

Ledbetter named analyst

Hill vows to cut spending

United Press International
AUSTIN — Attorney General John Hill, saying Texans want to be assured state money is not being wasted, announced Tuesday he has hired unsuccessful treasurer candidate Harry Ledbetter as a budget analyst for his campaign staff.

Hill, the Democratic nominee for governor, said Ledbetter's position is part of a major program to search out waste in state agency spending in preparation for presentation of a proposed budget to the 1979 Legislature if Hill is elected in November.

"What the people want to be assured of is that we're making the best use of our dollars and we're not

wasting any dollars," Hill told a news conference. "My campaign travels made it clear to me that the people consider inflation their number one concern, and they believe government is a major contributor to that problem. I want to help Texas set an example for the nation in assuring that tax dollars are spent carefully and effectively."

"No governor of Texas ever began preparing to this extent, this far in advance of taking office, to arm himself to become a full partner with the Legislature in the budget writing process," Hill said.

Hill, who faces Republican Bill Clements in the general election,

said he hopes his work on budget matters will build credibility for his proposals in the Legislature.

"I do not intend to submit a budget and then sit idly by," Hill said. "I intend to pursue it, and I believe it will be based on a solid foundation. I will not hesitate to go to the public on my budget recommendations if necessary."

Clements has proposed to eliminate 25,000 state jobs if he is elected governor, but Hill said he has no such goal in his budget studies. He said a budget analysis could result in a reduction of personnel for some agencies, and increases in personnel for others.



Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.
Attorney General John Hill talks with Brazos Valley supporters at a local press conference and reception held before the Democratic primary.

Sketchy voter turnout expected for election

United Press International
The Railroad Commission race between John Poerner and Jerry Sadler apparently has failed to stir voter interest in most parts of Texas, but half a dozen heated congressional races may produce heavy turnouts in isolated areas for Saturday's runoff election.

The battle between Poerner and Sadler is the only statewide contest on the ballot in the Democratic primary. There are no statewide Republican runoffs, and only one GOP congressional race — a contest between George Bush of Midland and former Odessa Mayor Jim Reese for the party's nomination for the congressional seat being vacated by the retirement of Rep. George Mahon of Lubbock.

The featured congressional race on the Democratic ballot will be the bid of state Rep. Joe Wyatt of Victoria to oust veteran Rep. John Young of Corpus Christi.

In other runoffs on the Democratic ballot, Ron Godbey and Phil Gramm are competing for the Democratic nomination to the place being vacated by retirement of Rep. Olin Teague; Lane Denton of Waco and Marvin Leath of Marlin are battling to succeed retiring Rep. W.R. Poage, A.L. Rhodes of Abilene and Charles Stenholm of Stamford are competing for the party nomination in the district now represented by Rep. Omar Burleson, and state Reps. Anthony Hall and Mickey Leland are seeking the seat being vacated by Rep. Barbara Jordan.

Heavy rainfall saves some farmers, dooms others

United Press International
CANYON, Texas — To some farmers, the heavy rains and hail that pounded the parched Panhandle flatlands were devastating. To others, it was a "million dollar rain" that drenched drought-stricken crops.

"I believe this is the worst I've ever seen it at one time," said Bill Hicks, who has farmed 40 years in Umbarger, Tex. "I had wheat and I had the sugar beets in, and they (the storms) just wiped them all out."

The usually arid region received more than five inches of rain Friday and Saturday, producing a flash flood that swept down the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River, demolishing homes and stranding campers in Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

Hicks, 64, estimated he lost nearly \$50,000 in the violent weather, which dumped hail 6 inches deep on his farm.

"We've had hail loss before, but not this bad. We just don't have anything left. I'm not going to get up and leave. I'm going to stay here and farm. It's one of those things that once in your life you've got to put up with," he said.

The worst farm damage was suffered in an 8-mile area west of town that the storm hovered over, said County Agent Bob Robinson. He said some growers may reduce the loss of wheat, corn and sugar beet crops by planting grain sorghum. Predictions of wheat yield in the county were already down because of lack of moisture.

"If you're talking about Randall County as a whole, the benefits (of the rain) will certainly outweigh the losses. It would have been great if it came in a slower manner where the soil could have absorbed it. This certainly isn't all (the moisture) we're going to need. We'll still be paying the price for the drought like

conditions we've experienced in the last two years," said Robinson.

"As a county as a whole, it was a million-dollar rain. In particular areas, it was a devastating rain," he said.

Robert O'Donald, 47, who farms 320 acres six and a half miles west of town, lost his wheat crop.

"They say that in this area, one extreme of the climate follows another," he said. "We've had extreme drought. I guess we can expect the other extreme. We were just unlucky."

Livestock losses were expected to run high, but Robinson said at least half the animals thought dead are being found alive.

"Most of them were just lost," he said. "We expect to recover most of the livestock that were missing. Livestock are instinctive beings. They know for the most part to get out of trouble if there's a way they can get out," he said.

But the 10 head of cattle belonging to Hicks were found dead. He had an autopsy performed.

"The cattle didn't drown," he said. "The only thing I can figure out is that they were all in one bunch and a bolt of lightning hit them."

School districts not easing tax burden on taxpayers

United Press International
AUSTIN — Texas schools spent nearly twice as much as the Legislature provided in increased state aid this year and forced local property owners to pay the difference, the Texas Research League reported Tuesday.

The Research League's annual report on school expenditures indicates only one in seven districts used the additional state aid to reduce tax burdens on local property owners — one of legislators' main goals in appropriating nearly \$1 billion in additional state funds for education.

School tax bills went up for nearly 90 percent of the taxable property in the state.

"Despite a letter from the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives to each school board president urging reductions in local school districts from local property taxes, the total levy was increased by \$148 million," the privately-funded research group reported. "Only 158 of the 1,080 districts actually reduced

their levies in any amount."

And the districts which did lower taxes did not necessarily reduce levies as much as legislators contemplated, the report indicates.

Tax levies were increased in 916 districts; tax levies did not change in a handful of districts.

"During the current 1977-78 school year, the Texas Legislature increased state aid to local schools by \$446 million, or 28.4 percent," the league reported. "The 1,080 local school districts responded by increasing school budgets by \$836 million, of which \$470 million went for higher current operating expenses."

The Research League said the additional aid only slightly slowed the increased taxes property owners are required to pay to support schools.

"School property taxes were increased by \$148 million (during 1977-78) or 9.1 percent as compared to the \$185.6 million increase (12.9 percent) in 1976-77," the record analyzers reported.

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