

Bryan-College Station SMOKING Ordinance

Once passed:

- No smoking in restaurants between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.
- Smoking to be prohibited within 20 feet of an entrance to a public building

RUBEN DELUNA/The Battalion

Bryan passes smoking ordinance

Ban will not be effective until city council votes again at Feb. 27 meeting

By JON NIVEN
The Battalion

The Bryan City Council passed an ordinance restricting smoking in restaurants in Bryan by a vote of 5 to 2 during its meeting Tuesday night. There was standing-room-only in Bryan City Hall because citizens from as far away as Austin voiced their opinions on the proposed smoking ordinance.

At the Bryan and College Station city councils' joint meeting Jan. 30, the College Station city council passed the ordinance. The College Station council must wait for Bryan to approve the proposal again before the ordinance is enacted.

The Bryan council's next meeting is Feb. 27, and the proposal will be revoted upon then.

During the open forum part of the meeting, 15 people spoke in support of the ordinance and 16 people spoke against it.

The ordinance bans smoking in restaurants between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. as well as in restaurant bars. The ban also prohibits smoking within 20 feet of an entrance.

Some residents were upset because the proposed regulations will apply to bowling alleys and bingo halls.

Many doctors, including Dr. Dan

Murray, showed up to support the ordinance.

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district manager of Taco Bell

freedoms 'from', and nonsmokers deserve their freedom from second-hand smoke," Murray said. "Rights come before pleasures."

Greg Gunter, the district manager of Taco Bell and owner of the Taco Bell restaurants in Bryan and College Station, said he does not believe this is a health issue.

"If this were a health issue, they'd ban it universally," Gunter said. "Government should stay away from businesses; the customers will drive it. Bryan will be devastated by [the ordinance]."

Bryan Mayor Lonnie Stabler and Councilman Mitch Morehead voted against the ordinance.

Stabler said he was surprised that more people did not show up to speak. He said he supports the council's decision, but thinks some restaurant owners will have problems staying open.

"There will be some local, small restaurants that will have problems," Stabler said. "I felt there were some alternatives. It is possible to have a clean-air system of exhaust that will get rid of all impurities, not just second-hand smoke."

Councilman Mike Beal said the outcome represented the best interests of the community.

"It is always good to listen to the citizens and what they have to say," Beal said.

PUF loses \$750 million in stock investments

Budget not drastically affected

STAFF & WIRE

A three-month period of plunging stock markets resulted in almost \$750 million in investment-fund losses for the University of Texas and Texas A&M University systems, officials from both institutions said.

Despite the shortfalls over the period ending Nov. 30, investment strategists say they propose no significant changes.

The investment results were reported by Dan Burck, UT System Chancellor, and Cathy Iberg, managing director of investment operations for the University of Texas Investment Management Corporation (UTIMCO).

Results show the Permanent University Fund's (PUF) value dropped to approximately \$7.7 billion. This includes \$17 million, distributed between the two university systems.

The system's total budget would not be affected by one bad quarter, A&M System Vice Chancellor for Finance Tom Kale said, because earnings distributions to UT and A&M are based on a three-year average of the fund's value.

"We haven't reconsidered anything we had planned," Kale said. "We're certainly keeping an eye on it, but we're not really concerned yet, and I'm confident the income will provide for our needs over the next couple years."

Kale said that, since the drop last quarter, UTIMCO has reported that the fund's value is holding steady. He also said the firm is unlikely to alter its investment strategies because of a short-term dip in the economy.

"The strategies they employ are no different from those of most large endowments—they're designed for the long term, and the swings in the economy usually even out," Kale said.

Although a long-term decline in the stock market could affect the fund, Kale said, the PUF has reaped the benefits of

the economic boom in recent years, and despite the recent slowdown, the long-term prospects for the economy are good.

The UT System gets two-thirds of the PUF earnings distributions, and the A&M System gets one-third. Texas A&M, Prairie View A&M, and Tarleton State University are the only schools in the A&M System that get PUF money.

Of the \$105 million in PUF money given to the A&M System last year, about \$25 million went to debt service and the System office's operation budget. Of the \$80 million remaining, \$68 million was earmarked for Texas A&M College Station, less than one-tenth of the University's \$730 million budget.

Budget projections for the A&M system for fiscal year 2002 (which will begin Sept. 1, 2001) will be calculated at the end of the month, Kale said.

"Should the fund income be a little less than we anticipated, that shouldn't be a problem, because we allow for some wiggle room on the budget," Kale said.

Burck said Monday that the drop in the value of the PUF means that the system will likely delay taking on new debt for large projects.

"We say, 'Let's pause a moment and analyze this and see where the market is going,'" Burck told the *Austin American-Statesman*, adding that the news will have no effect on projects already under way.

For the quarter ending Nov. 30, the Dow Jones industrial average was off 7.33 percent and the Standard & Poors 500 index was down 13.53 percent, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq fell 38.65 percent.

The PUF's endowment capital comes mostly from oil revenues on the state's vast land holdings in West Texas, Kale said.

Created by the Texas Legislature, UTIMCO has directed the universities' investments since 1996.

Free speech



BERNARDO GARZA/The Battalion

Abortion debates are running high this week after an anti-abortion exhibit was unveiled by Rudder Tower on Monday. A pro-choice message was chalked on a wall by Harrington Hall.

Display brings debate on abortion to campus

By BRADY CREEL
The Battalion

Although the pro-life display at Rudder Fountain sparked debate in the Texas A&M community this week, student leaders on the pro-choice side of the abortion spectrum say it has benefited the campus.

"I think it has been a positive event, just from the fact that it has people thinking about [abortion] and talking about it," said Lynsey Kelly, vice president of the A&M chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW) and a senior psychology major.

Although she does not support Aggies for Life's decision to bring the display to campus, Kelly said, she has recognized the benefits of the controversy.

"Putting [the display] aside, I

was pleasantly surprised to see people taking action," Kelly said.

Jennifer Woodson, president of the A&M NOW chapter and a senior bioenvironmental science major, said although she disagrees with Aggies for Life's message, she applauds the group's exercise of free speech on campus and recognizes both groups' opportunity to educate the student body about pro-life and pro-choice philosophies.

"[The display] makes a lot of people think about [abortion], and they are looking for information," she said.

Woodson said pro-life and pro-choice groups have a common goal: eliminating the need for abortion. Education is paving the way to that goal, she said.

"We decided not to protest [the display] because our main

goal is to inform people," she said. "I don't think it would get a very good point across because we just want people to see both sides."

Woodson said looking at both sides of the issue is important because many people at A&M have not taken a position on abortion.

"[Abortion] is something that can be affecting any one of us because of friends or family, or even in our future," she said. "You never know when the subject is going to come up."

Woodson said people must be armed with adequate information so they can take a position when necessary.

Natalie R. Wilson, a member of NOW and a junior zoology major, said she has already seen

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Condom day aims to convey safe sex

By BRANDIE LIFFICK
The Battalion

While Feb. 14 usually brings to mind thoughts of Valentine's Day, it also marks another nationally recognized event—National Condom Day.

Aggie Representatives Educating About College Health (REACH) and the Health Education Department of the Student Health Center will have tables set up in the Memorial Student Center (MSC) and the Commons Lobby from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. today. They will be distributing free condoms and information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

National Condom Day, originally National Condom Week, was created in 1978 by a group of students from the University of California-Berkeley. The American Social Health Association (ASHA) consolidated National Condom Week into one day and incorporated it with Sexual Responsibility Week.

According to ASHA, approximately 15.3 million cases of STIs are reported every year in the United States.

"I think [National Condom Day] makes students think," said Kristi Hanle, case worker for AIDS Services of Brazos Valley (ASBV). "A lot of college-age students think that bad things can't happen to them. Unless they are

"I think [National Condom Day] makes students think."

— Kristi Hanle
ASBV case worker

shown how STDs and other sexually transmitted diseases really can affect them, many don't bother to take precautions. Awareness is very important."

ASBV offers "safer sex kits" that include condoms, gloves and pamphlets with instructions on proper condom use, Hanle said.

"While it seems like a fairly easy thing to do, there is a correct way and an incorrect way to use a condom," Hanle said. "If a condom is used incorrectly, it becomes useless."

Students can anonymously obtain condoms from the pharmacy of the A.P. Beutel Health Center.

"Workers in the pharmacy will ask you to fill out a form and then to wait while they fill the order. It is 10 condoms for \$2," said Jennifer Bradley, Aggie REACH spokeswoman and a senior community health major. "The condoms are handed to you in a brown paper bag with no marks on it, and no one even has to know who you are."

For students trying to find an even more anonymous way to obtain condoms, Freecondoms.com, drdrew.com and condoms4free.com all offer free condoms, whether through ordering from these sites or by visiting other sites. At freecondoms.com, users earn "condom

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Potential freshmen facing competition

With applications due Thursday, officials expect more than 18,000 applicants

By EMILY HENDRICKSON
The Battalion

The closing date for admission to Texas A&M is Thursday, and many potential A&M freshmen are nervously awaiting letters of acceptance. The Class of '05 faces drastically increased competition for admission because of this year's record-breaking number of applicants.

"The only difference is, we have more applicants, but we are accepting the same number of people as last year, the result being more competition," said Mary Baldwin, assistant director of admissions at A&M.

Applicants who have not been accepted will enter the final review phase and receive the Uni-

versity's decision notices the first week in April.

"We expect over 18,000 applicants this year," Baldwin said.

More than 15,000 freshman applications have been received, and many have already been admitted, Baldwin said.

Automatic admission to any Texas public college is guaranteed to students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their high school class. Applicants who meet that criteria have already been notified of their acceptance, and criteria for admissions have not changed this year, she said.

The University of Texas-Austin has received approximately 19,300 applications, but UT plans to accept only 10,500 students, said Au-

gustine Garza, deputy director of admissions at UT.

Small changes have been made to the application process at UT, which no longer allows students to enter the provisional program. The provisional program allows students to be tentatively accepted to the university if they go to summer school, complete 30 hours and maintain a 3.0 grade-point ratio (GPR), Garza said. Now, UT requires students to complete their summer session at one of five other UT component universities, such as UT-El Paso and UT-Arlington.

The Texas Common Application has been instated as one method of applying to colleges and universities in Texas. Applicants

can submit a paper application or an Web-based application. The new system is less time consuming because students can complete a single application for any Texas public institution.

"Seventy-two percent of freshman applications have been received online," Baldwin said.

Having been in place for only a few years, the common application system is relatively new. Students find it convenient because all personal information is automatically stored in the system. When students receive their acceptance letters, it is only a matter of double-checking their information, Baldwin said.

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Status of APPLICATIONS For Fall 2001

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY	15,000 applications received
	18,000 applications expected by Feb. 15 closing date
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-AUSTIN	19,300 applications received
	only 10,500 to be accepted
Top 10% of high school graduates admitted automatically	

RUBEN DELUNA/The Battalion