Legislature Acts Quickly On Drunken Driver Bills

BATON ROUGE (AP) — The first major issue of the 1982 session was handled last week as the House approved and sent to the Senate a bill designed to dampen the habits of some drinking drivers.

Bruce Bolin of Minden, just prior to the vote.

The least a violator can expect on first offense is two days of community service work such as picking up litter or cleanup work in a hospital, plus participation in substance abuse and driver education programs.

And that's in lieu of a jail sentence and the judge has discretion.

With more than 600 traffic deaths blamed on alcohol in 1981, Gov. Dave Treen began a push to get tough on drunks.

The House also sent to the Senate a bill to give the New Orleans Dock Board authority to enter into a 90-year lease with a private corporation, which will build a massive mall over the Poydras Street Wharf for the 1984 World's Fair.

The bill at first was killed because legislators feared they had another Superdome on their hands — a facility that might get into financial trouble with the state forced to bail it out.

But, Gov. Dave Treen intervened and the House changed its mind.

There were some bills of perhaps lesser importance to the public in general such as one approved by the Senate to increase the penalty for promoters of dogfighting or owners who fight their dogs in pits. The penalty would be a $1,000 fine or six months in jail or both.

"It was a great day for dog lovers," said Sen. Ted Hickey.

The Senate also approved its second proposed constitutional amendment of the session. This one would set the start of the 85-day legislative session instead of the third day in April, it would open on the Monday in March.