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AGGIELAND

Politics

THE BATTALION

Page 9

Comptroller says Sept. 11 attacks had little affect on B-CS sales-tax collections, revenue

State returns down one percent, no long-term affects expected

By ERIC AMBROSO THE BATTALION

Sheila Clancy, spokeswoman for the Texas Comptroller's Office, said the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks had little, if any, effect on sales tax collections for Brazos County

According to reports issued by the Texas Comptroller's Office Nov. 9, Bryan sales tax collections were down 3.25 percent in the month of September, while collections for College Station were down only .02 percent. Overall, the revenue in Brazos County rose by 5.3 percent in the month of September, indicating that the terrorist attacks had a small affect on the local economy.

Brazos County was one of few Texas counties that did not increase the sales tax to combat a declining economy in the aftermath of the attacks.

"The state's revenue was down one percent in September, but local revenues were up 3 percent throughout the state," Clancy said. "Cities, counties and local areas broke even in the month of September. This reflects very little impact from the terrorist attacks."

State sales-tax collections for September

totaled \$1.15 billion, down only 1 percent from collections during the same time last year.

Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander expects the economy of Texas to fully recover without any governmental interference. Rylander said the terrorist

Texans are a defiant, confident and resilient bunch. I continue to believe it is highly unlikely that there will be a recession in Texas. One month is not a trend.

> - Carole Keeton Rylander Texas Comptroller

attacks reduced sales tax collections by \$113 million immediately after the attacks, but the economy bounced back quickly to be down only \$42 million.

"Texans are a defiant, confident and resilient bunch," Rylander said. "I continue to believe it is highly unlikely that there will be a recession in Texas. One month is not a trend."

"The state expects to lose around \$90 million overall," Clancy said. "As money came in, the state appeared to be down \$113 million, but the numbers quickly bounced back.

Clancy said the comptroller's office expects the economy to pick up and gain naturally sometime next year.

"September was the first month of the state's budget biennium. The economy can turn around, and a lot can

happen in two years," Clancy said. Rylander will be transferring \$686 million from the natural gas severance tax into the state's Rainy Day Fund, bringing that balance to \$882 million. Wall Street experts credited the Rainy Day Fund with giving the state a high financial rating and saving Texans \$55 million this year.

Consumer confidence, which was declining before Sept. 11, continued to slide nationally and in Texas after the tragedy. However, between August and October, consumer confidence slipped 25 percent nationally, while Texas consumer confidence decreased only 21 percent.

Rylander expects the Texas economy to fare better than the majority of other states and recover very soon.

State employees receive 4-percent pay raise Ogden and Brown crucial supporters of bill that passed in Senate

By NONI SRIDHARA THE BATTALION

Effective Sept. 1, state employees, extension agents and non-faculty employees at colleges and universities in Texas, who have been employed in this position for at least one year and receive less than \$30,000 annually, will receive a 4-percent pay raise per

This is the largest state employee raise that Texas has seen in 20 years, according to Tiffany Britton, chief of staff for Sen. Steve Ogden.

Other benefits include increased health benefits and increased longevity pay. Some state employees will not receive across-the-board pay raises, such as Child Protective Services and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, because of high turnover rates

Andy Homer, director of government employees. relations for the Texas Public Employees

Association, a non-union advocacy group lagging compared to other employers responsible for lobbying pay raises passed as part of the Senate

Prior to this year, state pay was lagging compared to other employers, and the turnover rate was up to 18.3 percent.

> - Andy Homer director of government relations Texas Public Employees Association

Appropriations Bill, said that the increase in pay is a year-round issue for the association to maintain and attract able

"Prior to this year, state pay was

and the turnover rate was up to 18.3 percent," Homer said.

Homer said that it would cost half a billion dollars every budget cycle to keep up with recruiting and training new state employees if a pay raise was not implemented.

"For Ogden, it was not a question of whether or not to pass the bill, but rather how much to increase the pay,"

Homer said that Ogden was a key component in attaining the funds. Ogden has one of the largest numbers of state employees in his representative district. Britton said Ogden has more than 50,000 state employees in his district.

Ogden's district includes the Huntsville prison, the Texas Youth Commission and two Mental Health Mental Retardation facilities, according to Britton, all of which have state employees.

"Another reason Ogden was crucial to port of state employee pay raises."

getting this bill passed is that he serves on the conference committee which works out the differences between the Senate and the House on the appropriations bills in order to get it passed through both chambers.'

The raise comes from Senate Bill One, which is the general appropriations bill passed in every legislative session.

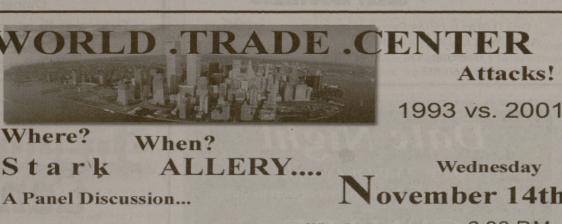
"Because he is involved with the Senate

finance committee, Ogden had a lot of influence on this decision," Britton said. Homer said there is a possibility that

state employees could see a 3-percent pay raise next year, contingent on the State Comptrollers assessment of funds. "Right now, as far as the budget, early

estimates are showing that we will have a \$ 5 billion dollar budget deficit, so nothing can be for sure," Britton said.

Fred Brown, R-College Station, and Ogden were honored at a luncheon hosted by the Texas State Public Employees Association Nov. 8 for their active sup-

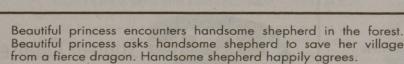


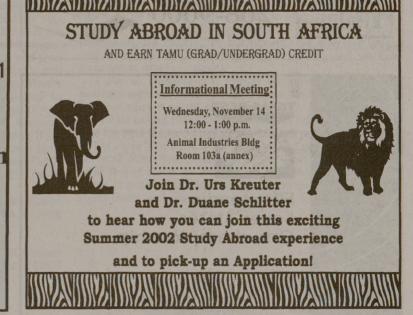
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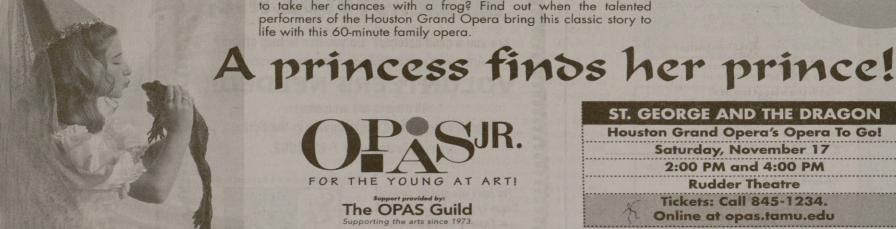
Why did the building collapse in 2001? What was the emotional impact in both cases?

6:30 P.M

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