

# Court-ordered English?

## Controversial judge fines Spanish-speaking defendants

WESLACO (AP) — Municipal Judge Joe I. Cardenas hands out some controversial advice along with the fines in his courtroom, telling some Spanish-speaking defendants they should take English lessons.

"Even here in the [Rio Grande] Valley, you're much better off if you speak the language of the country," Cardenas said yesterday. "It might determine if you get a job or don't get a job."

Though Cardenas describes it as helpful advice, critics said he is out of line and is intimidating people who come before him on misdemeanor charges like traffic violations or other minor crimes.

"I don't see that it's his place to tell people to learn English,"

Weslaco Commissioner Oscar Rios, who publicly criticized Cardenas at a recent commission meeting, said. "If you're bilingual, it's better, especially here in the Valley, but I feel that if a person wants to learn a second language, let it be voluntary."

Cardenas never makes learning English a requirement — he does not even check if someone is taken a class. From time to time he informs defendants about English classes taught at the local library if he thinks they would benefit from it, he said.

**"Even here in the [Rio Grande] Valley, you're much better off if you speak the language of the country."**

— Municipal Judge Joe I. Cardenas

"If they don't speak English, I will conduct the hearing in Spanish, but I would prefer that they know English and that the forum is conducted in English because we are in the United States of America," he said.

But it might as well be a court order, say some of Cardenas' detractors. Coming from a judge, suggestions carry the weight of authority, they said.

"It is a humiliation for the judge to try and tell us that we should learn English," Luciano Rodriguez, district director for the League of United Latin American Citizens in Hidalgo County said. "We have many things to do besides learning English."

# Holiday economy accelerates

DALLAS (AP) — Post-Thanksgiving spending and strong performance in manufacturing gave the Texas economy a boost over the last two months, according to a widely watched Federal Reserve report.

Known as the Beige Book, the report released Wednesday shows the Texas economy grew in the six weeks that ended Nov. 30 at a slightly faster clip than it did during the previous six weeks.

Another factor contributing to the accelerated growth was the high price of crude oil, which meant a bit more demand for the state's oil-field industries.


Reigning in the state economy was slower construction activity. Experts gave a lot of the credit for continued growth to out-of-state migration, which has replenished the state's labor pool.

"That is one of the reasons that the Texas economy has continued to outperform the nation as a whole throughout this expansion," Steven Brown, an economist with the Dallas Federal Reserve said. Brown told *The Dallas Morning News* that without the migration, Texas would have exhausted its own labor supply.

The Texas economy has outpaced the nation's as a whole for seven of the last 10 years, officials said.

Experts attributed some of the strong performance to the state's growing high-tech sector and its high volume of trade under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Overall, the Fed said the U.S. economy was expanding at a "moderate to strong" pace in October and November. Little sign of either inflation or economic cooling was found, the Fed reported.



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# State to execute second inmate this week

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — A former state hospital worker headed to the Texas death chamber last night for his part in a 1984 shooting spree that left three members of a family dead in their East Texas home.

James Beathard, 42, a former psychiatric technician and substance abuse counselor at the Rusk State Hospital, would be the second Texas inmate in as many days to be put to death and the 33rd this year. Two more executions are set for next week and at least seven already are scheduled for January.

Beathard was convicted of the death of 14-year-old Marcus Hathorn in an Oct. 9, 1984 shooting rampage that also left the boy's parents, Gene and Linda Hathorn, dead.

also was convicted of the Trinity County killings and sentenced to death. His case remains on appeal and no execution date for him has been set.

**"I know whatever I have to go to has got to be better than [death row]."**

— James Beathard  
Death-row inmate

"I've had 15 years to prepare," Beathard said in a recent death-row interview. "I know whatever I have to go to has got to be better than this."

But he said he worried about his mother, wife and a 20-year-old daughter, whom he saw earlier this year for the first time since she was an infant.

"I would endure 10 times the worst living than what I am going through now for them," Beathard said. "So in that sense, no, I am not ready to go."

The younger Hathorn and Beathard worked together at Rusk State Hospital until Beathard went to college in Nacogdoches, where he earned more than 100 credit hours at Stephen F. Austin State University.

Court records indicated Hathorn supplied Beathard with illegal drugs for him to sell on commission and during their friendship Hathorn talked about his desire to kill his father, step-mother and half-brother.

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11:00 AM Worship  
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INFO: 690-1911

We are currently meeting at Cypress Grove Intermediate School, 900 Graham Rd. Exit Rock Prairie Rd. and stay on the feeder, in College Station.

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1007 Krenek Tap Rd. • College Station  
693-4514

Service Time: 10:15 a.m. Sunday School: 9 a.m.  
Sponsor - A&M Lutheran Collegians

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**Covenant Family Church**  
"Success Begins on Sunday"

Danny & Janet Green, Pastors  
Sunday 10:30 a.m. Wednesday 7:30 p.m.  
4010 Harvey Rd., Hwy. 301 E-Mail: greenck@atd.com  
College Station 774-1589 www.covenant-family-church.org

**Friends Congregational Church (UCC)**  
"An Open and Affirming Congregation"  
2200 Southwood Dr. @ FM 2818, C.S.  
693-7021 http://www.ipt.com/jpi

Sunday: 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for ALL Ages  
10:30 a.m. Worship Service  
4:00 p.m. Youth Group  
Wednesday: 6:30 - 7:15 p.m.  
Wednesday with Friends (A Contemporary Worship Service)

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(409) 731-1230  
Email: mark-d@tamuc.edu or mwmm@tamuc.edu

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(Across from Duncan Dining Hall)

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