

TEXAS

PRESS CLIPPING SERVICE

1-800-474-1111

8064

Austin American-
Statesman

Austin, TX

Circ 194926

JUN 13 2003

Conservative think tank moving closer to Capitol

By Gary Sussewein

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

In a sign that times have changed, one of the state's most influential conservative think tanks is moving from San Antonio to Austin and setting up shop a stone's throw from the Capitol.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation will settle into its new Brazos Street offices — and will be even more accessible to the state's Republican power structure — by the end of June.

"When you're looking at state issues, it's good to be where state government is," spokesman Michael Quinn Sullivan said.

The nonprofit group researches and promotes "limited government, free enterprise, private property rights, and individual liberty and responsibility," according to its literature.

The group has had a sympathetic ear in Austin the past few

years. It opened a local office four years ago and sponsored a conference in January that featured the state's top elected Republicans as speakers.

The group drew some fire — and quickly admitted it was wrong — when it used the names of Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and House Speaker Tom Craddick in a letter soliciting five- and six-figure donations from lobbyists to help pay for the conference.

The incident underscored the close ties between the Republican leadership and the foundation's founder, San Antonio doctor James Leininger, a major political contributor.

"They are a player because of the shifting emphasis on limited government. It's probably a good move to come to Austin," said political consultant Tony Proffitt. "Like they say in the real estate business: location, location, location."