

THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TEEX receives funding to fight terrorism

By Emily Peters
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Bryan, College Station and Brazos County will receive federal funding for equipment to improve response capabilities in the possible event of terrorism through weapons of mass destruction.

The U.S. Department of Justice granted funds to 95 Texas cities and counties assessed on vulnerability and capability of handling biological, chemical or explosive terrorist threats. The equipment needed to combat terrorism and for which the federal grant pays includes protective

clothing and breathing devices for emergency responders, detection equipment to identify different types of hazards, emergency antidotes and medications, decontamination equipment and communications equipment.

"You generally think of terrorist activity as something that can easily affect large amounts of people at once," said Bart Humphreys, College Station Fire Department research and planning coordinator. "This area has several sensitive targets, including home football games and the Bush Presidential Library with all of its political implications."

The Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), based in College Station and part of the Texas A&M University System, will be responsible for facilitating equipment requests and allocation for the selected Texas areas. TEEX is home to the National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center Domestic Preparedness Program.

"The federal program needed someone at a state level to administrate this program," said Marilyn Martell, public information director for TEEX. "We have a close partnership with the Department of Justice, and we already have a

knowledge base in this area as well as national experience with programs of this nature."

The selected Texas areas will receive a total of \$11.7 million as part of the State Domestic Preparedness Equipment Program of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Domestic Preparedness.

Humphreys said numerous city divisions helped evaluate the area, including EMS, fire and police departments, public utilities and parks and recreation.

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JOHN LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Rescue specialist Randy McGregor helps Lt. Nick Pappas suit up in what is known as a Level A protection suit. Members of the Texas Task Force-1 took part in the Enhanced Operations Course with the Bryan

Fire Department where they familiarized themselves with various safety equipment. The task force will be traveling to Salt Lake City next month to assist with any problems at the Winter Olympics.

Task force prepares for Olympics

By Brandie Liffick
THE BATTALION

The Texas Task Force-1 (TX-TF1) emergency rescue team is training for the Winter Olympic Games. But instead of running sprints or lifting weights, the team is preparing to respond to any situation involving weapons of mass destruction, structural collapse or mass casualties.

"The Olympic games are classified by the government as a National Security Special Event, which means that special forces are often called in to help with security," said Mike Donoho, assistant fire chief for the Bryan Fire Department. "This was planned before the Sept. 11 tragedies."

Seventy-two of the 216 TX-TF1 members will be dispatched on Feb. 3 to Salt Lake City, Utah. Each will complete a 16-hour training course on new equipment and procedures.

"We have been provided with \$30,000 worth of equipment from our FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) that will be used in addition to the equipment we already possess," Donoho said. "It is important that we become familiar with the equipment and make sure everyone knows how everything works and should be used if needed."

In addition, team members specializing in

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A&M unable to meet increased interest in Islamic studies

By Rob Phillips
THE BATTALION

Student interest in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies has risen since Sept. 11, but directors of Texas A&M's international studies program said the University lacks the expertise and coursework to meet demand.

The University's course selection pales in comparison to the University of Texas-Austin's program, said Dr. Chris Alexander,

associate director of A&M's international studies program.

"It could well be the case that there was a basic sense that since the state of Texas had one well-developed program on that part of the world, it didn't need another one," Alexander said.

The program at UT offers a large number of courses across multiple departments, classes and training programs in a number of Middle Eastern languages and library

resources that support quality research in the region. Texas A&M currently offers six courses dealing with the Middle East. The classes are scattered across various departments, primarily in the College of Liberal Arts. According to Alexander, an important contrast between the two programs is regularity.

"The faculty who teach those

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AASC condemns Battalion for cartoon

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

African-American students demanded *The Battalion* issue a formal apology for publishing an editorial cartoon they claim is racist, and accused the student newspaper of a persistent insensitivity to minorities.

"It (the cartoon) is blatantly offensive. The appearance of the characters are exaggerated to exploit racist stereotypes of African-Americans as ignorant," said Bereket Bisrat, spokesperson for the African-American Student Coalition (AASC) and a sophomore international studies major.

The AASC distributed a statement Wednesday condemning *The Battalion* and urging University administrators to do the same.

The cartoon, which appeared in the Jan. 14 edition of *The Battalion*, depicts an African-American mother in curlers and an apron scolding her son for receiving a bad grade, saying "If you ain't careful, you gonna end up doing airport security."

Mariano Castillo, editor in chief of *The Battalion* and a senior international studies and journalism major, said he stands

by his decision to let the cartoon run.

"I don't believe it was racist, and it shouldn't be interpreted as such," Castillo said.

Although they are demanding an apology from *The Battalion*, Castillo said he has not been contacted by any-

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— Bereket Bisrat
AASC spokesperson

one from the AASC and only obtained a copy of its statement from another media organization. Castillo added that

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Rec Center gets new equipment

By Sarah Szuminski
THE BATTALION

The Student Recreation Center has spent more than \$80,000 this year on new equipment, focusing on

free weight equipment and treadmills, cross-trainers and abdominal machines.

Nine free weight multifunction racks were added to the Rec Center free weight area this month. Also

added to the free weight area was a new platform for Olympic lifting and new bumper plates. This is the first major addition made to the free weight area since the Rec Center's opening in 1995.

Jerod Wilson, the Rec Center weight room and personal training coordinator, is overseeing the improvements and said more multi-function racks will help alleviate the problem of crowding during peak hours.

"We're trying to get more efficient with our space," Wilson said. "You're not just locked into one exercise at each station."

The racks consist of a movable lever-action bench, a full set of weights and two bars: a standard 45-pound and a lighter 25-pound. The user can choose between the bench press, incline press and seated shoulder press at the same station, Wilson said.

"The best thing is that there are more benches available," said soph-

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