

# Freedom March celebrates community and equality

By Amanda Talbot

Community members commemorated the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. with a march on Sadie Thomas Memorial Park to Kemp Elementary School.

More than 500 attended the 19th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom March on Monday morning, hosted by the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Brazos Valley Area Alumnae Chapter.

Danny Ray Perkins Jr., construction science senior, participated in the march for the first time. He said he hopes even more people will participate next year for the common goal of equality.

"Not just African Americans — you know, whites, blacks, Hispanics, Asians — because Dr. Martin Luther King fought for the equality for all of us, not just black people," Perkins said. "So I really would love to see more people come out and more people walk for a common goal and that's equality for all."

Perkins said he was attracted by the community aspect of the march, as people from across Bryan-College Station attended.

"I really enjoyed actually



Allison Bradshaw — THE BATTALION

The 19th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom March drew more than 500 people to Downtown Bryan on Monday.

the walking part where we were walking down Martin Luther King Street — just the sense of community," Perkins said. "It was an awesome experience for me. I really enjoyed that the most — just interacting with people in the community and whatnot all toward a common goal."

Megan Henderson, biomedical engineer and Spanish junior, is the treasurer of the Omicron Omega Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She said the march is meant to emphasize similarities rather than differences.

"We have a lot more in common than the differences we all focus on and I think that was one of the messages Dr. King spoke on," Hen-

erson said. "And that's what our alumnae chapter is trying to bring back with its march they host every year."

Reuben May, speaker at the march and sociology professor, said he encouraged the audience to "upgrade the dream" and "think like a boss."

"We need you to be better people to make a better place for all of us," May said.

May said the opportunities people have today should be recognized and honored.

"How important it is to respect all the sacrifices of people like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.," May said. "Lots of people have died for the opportunity for us to take advantage of."

## GAS PRICES CONTINUED

growth and steadily impede economic growth.

"In Texas, you'll see a decrease in employment in the producing regions as well as the construction areas," Hallermann said. "Oil rigs are shutting down and the Texas-Louisiana gulf coast is suffering."

Texas is not the only region that may suffer. Hallermann said many oil-producing countries accustomed to high oil prices, such as Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, will see a greater strain on economies and national budgets.

"Venezuela is experiencing more unrest and political strife because of this," Hallermann said. "Russia's economy is vastly dependent upon oil and their currency has just reached a record low."

Ray Mentzer, lecturer at the Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center with an expertise in oil and gas production, said many oil and gas companies have made significant

decisions to keep up with the rapid decline of oil prices.

"[Oil and gas companies] are cutting back on their capital expenditures and projects while some have announced layoffs," Mentzer said. "One can expect an impact on hiring by many companies in this industry."

Mentzer said many graduates go on to work for oil and gas companies and ongoing research through the university is funded by the industry.

Petroleum engineering professor Ruud Weijermars said he does not expect the current trend of decreasing gas prices to last long.

"It is very hard to continue producing oil at such low costs," Weijermars said. "This is a very exceptional trend. By this summer, we will be back to the normal oil costs."

Mentzer said the oil price per barrel will work its way up again in six months.

"The cyclical nature of crude prices is not new to the energy industry," Mentzer said. "It remains a continued challenge for managing the long-term business."

## MEDICAID CONTINUED

loss of billions of dollars.

"Opting out of Medicaid expansion would mean that Texas will lose out on an estimated \$100 billion in federal funding to cover Medicaid expansion over the next 10 years," Dar said. "In addition, an estimated 1.2 to 2 million uninsured individuals who could have otherwise obtained coverage will remain uninsured."

There will be other repercussions as well, Dar said. Hospitals will continue to foot the bill for an estimated \$5.5 billion in annual uncompensated costs, and Texas will remain on the list of states with the highest percentage of uninsured residents.

Lori Taylor, associate professor at the Bush School, director of the Robert A. Mosbacher Institute for Trade, Economics and Public Policy and co-author of "The Takeaway," said another problem with Texas opting out is Texas taxes won't go toward helping Texans.

"One of the problems you run into is that

there are federal programs out there that will at least temporarily fund an expansion," Taylor said. "And if Texas chooses not to expand, then ... that results in our tax revenues being redistributed to other states. So there are downside risks to Texas to holding the line and not expanding the income eligibility for Medicaid, which is that our tax revenue gets redirected to other states."

With states like Utah and Arizona accepting Medicaid expansion under special alternative plans, Morrisey said many are hoping Abbott might do the same since he has said he is open to a block grant.

Laura Dague, assistant professor at the Bush School, said the reason states like Texas might be drawn to block grants is they tend to have more flexibility.

"States tend to be in favor of block grants because they would give them more flexibility, but again, you know, the federal government controls the broad credentials of the program and it's unlikely they would just give a state the blank check, so it's hard to say without knowing exactly how that would be implemented," Dague said.

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