

News in Brief

Brewery will close two years early

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The historic Pearl Brewery will be closed more than two years earlier than expected as it continues to lose money, a Pabst Brewing Co. official said Monday.

The 115-year-old plant on the banks of the San Antonio River will be shuttered in 60 days, Pabst chief operating officer Jim Walter told KTSA radio.

Walter said corporate employees will remain in San Antonio, but 82 workers will be laid off.

Walter did not immediately return telephone calls from the Associated Press.

Last June, San Antonio-based Pabst's board of directors voted to keep the brewery open for at least three more years but operating at

less than half its capacity and with a skeleton crew.

In July, more than 260 employees were laid off.

The remaining workers have continued to make Lone Star and Pearl, two regional beers born in San Antonio.

Search continues for missing sailor

GALVESTON (AP) — The Coast Guard continued searching Monday for a man who apparently fell off a sailboat en route from Galveston to Isla De La Hara, Mexico.

Mark Warren, 36, was discovered missing from the 27-foot sailboat Zephyr early Sunday afternoon when the other person aboard awoke to relieve him on watch. The remaining sailor immediately radioed the Coast Guard.

Gasoline additive cause of San Marcos pollution

SAN MARCOS (AP) — State regulators are preparing to add a site polluted by a gasoline additive along the San Marcos River to their Superfund registry of Texas' most environmentally contaminated areas in a move that has surprised government officials and environmentalists.

Cleanup of pollution caused by the additive MTBE and a solvent, if approved by the state's Natural Resource Conservation Commission, would be the first Central Texas effort to get federal Superfund help since the program began in 1980.

Investigators for TNRCC were scheduled to outline what they know about the plume of groundwater contamination east of the Interstate 35-Texas 123 intersection during a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. tonight at the San Marcos Public Library.

"The public meeting is an attempt to obtain some information about the site, maybe things the public will know and will share," the TNRCC's Dick Lewis told the *San Marcos Daily Record*.

Groundwater tests of Willow Springs Creek, one of the San Marcos River's chief tributaries east of 35, have since the 1980s found detectable levels of MTBE and a dry-cleaning solvent. But city officials who occasionally test the river for contaminants such as fecal coliform, said they were unaware of contamination near the river. Environmentalists were also caught off guard.

"This was a big shock to us," Dianne Wassenich, San Marcos River Foundation president, told the *Austin American-Statesman*. "We knew nothing about this, and it's a shame, because if we had, it might have been

easier to trace the contamination." She said researchers for the foundation and Southwest Texas State University also perform tests along

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— Dianne Wassenich
San Marcos River Foundation president

the river, but no one had identified the contamination by chemicals perchloroethylene (PCE) and methyl tertiary butyl ether before.

The TNRCC has investigated the area for more than 10 years, but only recently recommended the site for

Superfund status, said Superfund commission project manager.

"I know from the general viewpoint, it does look like it's taken a long time," Loftis will be addressed at the meeting.

The MTBE contamination, officials say, is linked to a United Parcel Service site, the source of the solvent contamination has not yet been traced.

The level of contamination of PCE and the MTBE in the creek and the springs that remained consistent for more than a decade, according to records, state records indicate there be no traces of the chemicals in the river.

Area environmentalists and residents are concerned about contamination's impact on the area and the endangered species habitat.

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