

BRIEFS

Human resources department to move

Human Resources Department (HRD) will move in two phases from the YMCA Building to Research Parkway. The HRD's offices of benefits, compensation, training/professional development and retirement services will move beginning Dec. 8. The HRD's offices of administrative services, employee relations and internal services will move beginning Jan. 5. The HRD's offices that are not moving are identification and compensation, recruitment, employee assistance and occupational health. The HRD's telephone numbers have not changed for any of the HRD offices.

Police to offer anti-crime services

The Bryan Police Department's Crime Apprehension Team will be conducting a crime prevention effort from noon to 6 p.m. Dec. 9-13. The police will be engraving property, assisting to recorders for identification, passing crime prevention information, answering questions about burglary and auto theft. During each day, the officers will be handing out awards for different door prizes and coupons. The team will be set up in a trailer at a different location each day. Dec. 9 — Winn Dixie at 4001 E. Street. Dec. 10 — Bryan Police Department at 301 S. Texas Ave. Dec. 11 — D.K. Food Store at 9 W. Villa Maria. Dec. 12 — Appletree at 2001 21 E. Dec. 13 — Wal-Mart Supercenter at 2200 Briarcrest.

Clinton defines U.S. nuclear-strike policy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Turning U.S. nuclear policy toward an emerging threat, President Clinton has decided the United States will consider using nuclear weapons against attackers who threaten American forces with chemical or biological weapons. The policy, made explicit in a classified presidential directive, marks the administration's first instruction to the Pentagon shaping a nuclear strategy against the increasingly worrisome possibility that nations such as Iraq might turn chemical or biological arsenals against U.S. troops. A senior Clinton administration adviser said Sunday the policy comes with two decades of White House statements on the possible "first use" of nuclear weapons. But it adds presidential weight to the long-standing concern about "rogue states" that has replaced the nuclear fear of the Cold War. The policy was approved last month by Clinton, principal elements of the "Presidential Decision Directive" or PDD, were reported Sunday by The Washington Post.

INSIDE lifestyles

All Things Aggie: Texas A&M prof pens books about Ag humor and other anecdotes. See Page 3

sports

The Texas A&M Volleyball team advances to the NCAA Tourney's third round. See Page 7

opinion

Johnston: Misinformation, awkward knowledge displayed today's society. See Page 11

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PTTS seeks solution for aging bus fleet

Proposal would add 10 new buses each of the next five years

By AMANDA SMITH
Staff writer

As the Texas A&M Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS) tries to keep enough buses running to accommodate students, it faces the reality of an aging fleet that demands an increasing number of repairs.

Gary Jackson, manager for Bus Operations, said PTTS is examining options to address the problems of a large fleet that is growing older. "We have one of the largest university bus systems in the country," he said. "We



would like to buy 70 new buses total, but that would cost some \$98 million. We are looking at other options now."

The current fleet includes 59 buses that transport students and faculty on and off campus. Students pay about \$20 in service fees to pay for on-campus transportation. This money accounted for the \$800,000 that PTTS received to help fund the bus fleet for the Fall '97 semester.

The off-campus revenue comes from bus pass sales and one-ride coupon sales and money allotted by PTTS at the fiscal year's end, Jackson said. A bus pass for two semesters cost \$110.

"The idea is that bus operations break down each year," Jackson said. "We have had nine major engine problems this semester. The engines in the buses are like antiques. It takes money and time to replace them." Jackson said the aver-

age life expectancy of a bus is about 150,000 to 200,000 miles. He said 33 of the 59 buses are 1982 models, and many have as much as 300,000 miles, nearly twice their life expectancies.

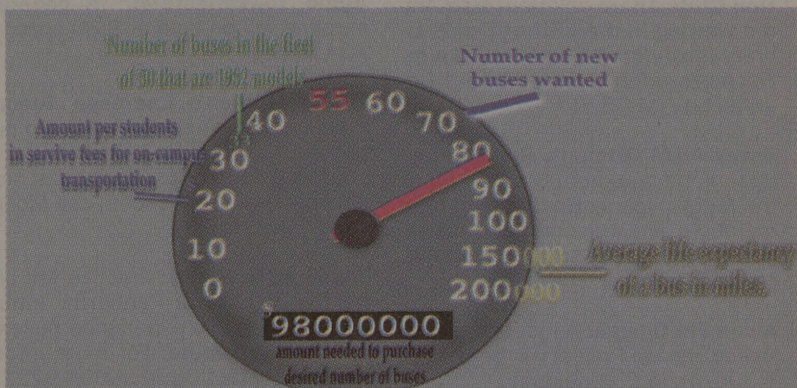
"We have gone beyond the life expectancy," Jackson said. "I think that we will have to phase in buses slowly. The buses cost between \$140,000 to \$150,000 each."

In order to accommodate the needs of the students, PTTS is reviewing a proposal to phase in new buses over a five-year period by replacing 10 buses each year.

A second option involves a lease-option agreement with a company outside the Texas A&M system. Jackson said the lease-option may also involve gradually replacing the buses.

Jackson said a third and less likely option would be receiving permission for a bond package that would include financing the replacement of the entire Texas A&M bus fleet.

Jackson said PTTS has considered increasing the student transportation fee to help fund replace-



Figures on the Bus Fleet and the Proposals. QUATRO OAKLEY/THE BATTALION

ment of the aging bus fleet. He said the fee could be as low as \$35.

"Even if students were to pay \$35 a semester, they would still have to purchase bus passes," he said. "For \$50 a semester, the student wouldn't have to purchase a bus pass. The other bonus is that the \$800,000 of student allocation fees would be kept for other uses."

Tom Williams, the director of

PTTS, said that increasing student transportation fees would make the system more convenient.

"Our proposal to the administration will be that each student pay their fair share of the system," he said. "It would make buses more available to dorm students who want to travel off-campus. It would be safer at night."

PLEASE SEE BUS ON PAGE 12.

Branching out



Tree vendor Daniel Hernandez drills Christmas trees Saturday in Bryan in preparation of their sale.

Houston's new mayor set to build on recent progress

HOUSTON (AP) — The first person Lee Brown singled out for thanks in his victory speech was the man he replaces.

When incumbent Mayor Bob Lanier vacates City Hall in January, he turns over America's fourth-largest city to its first black mayor with the economy humming, crime down and a reasonably content citizenry.

"When I raise my right hand to take the oath of office, I'll have the good fortune to take the reins of a Houston on the move," Brown, 60, said.

Brown, who served as Houston's police chief in the 1980s, edged 46-year-old businessman Rob Mosbacher with 53 percent of the vote in Saturday's runoff election.

Mosbacher, who handles his family's oil and gas business, also had unsuccessful runs for U.S. Senate in 1984 and lieutenant governor in 1990.

"Victory is not with us tonight, but we can be extremely proud of our efforts and our accomplishment and we can hold our heads high because we ran a great campaign and helped define the issues," Mosbacher said Saturday night.

Brown's victory was not without considerable help from Lanier, whose political muscle shifted to Brown more than a year ago. Lanier was barred by term limits from seeking fourth term.

Lanier's supporters quickly went to work to raise cash, encourage a strong minority voter turnout and more important, dissuade other potential black candidates from entering the contest. About 25 percent of Houston's 1.8 million residents are black.

About 31 percent of Houston's registered voters cast ballots. Voter turnout patterns found that blacks comprised a third or more of the electorate while whites made up about 55 percent, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Although early returns from Harris County, where most of Houston is located, showed Brown and Mosbacher splitting the votes, Brown was partially aided by capturing about 6,336 votes, or 94 percent, in outlying Fort Bend County.

On Nov. 4, Brown broke out of an eight-candidate pack with 41 percent of the vote. Mosbacher followed with a distant 29 percent. Despite being consistently outfinanced by Mosbacher, the Lanier-Brown machine's hard work resulted in a victory for Brown Saturday night.

The mayoral race became the most expensive in the history of Houston, with campaign spending by the pair topping \$5.6 million as of two weeks ago, the latest figures available show.

Like Lanier, Brown focused his campaign on neighborhoods. While Lanier's approach was more brick and mortar, embarking on a multimillion-dollar street resurfacing program and putting more police officers on the streets, Brown appealed to Houstonians' prized belief that they live in the most race-tranquil city in the nation.

"Houston's greatness lies not only in the bustling skyscrapers that reflect greatness, lies not only in the bustling skyscrapers that reflect this city's economic might, but in the sprawling neighborhoods that represent the heart of the city," Brown said. "Houston works best when Houston works together."

"When I raise my right hand to take the oath of office, I'll have the good fortune to take the reins of a Houston on the move."
LEE BROWN
HOUSTON MAYOR-ELECT

Russian officials seek cause of cargo-jet crash Saturday

IRKUTSK, Russia (AP) — It was a quiet, bitterly cold afternoon on Grazhdanskaya Street, where a group of men chatted and smoked while tinkering with their battered cars. Many of their wives were out shopping.

A teen-age girl sat by her living room window, puzzling over her chemistry homework. Suddenly, a roar shook her apartment building — and set her neighborhood on fire.

"When I looked out the window I saw a burning car and a woman running out of another apartment building with her fur coat on fire. A man was lying on the ground," Lena Meistakhova, 15, said. "Then, a wave of heat came through the house."

A huge military cargo jet that seconds earlier had lifted off from an airfield a mile away slammed into No. 45 Grazhdanskaya on Saturday, clipping an orphanage with its wing and demolishing one end of the five-story apartment building.

Those who saw the crash talked of huge sheets of flames that engulfed surrounding buildings. A day later, steam and smoke from burning fuel that had soaked into the ground was rising into the overcast sky.

The An-124 Russian air force transport plane that crashed Saturday was carrying two jet fighters built at a local factory for export to Vietnam. The export was a rare bit of good news for the battered air-



craft industry in this Siberian city of 700,000.

Ten seconds after taking off, the plane was in trouble. A woman who heard the shrill, ragged roar of the jet's engines said it was leaning to one side, a wing tilting toward the ground.

Then came a shattering explosion. The plane, the size of a Boeing 747 jumbo jet, was carrying 100 tons of fuel in its tanks. There were 23 crew and factory staff aboard, escorting the fighters to Vietnam.

Officially, the death toll stood at

62. It still may rise. Russian safety officials are baffled by the disaster, and were investigating at least eight possible scenarios including contaminated fuel or a shift in the cargo. But Shoigu, the emergency situations minister, said there were few leads.

Russia and other nations of the former Soviet Union have been plagued by deadly air crashes in recent years. Experts have blamed poor maintenance, safety violations and cost-cutting for persistent problems.