summer's construction. Changing construction sites and muddy roads frustrated students trying to get around town.

Anuj Kumar, a business graduate student who lives in the neighborhood behind Northgate, said the construction forced him to change his daily schedule.

"I have to start early from home every morning because I was late every day to

work," Kumar said.

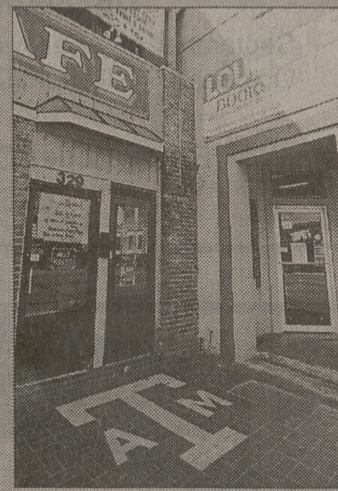
Although the summer construction strained business for Northgate merchants, McDaniel said the storekeepers appreciate what the construction will do for the future and how it was handled this summer.

McDaniel said the revitalization is important to the area's future and will raise the potential for attracting tourists.

"There is definitely more to Northgate than meets the eye," McDaniel said. "We only want to make the public more aware of what's here and to bring more diversity and selection to the area."

### Storefronts face change

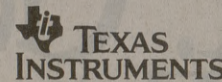
The city of College Station's budget for the next two years will provide \$500,000 to revitalize Northgate. A community meeting is scheduled for Sept. 15 to discuss the next step of the area's reconstruction.



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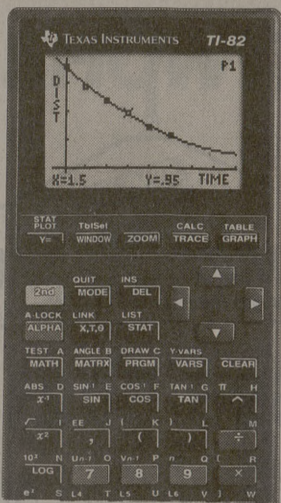
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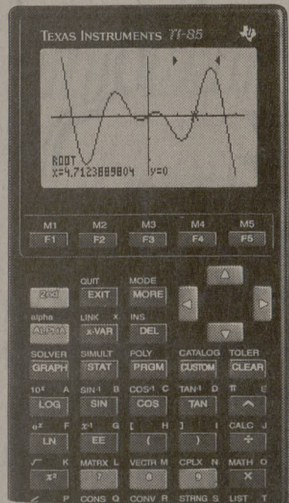


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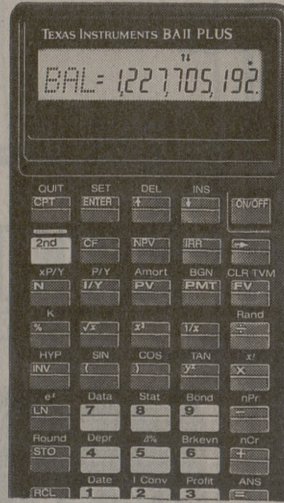
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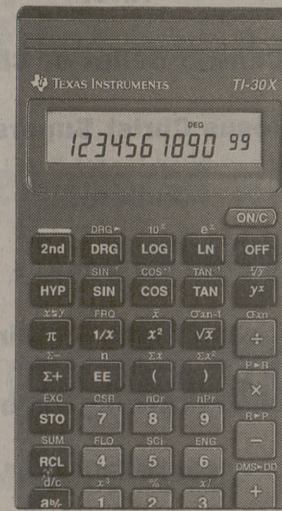
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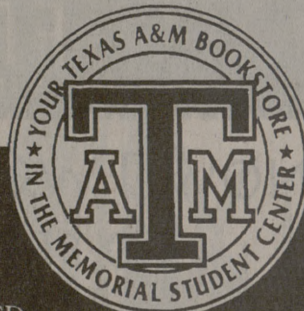
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