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Austin American-Statesman

50 CENTS **S PUBLISHED SINCE 1871 FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 1997

New rates approved for trash collection

Most expected to pay more as council passes sliding scale

By Ben Wear

American-Statesman Staff

During a brief four last spring over the city's trash sticker program, Austin residents said they wanted equity, a fee scale that would make people pay for only as much as they throw away. What most will be getting along with the equity is a hefty rate increase.

The Austin City Council voted unanimously Thursday to approve a sliding scale for trash collection fees for smaller trash cans, more for larger ones — that will increase rates overall by 16.1 percent. Most customers will pay 21 percent more and some people — those with the largest 60-gallon cans — will pay 44 percent more. The new rates take effect Sept. 1.

About 80 percent of the city's 18,000 residential customers have 60-gallon cans currently. To encourage people to use smaller cans and recycle, the council decided that people who trade down to a smaller trash bin will not be charged the \$12 exchange fee.

City solid waste director Billie Rhodes said that he doesn't expect another rate increase for at least two years and that his department will consider possible rate cuts each year.

Under the new sliding scale, customers with 60-gallon cans will pay \$1.75 a month, plus the 6.25 percent sales tax. Those with 40-gallon cans will pay \$1.50 a month plus tax and those with 20-gallon cans will pay \$1.25 a month plus tax. Currently, everyone, regardless of the size of their city-issued bin, pays \$1.25 a month plus tax.

Rhodes, asked about the double-digit increases that will accompany the variable rate schedule last



Israel mourns victims, threatens raids

Crying family members mourn in Jerusalem on Thursday about the deaths of Saeed Masha, who was among the 15 killed in Wednesday's bombing at a market, Israel has threatened military raids into Palestinian territory if stronger actions are not taken against militants. Story, Back page.

3 men held in bomb plot in New York

Informant leads police to uncover pipe bombs and plans to attack subway station

By Dan Bauer

American-Statesman Staff

NEW YORK — Two men with Jordanian passports and a third from Kenya were arrested Thursday in a Brooklyn apartment where police officers found components of one or more pipe bombs — evidence of what the authorities say was a terrorist plot to detonate bombs in a busy subway station and on a commuter bus.

Two of the suspects were shot after a team of New York City police officers, acting on a tip from an

other man who lived with two of the men, burst into the apartment an hour before dawn. Police officials said the men were shot when it appeared that they were trying to reach one of the explosive devices to set it off.

Federal law enforcement officials said the police had recovered a 3-inch pipe packed with gunpowder and nails, and a device in which four pipes had been wrapped together and equipped with toggle-switch detonators. At least three high-ranking investigators said that the lack of a timer or a remote-control detonator on the device strongly suggested that it was intended for a suicide attack.

Moyr Rudolph Gindman said the bombs may have been intended for

Austin businesses plan for UPS strike

By Ken Tyson

American-Statesman Staff

As strike negotiations continued early today between United Parcel Services and the Teamsters union, Austin businesses were taking steps to reduce potential disruption for their customers.

Negotiations for UPS and the Teamsters continued to meet past a deadline of 11 p.m. Thursday, Austin. Teamsters spokesman said after the deadline that strike plans were not on hold temporarily, while UPS took out newspaper ads today telling customers to expect service interruptions.

UPS clients in Central Texas — ranging from a computer giant to a golf-club manufacturer to small retailers — began to line up other delivery options this week as the strike appeared more likely.

Golfsmith, a \$17 million manufacturer of golf clubs and golf-club components, had used UPS to send 2,700 to 3,000 packages a day from its North Austin office.

By Thursday, Golfsmith had switched to other parcel delivery services.

UPS is a significant supplier of our shipping service — a good 40 percent of our traffic normally," said Curt Young, director of operations for Golfsmith. "We couldn't

100 people show up to speak about Austin's camping ban

By Dana G. Herrera

American-Statesman Staff

A controversial city law that bans camping in public places drew about a hundred people before the Austin City Council on Thursday night.

Supporters of the ban, wearing fluorescent green stickers urging the City Council to "Keep the Environment Ordinance" said it has cleaned up parks and downtown areas of homeless people and the trash they leave behind.

Others carrying signs and hanging a banner that said "House the Homeless" argued that the ban would force them to live in their back yard and their neighbors don't want them in their back yards.

The law passed in January 1996 by the City Council, in back before the council became one of its original supporters is leading the charge to have it repealed.

Council Member Gus Garcia said the ban hasn't done anything to solve the problems of the city's homeless.

"When we passed the ordinance it was understood that the city was going to move toward solving the problem," Garcia said.

Assistant Police Chief Michael McDonald said Thursday that help has been provided from the U.S. attorney, Texas attorney general and the Travis County district attorney's office.

"We wanted to do a review of the ordinance," McDonald said. "We don't want to create any false expectations," he said. "We do



A small group of people who support a repeal of the camping ban walk to the City Council Chambers for the public hearing Thursday night.

Austin gets improved state scores on schools

By Joan Brink

American-Statesman Staff

Austin schools got better grades from the state this year.

School officials announced Thursday that 1997 ratings for district campuses showed significant improvement.

Eleven schools picked themselves off the low-performing list and 15 schools — three more than last year — achieved recognized or exemplary ratings.

Since state tests occur come out in May, Austin school officials had been predicting that the district would have to school rated low-performing by the state. But their crystal ball failed them: On Thursday, they learned one school — Sims Elementary School — didn't trade that out.

Still, with the inventory of low-performing schools down dramatically from last year, Superintendent Jim Fox could emphasize the positive in Thursday's announcement of the ratings.

Fox said the district hopes that

Yogurt shop murders to get new investigation

Outside agencies to help re-examine 1991 case in which four teens were killed

By Jim Phillips

American-Statesman Staff

Austin police are starting a new investigation of one of the most infamous crimes in the city's history: the 1991 slayings of four teenage girls in a North Austin yogurt shop.

With the help of investigators and lawyers from the Texas attorney general's office and assistance from federal agencies and local prosecutors, police are presenting a new and thorough re-examination of the thousands of leads devel-



From left: Amy Ayers, Eliza Thomas, Jennifer and Sarah Harrison.

Assistant Police Chief Michael McDonald said Thursday that help has been provided from the U.S. attorney, Texas attorney general and the Travis County district attorney's office.

"We wanted to do a review of the ordinance," McDonald said. "We don't want to create any false expectations," he said. "We do

think it's our responsibility on something as tragic as this to look at what we've done so far and see if we can do anything different."

Three Austin officers — a sergeant and two detectives — will review all the evidence and chase leads that continue to come in on the killings.

The attorney general's office will contribute three or four investigators and two lawyers to the effort, spokesman Ben Dink said.

Asked about the unusual nature of the task force, McDonald said, "A case like the yogurt shop is not the norm."

Amy Ayers, Eliza Thomas and Jennifer and Sarah Harrison were found shot to death in the back room of the burning shop on the

Table with 2 columns: Item, Price. Includes items like Best Deal, Comics, Classifieds, Dear Abby, Health, Editorial, Inside Line, Ladies, Scoreboard, Signs, TV Listings, and a barcode.