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- Check out *The Battalion* online at [battalion.tamu.edu](http://battalion.tamu.edu).



- Testing the waters
- Drug examinations ensure accuracy



**Weather:**  
Partly cloudy with a high of 95 and a low of 71.

# THE BATTALION

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106 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## PTTS confiscates, stores abandoned bicycles

**ANNA BISHOP**  
*The Battalion*

With more than 17,000 places to park bicycles on campus, a multitude of students can be found methodically whizzing and swerving through the crowds at any given moment. However, bikes will run a greater risk of being confiscated and bike traffic will become more congested with the closing of the Northgate parking lots said Doug Williams associate director of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS).  
"At the end of each semester, PTTS purges the campus of all abandoned bicycles — bikes that are in need of repairs and have been left to rust. These bicycles are taken to a storage facility until a student makes a claim on his or her bike," Williams said. Williams said these confiscated bikes become state property after 120 days.  
"The storage facility, located on West Campus, is home

to more than 700 orphaned bicycles and other unclaimed property," Williams said.

Sergeant Allan Baron of University Police Department (UPD) Crime Prevention unit said UPD also confiscates bicycles and when these bikes are no longer needed in a court case or have no claims made upon them, they become property of the West Campus bike shelter.

The unclaimed bikes are sold at an annual auction held in September.

This method of confiscating bicycles and auctioning them causes grief for students like junior zoology major Jason Graves.

"What if students have left their bikes on campus and they are accidentally confiscated? Making a clean sweep of campus to rid it of all bicycles, unsightly ones or otherwise, is a poor decision," Graves said. "Some students invest a great deal of money on a bike and then find them in a heap on West Campus? It's a conspiracy."

Barron said students who believe their bicycles have been confiscated or stolen should contact the UPD dispatch office.

"When students do not claim their property, it indicates an indifference of whether or not they want [the unclaimed property] anymore. An auction is a way to control an excess build-up of such unwanted possessions," Barron said.

On the other hand, senior geography major Trey Dietrich finds the auction too good to be true.

"I have been told that I could pick up a nice bike at the auction for a really good deal," Dietrich said. "I would buy a confiscated bike at the public auction. I think it is a great thing to offer to a community of college students. Confiscating abandoned bikes makes the campus look clean and orderly ... auctioning the bikes off will give students who really want, and perhaps need, a bicycle an affordable opportunity to do just that."

In order to avoid having their bikes confiscated, UPD recommends students engrave a drivers' license number

somewhere on the frame of the bicycle and keep the bike serial number in a safe place. Students also can register their bikes with PTTS.



More than 700 abandoned bicycles were confiscated and stored in a storage facility on West Campus.

SUSAN REDDING/THE BATTALION

## B-CS has low jobless rate

**KIM TRIFILIO**  
*The Battalion*

Texas A&M University holds an unrecognized asset for the community of Bryan-College Station in providing many job opportunities that resulted in B-CS being ranked lowest in Texas unemployment rates.

The Texas Labor Market Review surveys 27 metropolitan areas in Texas each month and ranks the cities' employment rates. In May, B-CS had a 1.5 percent unemployment rate. In May 1999 B-CS rated 1.7 percent. Other cities studied in the survey were Dallas that rated 3.0 percent and Houston that rated 4.2 percent.

Clayton Griffis, an economist at the Texas Workforce Commission, said B-CS has kept the lowest unemployment rate for many months.

"That is nothing new. Bryan-College Station has had the lowest unemployment rate out of the 27 metropolitan areas for quite some time now," Griffis said.

Griffis said there are two primary inputs into the calculations to determine a city's unemployment rate.

"First, information is taken from a monthly survey, current population survey, in which we use the week of the 12th as a reference week. The household survey asks if you work and if yes, then you are accounted as employed. If no, then you are asked if you are able to work and actively looking for work and that is counted as unemployed. Be-

ing unemployed is still considered as being in the labor force," Griffis said. "Another key input comes from unemployment insurance claims. We look at that to see if they go up or down."

Griffis said the B-CS rating is influenced by the kind of market in the area.

"The Bryan-College Station rating has to do with the unique labor market. It is an extremely stable area," Griffis said.

Griffis said the stability of the area is due to Texas A&M University.

"Texas A&M has good employment and the agriculture and farming around there is continually steady. Many businesses rely on the university for consumers of their products," Griffis said.

Gary Basinger, business developer at Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce said Texas A&M provides the labor force part-time workers and a stable employment source because schools are not affected by layoffs.

"Overall, A&M stabilizes the economy because there are not going to be any big layoffs. It provides a labor force and a lot of job opportunities. It provides part-time workers for retail and jobs for new graduates any time of the year," Basinger said.

"We are also seeing a lot of former students who want to come back here. We are creating a combination of new jobs and keeping more graduates."

"Bryan-College Station has

See **JOBLESS** on Page 6.

## Fire in the sky



Fireworks celebrating Independence Day glittered across the sky over the George Bush Presidential Library Complex Tuesday night. Earlier in the day there were games and activities held to commemorate the Fourth of July.

JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

## Aggies witness PRI loss

**MARIANO CASTILLO**  
*Special to The Battalion*

MEXICO CITY — Approximately 50 Texas A&M students studying abroad in Mexico experienced first-hand what Mexicans consider their country's most significant elections in history. Vicente Fox's victory Sunday over Francisco Labastida brought an end to the 71-year rule of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in an election scrutinized by international observers.

A&M students studying abroad in Mexico City, Puebla and Cuernavaca witnessed and immersed themselves in the tense political atmosphere. Going into election day, polls for the presidential race showed Fox of the National Action Party (PAN) and Labastida of the PRI only two percentage points apart.

A group of students interning in Mexico City with the public relations firms Gcom-Kaufmann and GCI worked with a project called Democracy Watch to ensure fair voting. Various interests in Mexico funded the Democracy Watch project to conduct surveys and exit polls to combat corruption in the electoral process. Elections in previous years had been tainted by vote-buying and fraud.

Ashley Carmona, a senior journalism major with Gcom-Kaufmann, said the moment before the preliminary results came in was the busiest and most exciting.

See **ELECTIONS** on Page 6.

## University housing to have new center

*A&M-owned apartment complex offers residents new community features*

**JOSEPH PLEASANT**  
*The Battalion*

Residents of the University owned apartments will have a new community center by Spring 2001. The center, worth an estimated \$2 million, is under construction in the central part of the apartment complex is scheduled to be completed by March 7, 2001.

John Sodolak, assistant director for the University apartments, said residents have requested a new community center in the apartment complex.

"This community center has been five years in the making; it's partly in response to resident input," Sodolak said.

Sodolak said the new center will replace an older, smaller building currently in use.

"A 1947-model metal building is being used now for the apartment's community center, and with our programs, it is used almost every day a week," Sodolak said.

The University housing programming office will use the community center for activities throughout the year.

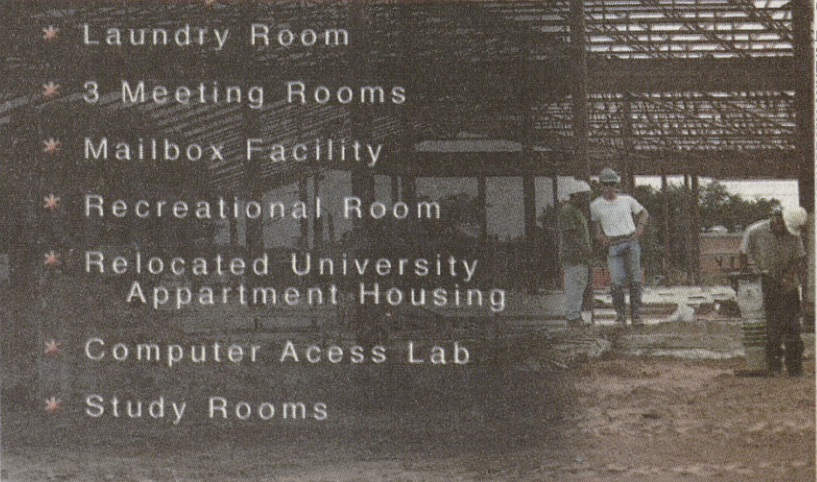
Sheetal Desai, graduate assistant in the University apartment programming office and an education administration graduate student, said the complex has a large number of international students and the programming office's activities are geared mainly toward them.

"Our complex is 95 percent international, and our office, through activities and programs, tries to help those students

See **HOUSING** on Page 6.

### Community Center Features:

- \* Laundry Room
- \* 3 Meeting Rooms
- \* Mailbox Facility
- \* Recreational Room
- \* Relocated University Apartment Housing
- \* Computer Access Lab
- \* Study Rooms



PATRIC SCHNEIDER AND STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

## METROPOLITAN AREAS Unemployment Rate May 2000

• Bryan-College Station	1.5
• Austin-San Marcos	1.9
• Dallas	3.0
• Waco	3.1
• Houston	4.2
• McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	12.5

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

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