

Breaking ground



JAKE SCHRICKLING/THE BATTALION

Mickey Clatt, an employee of Bayer Electric, breaks up a part of the sidewalk outside of the Pavilion Tuesday afternoon. The sidewalk is being operated on in order to allow access to the new phone system being installed in the Pavilion.

Clinton advocates statistical sampling for next census

HOUSTON (AP) — Anticipating a showdown with congressional Republicans over the next national census, President Clinton today advocated using statistical sampling to avoid undercounts of minorities and the rural poor. "It's not about politics, it's about people," he said.

The president visited a community center in a heavily populated Latino community in Houston to get an idea of how much local governments, community programs and even private foundations rely on census data to determine the assistance they dispense.

Clinton said severe undercounting of populations such as children, minorities and homeless people is now hurting attempts to funnel federal help to those who need it. He said the experts agree that using statistical sampling, along with "quality checks" that involve head counts in certain neighborhoods, can reduce the error rate to 1/10 of 1 percent.

That would mean only about 300,000 Americans may be missed in the next census count, rather than the millions overlooked in the 1990 tally, he said.

"It is therefore, I think, quite unfortunate that some in Congress have so vociferously opposed sampling, because improving the Census should not be a partisan issue," Clinton said.



CLINTON

"It's not about politics, it's about people. It's about making sure that every American really, literally counts."

Afterward, Clinton attended a fund-raising luncheon at the home of attorney Richard Mithoff. The luncheon, which drew 120 guests, raised \$800,000 for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. It was Clinton's first fund-raiser for the DCCC in Texas and all the money is to be spent on congressional races in the state.

He was expected to pick up another \$500,000 at a fund-raiser in Dallas tonight for the Democratic National Committee.

Clinton chose to visit the Magnolia Multi-Service Center in Houston to address ways to keep the serious problems with undercounting experienced in the 1990 census from happening again.

With that tally, an estimated 4 million Americans nationwide were overlooked, with higher rates of undercounting among minorities, said Robert Shapiro, undersecretary for economic affairs at the Commerce Department.

The problem was acute in Texas, where the Census Bureau estimated that 245,286 Hispanics and 83,114 blacks — as well as 226,883 children — were missed by census takers. In Houston alone, nearly 67,000 people were left out in 1990.

As a result, the state lost out on \$1 billion in federal funding. That alone should lead lawmakers of any political party to support ways to make the count more accurate, the president said.

"In Texas, I would think, every Republican would be just as interested as every Democrat

in seeing that every Texan is counted, and this state does not lose another billion dollars," Clinton said.

Census results are a factor in establishing boundaries for congressional districts. They play a role in determining eligibility for funds for an array of programs from Medicaid to roads and bridges.

Acting on a request from then-President Bush, the National Academy of Sciences recommended after the 1990 census that sampling be used as a means of ensuring accuracy. It is a technique that uses numerical characteristics of people who are counted by census takers to build estimates about those who cannot be located.

In addition to Clinton, sampling is supported by congressional Democrats, who stand to benefit if census results show higher counts in areas, where voters traditionally are Democrats.

Republicans, however, object to sampling, saying the Constitution requires that census takers literally count, not guess, how many people live there. Plus, they say, sampling leaves census takers too vulnerable to manipulation by the Clinton administration.

Last year, lawmakers compromised by agreeing to conduct a test run of the census before reaching a final decision on how to count.

Three dress rehearsals were planned for Fresno, Calif.; an 11-county area near Golden, Colo.; and Menominee County, Wis., including the Menominee American Indian Reservation.

Verdict expected Thursday for assault of 3-year old Dallas girl

DALLAS (AP) — Two brothers, ages 7 and 8, testified Tuesday that they and a fourth-grade friend sexually assaulted and beat a 3-year-old girl at a West Dallas creek.

Their testimony came during the trial of the 11-year-old boy, who is charged with three counts of sexual assault and one count of injuring a child. He faces up to 40 years' imprisonment if convicted.

The 8-year-old brother was practically mute on the witness stand, giving only simple yes or no answers in a small voice. Lawyers for both sides repeatedly asked him to pull his hand away from his mouth and use a microphone.

By contrast, his younger brother was smiling and chatty, spoke loudly and clearly into the microphone, giving yes or no answers in a lilting singsong voice. After admitting that he touched the girl's vagina with his penis, he gave a toothy grin and sang a little song.

The brothers can't be charged with the crime because they are younger than age 10.

Both boys said they and the 11-year-old on trial engaged in oral sex with the girl and beat her naked body with shoes. There were some inconsistencies, however.

The victim's mother broke into tears when prosecutor Gina Savage

showed her photos taken of the girl at the hospital after the April 9 attack.

"She was nude, and she just had big eyes, like she was not knowing what was going on," the 24-year-old woman said, her voice quaking. "When I saw her, I couldn't bear to see her, so I just looked away."

"You're going to hear bravado from a 7- and an 8-year-old trying to be bigger than they are," said Garry Cantrell, maintaining his client's innocence and contending admissions to police were coerced. "You're going to hear inconsistent statements."

Officer Gregory Dugger of the Dallas Police Department's Child Exploitation Unit testified Tuesday afternoon that all three boys admitted to him that they took part in the assault.

The state wrapped up its testimony from detective Jack Martindale, a 29-year veteran who led the physical evidence section of the Dallas Police Department.

Martindale said he compared the shoe of the 8-year-old, and the findings on the sole were similar to findings on the girl's body after the assault.

The trial will resume Wednesday, and the state is expected to rest shortly afterward. Officials now expect the case to go to the jury's hands by Thursday.

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