

# Local news

## Program offered in disaster planning

By LAURI COX GIFFORD

North Texas State University launched a degree program in emergency management and planning in September expecting it to attract about five students. Enrollment, however, was quadruple that estimate, and now a master's degree in the field is being planned.

Response is not coming only from students. The school has received inquiries about the degree from state and city governments, private corporations, utility companies and local, state and national agencies.

NTSU is the only school in the nation offering the degree. Hyder said it is a pilot program in Texas, so no other Texas school can offer the degree for four years.

The first students to receive the new bachelor's degree will graduate in December 1984, Hyder said.

NTSU is developing a brochure about the degree, Hyder said, to be sent to people who have called "from one coast to the other" about it.

Four new courses are being developed for the degree and will be offered

beginning next fall. They are: Theories, Techniques and Practices of Emergency Planning-Operation; Hazard Mitigation; Economics of Emergency Planning; and Response of Local, State and Federal Agencies to Elderly Disaster Victims.

"The principal source off our information about course development comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We're also getting information from our state emergency management people, who have been extraordinarily cooperative," said Dr. William Luker, dean of the School of Community Services. The Department of Public Safety directs emergency management in Texas, he said.

Emergency management and planning majors also will take courses in political science, business administration, sociology, rehabilitation studies and psychology.

NTSU also will teach the students to work with groups such as amateur (ham) radio operators, the Red Cross and the National Guard, Luker said.

Hyder said field trips to disaster sites

and internships in agencies involved in disasters also are being considered.

"Our reasonable expectation is that our students will, as a general policy, be taken on-site to disasters — constrained, of course, by safety and other efficiency considerations," Luker said. "Obviously, we won't jeopardize the lives of our students. We want them to have a real sense of, for example, the total breakdown of services associated with disaster — the police, fire department, food, water, power and everything."

Because of the breakdown in utility services in a disaster, "utilities are extraordinarily interested in this," Luker said.

The management of a nuclear facility has called Luker about the degree progra. "They're very interested in doing everything they can to assure the community that the facility is safe," he said. "But they're also interested in a program like ours as it relates to the training of people who could help them make it safe."

(Lauri Cox Gifford is a student at NTSU.)