Houston mayoral election low-key

United Press International HOUSTON — Boastful Houston, enduring stagnated traffic, a soaring

homicide rate, potholes, police problems and pollution, is moving toward a mayoral election that will either fix blame or prove that the inconveniences of urban sprawl can be tolerated in exchange for economic prosperity.

Good wages may make for short memories. If there isn't another multimillion-dollar flood before Tuesday, there is strong indication

Less than a week before the election, even his best-financed opponents admit McConn is well ahead in votes and contributions.

former commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization stuck in freeway traffic than city council.

McConn said his polls agree that potholes in 22 months Castillo is running second, but McConn, 52, was a two-term city Councilman Louis Macey, who councilman when he won the

7 A.M.

11 P.M.

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Session 1: Law (8 a.m.-noon)

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or at (228 MSC Nov. 10)

Session 2: Business (1 p.m.-4:30 p.m.)

Registration Fee: single session \$1.00

2nd Floor MSC

Despite Houston's inability to provide basic services in areas of mass transportation, street maintenance and police protection, and despite a federal investigation — temporarily suspended — of the money coming into and going out of City Hall, the campaign has been calm, low-key and generally clean.

that debt-bound, builderdeveloper-Mayor Jim McConn will
emerge from a field of nine candidates into a runoff for another twodates into a runoff for another two-Few of the estimated 1.7 million ers did not share their indignation at the status quo. But residents of the nation's fifth largest city simply never took up a "throw the rascals votes and contributions.
"I'm pretty consistently in second ace," said Leonell Castillo, the out" chorus at a time when jobs were plentiful, wages high and gasoline sold for less than 90 cents a gallon, if only to be burned up while

Service, who didn't quit his Washington position until late summer and then surprised his friends by announcing for McConn's job rather good job," said McConn, who says the city repaired 2.4 million

McConn, 52, was a two-term city

ICE

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raised twice as much money as Castillo but only half as much as McConn, said his polls show he is companies but was \$400,000 in debt two years ago. Now, his office says, his debt has been reduced to less than \$200,000. He rated transportation and crime as the top issues in the campaign and said his biggest accomplishments were inner city revitalization and improved minority representation at City Hall. Macey, 43, is a two-term council

member who sold his custom drapery business in 1977 and now has investments in ladies sportwear companies and boasts he "didn't

make my money at City Hall."

Castillo, 40, was a cum laude graduate at St. Mary's in San Antonio consulting the state of tonio, served in the Peace Corps, was city controller from 1972-77 and INS commissioner from 1977 until this summer.

Also challenging McConn are

firm owner; Bette Graham White, 40, a communications department instructor at Houston Baptist University; Jewell Davis Lemons, 70,

an attorney; the Rev. C. Leon Pickett, 50; Debby Leonard, 37, a refinery worker and Socialist Workers Party candidate, and Lawrence A. Sims, 33, a builder-developer and the only black in the race.

"By doing this, we create

Debbie Aughinbaugh of University Savings, which loaned the 16

percent construction money to

Playa, said, "We're helping out one of our builders."

"He's paying 16 percent on the construction loan, so it certainly would behoove him to only pay 3.125 percent," she said.

The company's interest costs are tax deductible.

had "never done anything like this

before," including allowing buyers

to obtain what will become 11.125

percent loans by meeting the lesser

qualifications required at 8 percent.

"What we hope, of course, is that the people will be doing better fi-nancially after five years," she said.

Aughinbaugh said the association

momentum, we have our inventory

moved out, and we turn our efforts to making a profit," he said.

8 percent loans offered

Home sale cuts interest

Playa Homes will sign a contract

to pay the difference, \$141.40, for

60 months. Darbonne said, "The most important thing is that this lets

a buyer qualify at the 8 percent rate. He can get more loan for his

After five years, the buyers will pay the full 11.125 and the

The monthly payment cost to Playa could exceed \$432,000, but

Playa vice president Don Barras said the cost of unsold homes could

Barras said the carrying costs on one of the homes unsold would be

about \$900 a month, including maintenance, the 16 percent inter-

est on short-term construction loans

"Basically, with the high interest that we have now and the high carry

that's on the house, our costs would

be more to let them sit for six

months than by selling them all in

mortgages are not transferrable.

be much greater

and other costs.

HOUSTON — A builder flush with unsold homes in a sluggish housing market has found what seems like sure-fire sales bait mortgage money at 8 percent interest, 3.125 percent below the going

On a first-come, first-serve basis, Playa Homes Inc. plans to sell 51 homes Saturday with special mortgages from University Savings Association, which financed development of the subdivision.

The actual mortgage rate will be 11.125 percent, but it will look and feel to the 51 homebuyers like 8 percent for the first 60 months because Playa Homes Inc. will pay the difference.

Since advertising began last Saturday, Playa salesman John Dar-bonne said, "Response has been tremendous. We've had 200 or 300 people come by.

The company promises police se-curity and refreshments (hot dogs and soft drinks) for those who get in line Friday night with the idea of camping out to wait for Saturday's

The houses, many of which are not finished, are three-and fourbedroom, two-bathroom brick homes averaging about \$65,000

each, Darbonne said.
Using the \$65,000 average cost figure and assuming a 5 percent down payment, Darbonne said the monthly payment on an 11/ percent 30-year mortgage would be \$594.65. An 8 percent 30-year mortgage would cost \$453.25 a month.

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Groucho and pal

David Godfrey reacts to applause that put him in first pla in the pumpkin carving contest sponsored by the MSCA and Crafts Committee. The contest was held at Rudo Fountain at noon Wednesday. Godfrey received a \$25 gi certificate to TJs. Second place winner was Kristi Krams John Rock won third place.

Same method used in Fort Worth last year

Texas extortion cases have similariti

United Press International ARLINGTON — FBI agents on

the trail of a gun-wielding extortionist say they see similarities between the ransom of a bank president's family and a year-old case in nearby Fort Worth.

Police in Arlington said Thursday there were no suspects in the extor-tion of Arlington Bank of Commerce board chairman H.R. Poynter, bank president Danny Smith and Smith's family. The gunman left the hostages unharmed as he fled the Smith's Arlington home Wednesday with an undisclosed amount of

money.

The FBI, called in to help state and local authorities in the case be-

cause of an apparent violation of the Hobbs Act governing interference in interstate commerce, said the abduction-extortion resembled an

unsolved Fort Worth case. "There was a similar case about a year ago in Fort Worth," said FBI agent U.H. Specht. "An employee of the First National Bank of Fort Worth on Nov. 22, 1978, was taken hostage by an individual with a very similar description, held all night and when the bank opened in the morning, the robber made the person get the money. It's the same M.O. (method of operation)"

The ordeal began Tuesday when "an unidentified black male" barged into the Smith home through a back

Smith, 31, his wife Linda and their children — ages 10 and 5 — were held through the night, offi-

The extortionist ordered Smith to telephone Poynter Wednesday morning to ask that Poynter come to the Smith home. When Poynter arrived, he also was held hostage while Smith went to the bank and drew an undisclosed sum for ran-Smith and the gunman then

drove in Smith's car to Fort Worth.

Smith was ordered into the to a. C(the vehicle, which was abar by the masked man a shor Smith escaped from the o

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notified authorities, officials "Everything's fine," Smith after his escape, although hes still felt "shaky." The bank ducted business as usual thro the remainder of the day.

Poynter said he had feared by life during the ordeal and dany know masked man had said he "desty 440 votes

the money" but did not elabor t sent him t

Local woman named a of Verno to state advisory pan ough the year his five h

appointment of 11 Texans to serve an advisory panel to the House Select Committee on State Employee Productivity.

The committee, chaired by Rep. Mary Jane Bode, D-Austin, has been directed to study the laws and policies of the state and its agencies that affect the training, education, hiring, classification, performance and promotion of state employees to determine where changes are war-

United Press International

AUSTIN — House Speaker Bill

Kay Sanders of Bryan was miney as using to the advisory panel. Sanders half-pints of administrator of Greenleaf ric Center.

> The other members of the Fracy and v are Curtis W. Dickson of A Ruben Bonilla Jr. of Corpus Ch James A. Caley of Austin, John

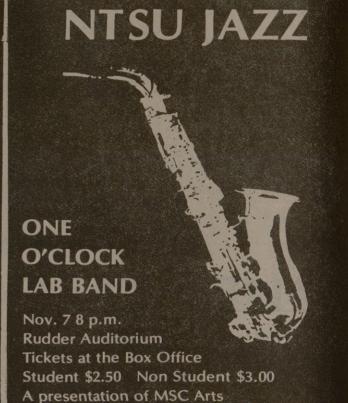
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