

MEMBER  
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**To The Editor & You**

**RMC Employees extend a special invitation**

The Rice Medical Center Employee Volunteers would like to invite you to a fun filled day at our First Annual Resale Extravaganza Arts & Crafts Sale on Saturday, Aug. 22 to be held at the Eagle Lake Community Center from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

More than 30 booths have been reserved for this event and will offer a wide variety of arts and crafts to be on display.

Other activities will consist of food booths, a plant and cake walk, a dice game, basketball shoot, ring toss, grab bags, sucker board, fish pond, face painting, clowns and much more.

Some of you have already donated items for the Employee Volunteer Resale Corner of Bargains and for the Silent Auction. We thank you for your support of our organization.

If you wish to contribute, you still have time!

Examples of items you may donate are: quilts, throw pillows, crockit items, costume jewelry, art wall paintings, gems, leather made items, wicker made items, wood crafts, stuffed animals, toys, books, what-knots, knick-knacks, exercise equipment, tools, clothes, homemade canned items, homemade cakes, candy, bread, cupcakes or anything creative you can make or donate.

Please call Jody or Roxanne at 409-234-5571 to arrange your donation drop off. The deadline is Aug. 21 at 12 noon.

Our objective is to improve the quality of care to our patients, and make our hospital a better facility in which to work. Proceeds from the event will be used toward the purchase of items needed to complete our current project that is underway to renovate a patient room into a pediatric room that is sure to provide a more pleasant and comfortable stay for our young patients.

We will forever be grateful for your support.

Respectfully yours,  
RMC Employee Volunteers

**Question(s) on City truck ordinance...**

Editor:

The City Council has passed an ordinance to keep loaded trucks off of city streets.

Are truckers supposed to spend their money here, but not be seen? Truckers play a big part in keeping progress going in Eagle Lake.

Most of these trucks are registered in Colorado County. They pay city taxes, school taxes, county taxes and taxes to the Hospital District.

To stop them from parking loaded, which enables them to get an extra load each day, is taking revenue from them. This can result in an economic impact on our city and county.

Laws should be made to benefit all citizens, whatever their occupation. I strongly urge the City Council to re-consider this truck ordinance, and urge all truckers to express their opinion to the City Council.

A trucker's wife  
(Name withheld by request)

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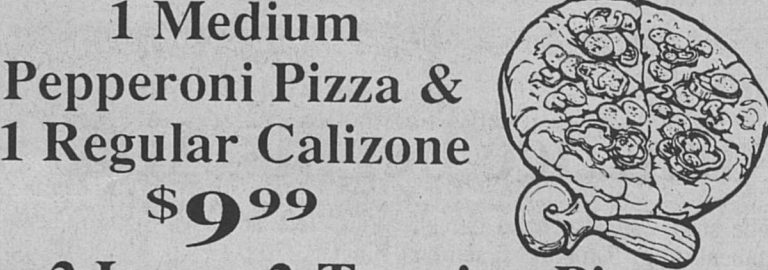
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**Gov. Bush, Morales finally agree**

Gov. George W. Bush and Attorney General Dan Morales have agreed to let arbitrators decide how much private lawyers will get in the state's \$15.3 billion settlement with tobacco companies.

After months of contentiousness, Bush and Morales settled with each other on July 16, enabling the state to collect the first \$350 million of the

largest civil settlement in U.S. history.

Bush, who started the fight over lawyer fees in Jan., said he was happy with the agreement. "I have consistently asked that the attorney fee issue be separated from the rest of the settlement so the award to Texas can become final, and I am pleased that this has now happened," he was quoted by the *Austin American-Statesman*.

A federal arbitration panel, which will convene in Nov., will decide how much cigarette makers must now pay attorneys hired by Morales to represent Texas in the lawsuit.

Morales hired six private lawyers and agreed to pay them 15% of any money won by the state in its lawsuit. Fifteen percent of the \$15.3 billion award totals about \$2.3 billion.

Bush and seven legislators complained that the lawyers were going to get too much.

**State Capitol Highlights**

By Ed Sterling  
Texas Press Association

Among the terms of the settlement are requirements that:

- Some of the money to reimburse the state be returned to Washington to cover tobacco-related health-care costs paid in Texas by the federal government.
- Tobacco companies remove billboards and reduce advertisement aimed at children.

**Scholarship Increases Proposed**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board members are telling lawmakers early they want the state Legislature to triple the budget for scholarships to about \$500 million.

Too many students and parents are being priced out of the market, they say.

"We're looking at a real crisis of access by everyone - not just minorities, but the middle class," said Board member Joe Krier of San Antonio.

"If [lawmakers] don't address this in a big, big way...we believe they'll be looking at a dramatically declining number of people in public higher education," he said.

Annual tuition and fees at state colleges and universities have risen dramatically in the last five years, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported. At the University of Texas, those costs are up 78% and will average \$3,004 for undergraduates in the coming school year.

Sen. Bill Radliff, R-Mount Pleasant, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said there is a lot of interest in boosting scholarship funds, as the days tick away to the Jan. opening of the 1999 Legislature.

**Other Capital Highlights**

- If stock markets don't crash and tax revenues continue to grow at 10%, the state budget surplus for the next biennium will be nearly \$6.3 billion, Texas Comptroller John Sharp predicted recently. In 2000-01 budget period, state lawmakers should have that amount to spend or return to taxpayers, he said.
- The Texas Department of Criminal Justice has approved more than \$13.5 million in grants to local probation departments covering 109 counties with drug abuse treatment programs (See Highlights, Page 5)

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