

Texas A&M University — Celebrating 125 Years

THE BATTALION

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NEWS IN BRIEF

PA 43 will be open to guests during 125th Wednesday

The 125th Anniversary Celebration of Texas A&M will bring visitors and, with them, automobiles that will cause some students to use alternate parking areas.

Parking Area 43, the commuter parking lot near the George Bush Presidential Library, will be open Wednesday only to guests attending the Academic Convocation Conference at the George Bush Presidential Conference Center.

The lot will be closed to commuter students and staff members not attending the conference.

The University Center Garage will be reserved primarily for visitors attending the Academic Convocation scheduled from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium. A limited number of spaces will be available for commuters.

Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services officials urge students to utilize the bus services to campus.

On-campus and off-campus bus routes are available at www.ptts.tamu.edu.

PUBLIC EYE

Total compensation package for MBA graduates of Lowry Mays College and Graduate School at their first place of employment

\$97,000

TODAY

AGGIELIFE

Page 4 Helping hands

• Aggies give time, effort toward helping victims of terrorist attacks

SPORTS

Page 7 Life on the fast track

• Freshman forward making immediate impact on Aggie soccer squad

OPINION

Page 11 Expensive laptops are not the answer

WEATHER

TODAY

HIGH 84° F LOW 55° F

TOMORROW

HIGH 85° F LOW 58° F

FORECASTS COURTESY OF www.weathermanted.com

Lowry Mays ranked No. 14

By CHRISTINA HOFFMAN THE BATTALION

The Lowry Mays College and Graduate School of Business was ranked 14th in return on investments for graduate students by Forbes magazine.

Texas A&M's master of business administration (MBA) program was among more than 100 school programs researched in the United States and internationally.

The study has great importance for the future of the Mays MBA program and its graduate students, said MBA program director Dan Robertson.

"This magazine has a great deal of credit and is read by many business executives," Robertson said. "The high ranking provides a positive image for students and MBA applicants. We are named Lowry Mays College and Graduate School of Business because of the generosity of Mays, so creating and maintaining a positive image is very important."

The research evaluated students' return on investments, comparing average salary and job opportunities available after graduating with an MBA degree to the out-of-pocket costs and job opportunities given up by students to pursue the MBA degree.

"Two very important concepts were looked at — the salary and time given up and the cost of the program," Robertson said. "It's the opportunity cost, you can say, of the salaries and time given up compared to the average costs of the programs and the average salary after receiving the MBA; it's the average compensation for those who graduate, or the break-even point."

The average compensation package for Mays MBA graduates, including sign-on bonuses and investment plans, totals \$97,000, said Pamela Gerbig,

See BUSINESS on page 5.



CODY WAGES • THE BATTALION

College Station firefighters remove an exhaust fan used to remove smoke and carbon monoxide from the Langford Architecture Center after a power transformer caught on fire in the Visualization Lab Monday morning.

Students evacuate after Langford fire

By MAUREEN KANE THE BATTALION

Students were evacuated from the Langford Architecture Center Monday when a transistor caught fire on the second floor.

Bart Humphreys, public information officer for the College Station Fire Department (CSFD), said the fire was electrical in origin and that sometimes transistors simply malfunction or short out, causing fires.

"Since it was energized, electricity was running through it and they couldn't use water, they used dry chemical extinguishers," Humphreys said. "They had to shut power off

to the building. The first time they shut off the power, the emergency generator kicked on, so they had to turn it off again."

Humphreys said the transistor that caught fire was located near the Visualization Lab on the second floor, which contains a high amount of electrical equipment. He said that damage costs could be expensive if equipment was ruined.

According to Humphreys, CSFD received the original call about the fire at 9:16 a.m. The first unit was on the scene five minutes later, and the fire was under control by 9:43 a.m. People were kept out of the building until

See FIRE on page 9.

SILVER TAPS James St. Peter History Graduate student 10:30 p.m. Academic Plaza ADRIAN CALCANEO • THE BATTALION

FACT gathers student opinion

By GISELLE WALLACE THE BATTALION

The First Time Aggie Contact Team (FACT) will speak to approximately 8,500 undergraduate and transfer students about their opinions of student life, campus events and curriculum during the next two weeks.

According to Vanessa Diaz Clark, assistant director of the Department of Student Life, FACT members start calling students during the fifth week of both the fall and spring

semesters after the first exams have taken place and students have grown accustomed to the University.

"Undergraduate and transfer students will be contacted by orientation leaders, student government and staff to make sure they have settled in to the community, and we allow students to express their concerns," Clark said.

FACT was created in 1987 by Dr. John J. Koldus, vice president of student services, with the mission to support and welcome new undergradu-

ate and transfer students to Texas A&M, officials said.

No recommendations or requirements are necessary to be a part of FACT or to volunteer for the program.

"Students, faculty and staff simply volunteer to welcome new students and assist them in any way," Clark said.

FACT averages 574 calls to students per day.

"FACT is a fabulous program that not only welcomes students to A&M, but it gives

See FACT on page 9.

Finalist chosen for HSC president Dickey to face Board of Regents

By NONI SRIDHARA THE BATTALION

From a list of 40 candidates, Nancy Dickey is the sole finalist for president of the Texas A&M University Health Sciences Center chosen.

Dickey previously was the interim dean of the College of Medicine at the Health Sciences Center. The Health Science Center is comprised of the College of Medicine, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, the Institute of Biosciences and Technology, the School of Rural Public Health and the Baylor College of Dentistry.

The search committee that named Dickey as a finalist included faculty, staff and students, along with the director of the Institute for Biosciences and Technology in Houston and faculty associated with the Scott and White Clinic and the Veterans Affairs hospitals in Temple.

"The committee conducted a national search for prospective candidates," said Dr. Jerry Gaston, a search committee chairman and deputy chancellor for the A&M system. "We were dealing with an extraordinary group of capable people. After reviewing their strengths and weaknesses, we suggested three names to the chancellor, who then gave his recommendation to the Regents."

Dickey's experience with primary care and her 1998 to 1999 presidency of the American Medical Association were reasons behind her selection, Gaston said.

"She is extremely knowledgeable of the health issues that are problematic in this country," he said.

Gaston said there was a motion in the Executive Session for Dickey to be chosen for the position.

"The committee worked very hard to make this a national search that concluded with the outcome of someone already known to us as the best possible choice," Gaston said.

An official appointment could be made this month.

"I am honored by the Regents vote of confidence to name me the sole finalist," Dickey said. "I look forward to the possibilities of the extraordinary opportunities at the Health Sciences Center."

She said the Health Sciences Center has a very strong reputation. The College

See PRESIDENT on page 9.

Winter shaping up to be mild for energy markets

NEW YORK (AP) — With the mercury dropping and the home heating season getting under way, customers can expect big savings compared with last winter, analysts said.

Because of weak demand from industrial users and a glut in supply, natural gas is 57 percent less expensive than a year ago. Crude oil, from which heating oil is refined, is about 30 percent cheaper per barrel.

With no quick turnaround in sight for the U.S. economy, experts believe the downward pressure on energy prices could last through December.

"Natural gas prices are a fraction of what they were last year and, on average, consumers should expect tremendous savings," said Fadel Gheit, an energy analyst at Fehnestock & Co. in New York.

Last winter, Americans paid dearly to heat their homes because natural gas supplies were extremely tight and demand from industrial users was strong. The wholesale price, which traded around \$2.50 per 1,000 cubic feet in the late 1990s, soared above \$10 in January.

For a while, natural gas companies raked in huge profits as they cranked up

production. But their aggressive drilling eventually bumped up against a sharp drop in demand as the U.S. economy faltered.

The country had 2.84 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in storage for the week ended Sept. 21, compared with 2.40 trillion cubic feet during the same period in 2000.

The wholesale price is now slightly above \$2.15 per 1,000 cubic feet, compared with \$5 per 1,000 cubic feet at the beginning of last year's home heating season.

Electricity could also be cheaper, since

more than 15 percent of the nation's power is derived from natural gas.

Half of all homes in the United States are heated with natural gas, according to the American Gas Association. Thirty-two percent use electricity, 9 percent rely on heating oil and the remainder use wood, alternative fuels or have no heat at all.

When it comes to heating oil, which is primarily used in the Northeast, analysts say homeowners could save an average of 30 cents a gallon compared with last year's prices. A household using 600 gallons of heating oil during the October-March season could save \$180.