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APRIL 1977

**BRISCOE SIGNS OPTIONAL LODGING TAX INCREASE —** Gov. **Briscoe** ended speculation as to whether a bill increasing hotel-motel occupancy tax from 3 per cent to 4 per cent was against his "no new tax" policy by signing S.B. 333 into law March 24. Effective Aug. 29, the revenue will be earmarked for convention and tourist promotion in those cities raising the levy. Only 88 Texas cities have the tax, and only 64 levy the current maximum of 3 per cent. Noting that the bill didn't conflict with his policies, **Briscoe** said, "It gives the cities a broader authority in the areas of local self-government..."

**ARTS & CRAFTS EVENTS —** The calendar released by the Texas Arts and Crafts Foundation in Kerrville is a valuable aid to a multitude of Texans. For 1977, the first edition carries more than 150 such events spread across the state -- and more than 140 occur after April 1, so it's worth writing for. Send an addressed, stamped envelope to Mrs. Audie Hamilton, Director, Texas Arts and Crafts Foundation, P.O. Box 2527, Kerrville 78028.

**THE DAYS DWINDLE —** In a little more than three weeks AAA and DHT travel counselors from over the state will meet for the 22nd Texas Travel Counselors Conference in Kerrville at the Inn of the Hills. In addition to seeing the attractions of the Texas Hill Country, the counselors will hear excellent speakers: **John de Lorenzi**, AAA official; **Frank Woodward** of Woodward Ranch; *Sand Dollar* Editor **Judy Veach**; Institute of Texan Cultures Executive Director **Jack Maquire** and the Institute's **Rocky Stallings**, and **James Harwell** of the Texas Industrial Commission. The counselors will also have a joint meeting with Discover Texas Association members and will attend their Travel Fair. DTA members will also be having their annual meeting at the Inn of the Hills. *The importance of the travel counselors can be seen in the number of visitors to and within Texas that they assist: four million!*

**TEXAS EVENTS —** You should have 932 happening in Texas in your office by now. The *Texas Calendar of Events* was mailed in late March to all addressees. A DHT Travel and Information Division release was mailed a little earlier to whet event-goers enthusiasm and to tell them where they could get calendars. If you haven't received your copy, please write us.

**TOURIST INTEREST IN CORPUS CHRISTI BOOMS —** **BOB CONWELL** said interest in Corpus Christi as a vacation and convention spot is greater than ever. The city's Area Convention and Tourist Bureau received a record 1,100 letters asking for information on tourist facilities in the area -- especially Padre Island. The large number of inquiries followed articles in the *Family Circle*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Detroit News* and *Chicago Tribune*. Hotel-motel occupancy taxes in the last quarter of 1976 was \$11,000 greater than in the 1975 period in the Sparkling City by the Sea.

**"TEXAS" —** In quotes, "TEXAS" means a musical romance of Panhandle history -- seen against the backdrop of Palo Duro Canyon from June 15 through August 20. The "Fragments" column in the *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe* told of the report received by "TEXAS" officials from the Pan Am Visitors Center in London. Since Oct. 30, 1976, Pan Am said requests about the production numbered 301. The visitors center said 79 of the requests came from Germany, 50 from the United Kingdom, 42 from Belgium, 40 from Sweden, 29 from Italy, the rest from various countries including Iran and Turkey. Pan Am also reported that they had received 1,046 requests starting in 1975. "Fragments" added, "No two ways about it -- exposure is important." **PAUL GREEN**, author of "TEXAS," told Texas Panhandle Heritage Foundation members how he wants to use the canyon in a new way. Describing the new light-and-sound show to be presented in the amphitheater when "TEXAS" is not being performed, **GREEN** said, "You will hear rain...the animals. Then you will see man appear, one after another...Charlie Goodnight says at the end that 'This is all made for me.' We too, like Goodnight, only pass this way."

**IN-STATE TOURIST PROSPECTS ARRIVE IN NUMBER —** One segment of the population was the subject of a study by the *Army Times*: military retirees. *Their finding showed that the ex-military people picked their retirement homes almost the same as yearly vacationers -- at least in the top choices.* California led in having the most retirees receiving Department of Defense retiree checks followed by Florida, Texas, Virginia and Georgia. And most of the retirees are prospects for extended in-state travel.

**TOURISM'S TEN COMMANDMENTS —** "As the new tourism season approached, the *Arlington Citizen-Journal* repeated the "Ten Commandments for the Care and Handling of Visitors to Texas." And added that it would be a good idea if all Texans knew and followed them: **THOU SHALT NOT** frown or scowl at visitors, for a traveler is your bread and butter. **THOU SHALT** ask pleasantly if you can be of service to visitors. **THOU SHALT** make yourself a storehouse of information for travelers and cheerfully share your knowledge with them. **THOU SHALT** answer questions seventy times seven with a smile. **THOU SHALT** keep your sunny side up, even though wearied and troubled. **THOU SHALT** remember the State Motto of Texas is Friendship -- and show it. **THOU SHALT** be neat and clean, for cleanliness is the mark of politeness to others. **THOU SHALT** cause children to have a happy vacation, for their memories shall profit you in the future. **THOU SHALT** encourage travelers to **STAY AND SEE TEXAS** for thereby will you and the entire state benefit. **THOU SHALT** send visitors on their way with smiles on their faces and yours. *To which, all Texas tourism people say, "Amen."*

**TRAVEL UP —** U.S. Travel Data Center figures for 1976 show travel receipts to be 10 per cent higher than in 1975, travel volume 6 per cent greater, and foreign travel to the U.S. up 12 per cent. The 10 per cent growth in travel receipts is significant because travel costs grew more slowly in 1976 than in 1975. Travel-related businesses showed an employment growth of 4 per cent in 1976.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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**EAST AND WEST TEXAS BROCHURES RELEASED** — The East Texas and West Texas Chambers of Commerce have released their 1977 guides on the highlights of their respective areas. The Fourth Annual WTCC "Wonderful West Texas" Fun and Adventure Map tells of 69 points of interest in the 132-county West Texas area. More than 50,000 14th Annual East Texas Vacation Guides will be distributed. The 54-page guide includes advertisements of more than 100 cities, lakes and other attractions plus detailed lists of hosts and maps. Commenting on Texas' \$5-billion tourist industry, East Texas CofC **EXECUTIVE VP AND GENERAL MANAGER ALF JERNIGAN** said, "East Texas wants visitors who spend money in our communities...and who often return to live, work and retire."

**MEXICO TO MAKE TRAVELING SAFER** — AAA worked with Mexico **President Jose Lopez Portillo** and gained his agreement for a program to improve travel conditions for American tourists. The agreement, announced after **Lopez Portillo** met with **AAA President J.B. Creal**, agreed to (1) establish a top office to offer a complete tourist aid system, (2) install a local and long distance telephone hotline with bilingual help for tourists with problems, (3) develop a national standard for police in the arrests and detention of tourists, (4) set stiff penalties for bribes, (5) allow citizen band radios, (6) establish training programs for customs officials to eliminate harassment and eliminate inconvenience and (7) provide AAA direct access to high Mexican officials to help resolve serious tourist problems. **Lopez Portillo** also approved establishment of attorneys for the defense of "the tourist as a consumer" in major cities and at the Mexico-U.S. border towns.

**CALIFORNIA COUPLE LIKE TEXAS' TREATMENT** — A Santa Elena, Calif., couple stopped in Corpus Christi on their swing around the U.S. They were with others in their party at a seafood restaurant when the hostess mistakenly seated a man at the table they were supposed to have. Finally seated, they received a round of drinks from the man who had been seated ahead of them. And when the couple went to leave, they found the dinner check for the entire table had already been paid by the same man. Then, as they arrived at the border, they discovered they had left all their credit cards and identification at a Corpus Christi food store. Contacting the manager, they found that he had already placed two calls to California trying to locate them. He kept their valuables for them until they returned from Mexico and accepted their thanks - - but refused to accept a reward, or even payment for the long distance calls. The Santa Elenans "think Texas is beautiful and Corpus Christi is the best."

**BIRDERS AND TRAVEL** — A U.S. Forest Service survey gives the economic impact of bird-watchers as \$500,000 a year, not including money spent on field guides, birdseed, feeders, binoculars and other equipment. And please note: Three-fourths of all the bird species known in the U.S. (except Hawaii) are found in Texas.

**AROUND THE BUREAUS** — We noted in February that Texas' salubrious climate may have caused one visitor to quit using crutches. The truth came out after the Rockport Pilot picked up the item. A neighbor called it to the attention of **MR. AND MRS. DONALD F. EAUT**, Wilton Junction, Iowa, who were staying at a Rockport mobile home court. **MRS. EAUT** wrote TIB Supervisor **BILL NAIVAR** that they had left the crutches when her husband forgot them while in the bureau. He was getting used to a new prosthesis, and, after the crutches were missed, decided they had been left 100 miles back at another stop. She said it would be too expensive to mail them, so Bill has written asking if she has a special charity to which she would like them to be donated. And hearts were sad at the Orange TIB on a Monday in late March as Susie failed to fall out for roll call. The eight-year TIB-veteran died in kitten-birth over the weekend. Widely known as a champion "snaker," Susie's previous litters found homes all over the U.S. and one was taken along by a traveler heading for Singapore. **PEGGY WILLIAMS** was pleased when a mother showing her children Texas history in the Capitol paused and confided that she was a native of California but had recently moved to San Antonio. And added, "I've lived in the wrong state all my life. I just love Texas."

**BOX SCORE** — Visitors to Texas came in increasing numbers to DHT bureaus in March - - almost 10 per cent more than the number arriving in the 1976 month. Beginning this month, we'll add "year to date" figures to the box score. Please note that 1977's first quarter shows a 3.5 per cent increase over the 1976 period.

| Bureau      | Visitors | Variation* | Visitors*** | Variation** | Bureau               | Visitors                              | Variation* | Visitors*** | Variation** |         |
|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| Amarillo    | 10,317   | + 17.7%    | 25,059      | + 13.7%     | Laredo               | 11,634                                | + 12.1%    | 30,408      | - 0.9%      |         |
| Anthony     | 28,647   | + 11.0%    | 78,330      | + 6.4%      | Orange               | 27,342                                | + 1.4%     | 75,669      | - 8.9%      |         |
| Capitol     | 21,144   | + 75.6%    | 56,220      | + 73.4%     | Texarkana            | 17,688                                | - 9.9%     | 46,920      | - 18.5%     |         |
| Denison     | 8,898    | + 5.2%     | 25,389      | + 7.9%      | Waskom               | 19,569                                | + 9.3%     | 50,094      | + 6.0%      |         |
| Gainesville | 13,524   | + 10.8%    | 39,246      | + 1.5%      | Wichita Falls        | 12,018                                | + 4.1%     | 31,779      | + 2.2%      |         |
| Langtry     | 8,943    | - 8.8%     | 22,014      | - 11.6%     | <b>Bureau Totals</b> | 179,724                               | + 9.9%     | 481,128     | + 3.5%      |         |
|             |          |            |             |             |                      | Austin Office (mail, phone, walk-ins) | 42,449     | + 37.3%     | 74,039      | + 19.4% |

\* Compared to 1976 month    \*\*\* 1977 Total  
\*\* Compared to 1976