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No Details On Capitol Security Changes

Security concerns ballooned on Jan. 21, after a man fired pistol shots outside the south entrance of the state Capitol building.

Fausto Cardenas, the shooter, was quickly apprehended by authorities and no one was injured in the incident.

On Jan. 28, leaders met to discuss how Capitol security might be improved.

Checkpoints and surveillance cameras were mentioned, but officials with the Texas Department of Public Safety, Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, House Speaker Joe Straus and others did not give deeper details after their closed-door meeting.

Visitors, employees, lawmakers and other public officials have enjoyed minimal scrutiny in their Capitol comings and goings, but the time for more stringent measures may have come.

The Texas Department of Public Safety has a force of trained officers stationed at the Capitol and the nearby Governor's Mansion.

Still fresh in mind is the June 8, 2008, fire ruled as arson, that destroyed much of the mansion, prompting worries about security.

Tax relief program to benefit many

In 2009, more than 2.3 million Texans claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit and received more than $5.3 billion in EITC refunds, State Comptroller Susan Combs said Jan. 29.

"That's an average of $2,313 per qualifying household, bringing financial relief to families and a boost to the Texas economy," she said.

This year, more Texas families will be able to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit because of the slow economy, Combs said.

EITC refunds are based on family size and income.

Families with three or more children and less than $48,279 in earned income during 2009 may qualify for a tax credit up to $5,657.

Families with two children and an earned income less than $45,295 can claim a tax credit up to $5,028.

Families with one child earning less than $40,463 may qualify for a tax credit up to $3,043.

For a childless family earning less than $18,440, a credit up to $457 is available.

Call the Internal Revenue Service at (800) 829-1040 for details.

Unemployment rate increases

Texas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 8.3 percent in December, up from eight percent a month ago, the Texas Workforce Commission reported Jan. 21.

The U.S. seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December was ten percent.

In other labor news, on Jan. 25, Tom Pauken, Texas Workforce Commission chief, released new federal labor statistics showing Texas created more private sector jobs than any other state in the nation over the last ten years and has the lowest unemployment rate among the ten largest states in the nation.

Current Employment Statistics for December 2009 show Texas created 724,300 more net private sector jobs as compared to December 1999, the largest private sector job gain nationwide over the last decade.

Debates slated for guv candidates

Incumbent Gov. Perry, U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and Debra Medina of Wharton County, all Republican candidates for governor, have debated twice before a large broadcast audience, first on Jan. 14 and again on Jan. 29.

The second and final debate for the Republicans was staged at WFAA-TV, a Dallas station owned by Belo Corp. Reporters peppered the three candidates with questions on jobs, taxes, health care and transportation.

Now it's the Democratic candidates' turn. Former Houston Mayor Bill White and hair products millionaire Farouk Shami of Houston will square off in their own debate to be broadcast live on Feb. 8.

Former Commerce chief dies

Gov. Perry directed Texas flags to be flown at half-staff at state buildings on Jan. 27 in memory of Texas businessman Robert Mosbacher Sr., U.S. Commerce Secretary from 1989 to 1992.

Mosbacher, 82, died of pancreatic cancer on Jan. 24 at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in his hometown of Houston.

Magazine rates Texas near top

Forbes magazine, in a special "Global Debt Crisis" report published Jan. 20, ranked Texas as having one of the lowest debt burdens in the country compared to the other 49 states.

Texas ranked fourth overall behind Utah, New Hampshire and Nebraska.

Conversely, California, Connecticut, New York and Illinois ranked 47th through 50th, respectively.

Early voting to begin Feb. 16

Feb. 1 was the last day to register to vote in 2010 primary elections on Tuesday, March 2. The first day of early voting is Feb. 16 and the last day of early voting is Feb. 26.

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION
State Capital

HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 Years Ago

Feb. 27, 1986

John Wiley Price will be the keynote speaker at the 6th Annual Black Heritage Banquet at the Veteran's memorial Center...

The **MAYC** Organization is continuing its efforts to raise funds for its annual scholarship program. A dance is scheduled for Saturday at the Community Center...

Angel Sanchez became the temporary postmaster in Eagle Lake working this week with **Robert Martin**, retiring postmaster...

Texas' 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence will be celebrated Sunday in Eagle Lake. At noon, everyone is asked to ring church bells 150 times...

Floyd L. Owens, 73 of Eagle Lake passed away Feb. 21 at the Eagle Lake Community Hospital...

Geneva Mann Connor 75, passed away Feb. 18...

Johnny "Bubba" Mathis, 67, of Eagle Lake passed away Feb. 14 at the Eagle Lake Community Hospital. He gave many years of service to the county and the city as a peace officer...

The Sheridan Volunteer Fire Dept. elected new officers. They are **W.C. Gohlke**, secretary; **C.W. DeShazo**, treasurer; **Benny Machac**, assistant chief; **David Fuller**, assistant chief; **George Kazmir, Sr.**, chief; and **Birton Shaw**, president...

Deanne and Marcus Purtle of Eagle Lake are the proud parents of their first child, a son, born Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, at Gulf Coast Medical Center in Wharton. The baby was named **Jerry Nolen Purtle.** The new mother is the former **Deanne Van Nort** of Eagle Lake...

Darrell Stancik was the 7th place winner in the Lone Star Beef calf scramble held recently in San Antonio...

Beta Sigma Phi Sweethearts for 1986-87 were named recently at the annual Western Dance. **Glenda Blair** was named sweetheart of Xi Pi Psi and **Sheila Mathis** was named sweetheart of Alpha Delta Phi.

Feb. 25, 1960

Mrs. Raymond Lee Kohleffel has become a local representative for the Singer Sewing Machine Company...

Earl Rodgers and **Tom Waddell** were back this week from a fishing trip to La Pesca, Mexico. They reported a fine trip and nice catch of 4 to 500 pounds of fish, including one 32-pound red fish...

Another landmark in the community is disappearing. The ling tin warehouse at the rear of the Meitzen Magnolia Station on McCarty St. is being dismantled by the Willis Brothers who purchased the building from Helmer Seaholm...

Pete Canaris, of the Canaris Bros. Nursery is in College Station attending a short course on "Nursery and Landscaping"...

The Rev. and Mrs. Billy T. McDaniels are very happy over the arrival of a daughter born in Laughlin Hospital. The baby has been named **Beverly Susan.** The McDaniels have another daughter, **Lois Ruth**, age 4...

Susan Braden, daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. Earl L. Braden**, was complimented by her mother with a party on the occasion of her 7th birthday...

Mrs. Melvin Hayden announced this week that she plans to open a children's wearing apparel shop in Eagle Lake during the month of Aug. The location will be the former office of the gas company, next to Luna Drug Store in downtown Eagle Lake...

Joe E. Koudelka and **Leon J. Spanihel**, members of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Council of the Knights of Columbus, Eagle Lake, were among 65 candidates who were exemplified fourth degree Knights of Columbus in ceremonies in Rosenberg...

David O. Konesheck, Jr., son of **Mr. and Mrs. D.O. Konesheck** of Eagle Lake, enlisted in the U.S. Regular Army on Feb. 12 for three years...

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Stiles were complimented by **Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stephens** at a party Feb. 19 at the Stephens home...

Funeral services were held for **Michael D. Labay**, 76, of Nada on Feb. 17...

Terry Lynn Kohleffel, daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. A.W. Kohleffel**, was complimented by her mother on Feb. 11 on the occasion of her 4th birthday...

Funeral services were held for **L.O. (Skeet) Payne**, a long time resident of the Eagle Lake community.

County Courthouse

Continued from page 1

In the previous five rounds of the program, the State of Texas has allocated $207 million and counties have provided local matches of more than $130 million to fully restore more than 40 of the state's historic county courthouses.

The results of the highly successful partnership have been the creation of more than 7,750 jobs and more than $17 million generated in local taxes.

The THC's Courthouse Preservation Program's accomplishments have generated national and international attention, with honors from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Association for Preservation Technology, and the Texas Society of Architects.

In 2008, the program was recognized with a Presidential Award from the White House.

The innovative program has also partnered with the Texas Land Title Association for the past three years to offer a series of stewardship workshops that provide training to ensure the restored structures are maintained, preserved and do not fall back into disrepair.

"With string support from the Texas Legislature and the Texas Land Title Association we remain committed to restoring all of the historic county courthouses, while also ensuring they do not become vulnerable again," said the THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe.

"These structures are symbols of pride and democracy and need to be nurtured to guarantee they continue to safeguard the real stories of Texas for future generations."

Many of the state's more than 230 historic courthouses are in disrepair due to insufficient funding for building care and maintenance.

The estimated remaining monetary need to restore the 125 courthouses that have submitted approved master plans is approximately $214 in state funds.

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