

# HOUSTON HERALD

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## GAMO USA To Locate Here

### Largest Airgun Maker in Europe To Distribute from Houston

Houston has a new industrial partner this week. Gamco, which is the largest airgun manufacturer in Europe with a presence in more than 50 countries across the world.

The company announced this week it was locating in the former Brown Shoe Co. building on South Sam Houston Blvd. The firm has deep roots, dating to the late 1800s when the parent company manufactured a variety of lead products. Sixty years ago, it started to specialize in high quality airgun pellets for the European market. Later, Industrias El Gamco was formed and

began making high quality performance airguns.

Gamco USA, created in 1995, and its BSA unit, specializing in sports and recreational optics, launched in 1996.

Rolf Wilken, vice president of operations for Gamco, said last week that the company would initially use the building for distribution of its products — about two-thirds of the firm's business is in optics, with the balance in sports and recreational optics. Wilken was in Houston last week laying the groundwork for the firm's arrival.

The ability to expand the building

gradual spike in employment numbers, he said. Employment packets are available at the Houston Area Chamber of Commerce office. Persons can also return job applications there.

The firm has an option to purchase it from the Houston Industrial Development Authority. The federal government has given its blessing to the proceeds to be used for construction of another industry building in Houston, according to the City of Houston.

including Wal-Mart, Sports Authority, Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's.

Houston Industrial Development Authority, owner of the building, leased it to the firm for five years with an option to purchase the 66,000 square foot structure.

Evans Sports, also in Houston, was instrumental in the lead to land the company here. Gamco's products can be found in several mass merchandiser's stores.



Gamco USA has leased this 66,000 square foot building on South Sam Houston Blvd. in Houston. The firm has an option to purchase it from the Houston Industrial Development Authority. The federal government has given its blessing to the proceeds to be used for construction of another industry building in Houston, according to the City of Houston.

## U.S. Agency OKs Sale Proceeds for New Building

The U.S. Department of Commerce has signed off on a deal that would allow the city's industrial development authority to sell a South Sam Houston Blvd. building and reinvest the funds in a new structure. The decision last week signals that the group can sell the former Brown Shoe Co. building and reinvest the proceeds in a new structure at the Houston Industrial Park on Industrial Drive. That's good news for the city, said Ron Reed, industrial development director, who made the announcement Monday. A regional U.S. Federal Economic Development Administration office in Denver signed off on the deal earlier and word was received last week that a Washington, D.C., office concurred.

Gamco USA last week said it was interested in acquiring the 66,000 square foot structure and has an option to do so before the end of the year. Reed said the federal agency's approval means that if the sale of the building is completed, the federal funds to purchase the building several years ago and assist the Durham Co. can be reinvested in the community and not returned to the government. Houston received about \$1 million that was used to purchase the South Sam Houston Blvd. building from the Brown Group and assist the Durham Co. with building costs and equipment needs.

## Applications Available

Persons interested in applying for a job at Gamco USA can pick up a packet from the Houston Area Chamber of Commerce office on South Sam Houston Blvd. Applications also should be returned there.

## WAR CLOCK TICKS

A blinding desert sandstorm Wednesday enveloped American and British armies as they struggled to wheel into final position on the Iraqi frontier to await the order to wage a war intended to topple Saddam Hussein's government in Baghdad.

Anxious relatives in Texas County were watching to see if their loved ones would be called into battle as early as Wednesday night. Across 5,000 square miles of Kuwaiti desert, the wind whipped up a huge yellow nimbus of dust and sand that raked the convoys of tanks, troop transports and huddled infantry after a night in which artillery fire echoed through the border region near southern Iraq.

Military officials said a series of naval clashes around the Iraqi port of Basra during the night were the result of an attempt by Iraqi military forces to send a small armada of wooden fishing vessels into the Persian Gulf, where American commanders feared they could be used in suicide strikes on allied war-ships assembled there.

As the hours counted down on President Bush's 48-hour ultimatum for Mr. Hussein to go into exile or face war, United States Army and Marine divisions rolled into new formations and there was an expectation that an air and ground combat operations could commence promptly after the deadline expired 7 p.m. Wednesday — if not sooner.

## One Injured When Knife Branished

Houston police arrested a local man following an attack on a business parking lot.

Michael H. Hinton, 52, of Houston, was charged with first-degree assault and armed criminal action following the incident Saturday.

Police said Jeff Waknight, 18, of 401 Oak Hill Dr. sustained cuts to the forearm in the attack. Waknight was treated and released from the emergency room with several staples in each arm. The incident apparently boiled over following a discussion concerning the treatment of a woman, officers said.

Hinton posted \$35,000 bond.

In other matters, police charged Treva Hayes, 8661 Hayes Drive, who reported a lost or stolen registration plate from her vehicle on March 13-14.

Investigated vandalism to a Coca-Cola Bottling Co. machine at the former Rugged Exposure location at West Highway 17 and South Sam Houston Blvd.

Adjusted into a closed session to discuss litigation. No votes were taken.

## Two Injured In Wreck

Two persons were injured Monday afternoon in a head-on collision one mile south of Evening Shade on Highway AW, said the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

Tpt. Mary Woreman said a vehicle driven by Paul E. Weber, 30 of Raytown, crossed the centerline and struck a vehicle operated by Lori L. Peterson, 41 of (Please turn to Page A-6)

## City Receives Finance Report; Hears Turning Lane Work Near

Members of the Houston City Council received a year-end review of finances and an update on several projects under way in the city during a meeting on Monday.

The Springfield accounting firm of Davis, Lynn and Morris presented the results of its annual year-end audit that was recently completed. The city will continue to work on compiling its fixed assets as part of changes in accounting standards.

The report shows that the city's enterprise funds — a compilation of various cash accounts and other assets — stood at about \$6.3 million. That's an increase of about \$400,000 from the previous year. A report will be published in the Herald.

The city's electrical systems profit and sales tax monies continue to finance the bulk of city government's operation. A bright spot was that water and sewer service funds nearly broke even when not considering interest earned and monies from a quarter-cent sales tax.

In other matters, members heard from representatives of the Houston Area Chamber of Commerce.

Attention, Texas County back-to-school shoppers: For three days only this August, you could get a too-free bargain on everything from clothes to computers to pencils.

Legislation passed last Thursday by the Missouri Senate would lift most state and local sales taxes on the purchase of traditional school items during the second weekend in August.

The Senate's 26-5 vote sent the bill to the House. Supporters say the so-called "sales-tax holiday" could spur the

economy — giving a break to Missourians and encouraging residents from neighboring states to do their shopping in border cities such as St. Louis and Kansas City.

The tax holiday would run Aug. 8-10 this year. It would expire after the August 2004 back-to-school shopping season.

"We are going to have a lot of pain this year in the budget, and this is something nice we can do for Missourians that has worked well in the nine other states that have done it," said Senate President Pro Tem Peter

Heard that final specifications are nearly completed for a turning lane and road work at West Highway 17 and Industrial Drive. The city's engineering firm, Hood Risk, also will assist with road design.

Heard that bids will be opened March 27 for demolition office housing units on the city.

Learned that University Extension has a lease that would complete a deal between the city and the

matrix, who outlined plans for the annual Emmet Kelly Clown Festival, which is set for May 3-4. A tri-city yard sale at Cahoon, Houston and Licking is planned in conjunction with this year's attraction.

Received an update on the activities of the city's economic development director, Ron Reed. The city will proceed to work with the Houston Development Co. toward grading work at the city's industrial park, where one site is available. Reed also reported that a community assessment report that highlights all facets of the city is nearly completed. It is needed as the city applies for various grants and state assistance.

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