

Local



Jim Hightower, Democratic candidate for Texas agricultural commissioner, holds up a loaf of bread to illustrate his claim that high food prices are gouging farmers and consumers.

Inflationary prices will be the key issue of his campaign, he said.

Staff photo by Greg Gammon

Hightower declares candidacy for office

By NANCY FLOECK

Battalion Staff

Farmers and consumers are being gouged by high food prices and something must be done, Jim Hightower said Monday as he announced his candidacy for Texas agriculture commissioner.

"This gouging of food prices is the number one issue that the next agriculture commissioner has got to address," he said.

Hightower, a former editor of the Texas Observer, is seeking the Democratic nomination for the office. He announced his candidacy here at the Ramada Inn before flying to Austin to announce it at the capitol. The candidate said he wanted to make the first announcement in the Brazos Valley, since it is the "heart of agriculture" in Texas.

Using a bag of groceries to illustrate his "gouging" point, Hightower told a group of about 20 community residents that farmers get 25 cents from an 83-cent box of rice, 4 cents from a \$1.57-box of cereal, 8 cents from a \$1.09-bag of Fritos and 6 cents from a 61-cent can of tomato sauce.

"Supermarket prices are up; farm prices are down," he said. "That's a curious kind of arithmetic. Somebody's making a killing."

Hightower said 80,000 small farmers have gone broke in the past few years, and that Reagan Brown, incumbent candidate for the office and Hightower's opponent in the May primary, hasn't used the resources and power of his office to prevent it.

Reagan is a "do-nothing" official who has ducked responsibility and not promoted legislation of his own to aid consumers and farmers, he said. And the agriculture commissioner's office has provided him plenty of opportunities, he added.

"It's been the most embarrassing performance of a state official in the past four years," Hightower said. "And you've got to go a long way to achieve that in Austin."

However, Hightower said, he would put "common sense" back in Texas' food economy if elected agriculture commissioner. Texas residents are suffering because of food, land and water issues—issues that the Texas agriculture commission office has the resources to deal with, he said.

This isn't Hightower's first bid for public office. He ran for railroad commissioner in 1980, and captured 49 percent of the primary vote. He ran on a populist platform, fighting for environmental controls and against big business and industry.

Target 2000 group to meet

By DENISE RICHTER

Battalion Staff

The organizational meeting of the Target 2000 Project, a long-range study to determine where the Texas A&M University System's academic and service branch priorities will lie by the year 2000, is scheduled for Thursday at 1 p.m. in 701 Rudder.

The project, scheduled for completion and presentation to the Board of Regents in December 1982, will determine "what we wish to be in the year 2000," said George P. Mitchell, general chairman of the Target 2000 Project.

The Target 2000 Project Committee, a 230-member advisory group, will carry out the work of the project.

This committee will be divided into three task forces: one dealing with the four academic institutions, one dealing with the four agricultural agencies and services and one dealing with the three engineering agencies and services.

Each task force will be divided into four work groups. Each work group will deal with one of the following areas — programs, clientele, resources or organization and management — of the institutions or agencies that fall under the scope of the task force.

Dr. Robert E. Shutes, project chief director, said committee members were chosen by the Board of Regents from nominations submitted by the system's chief executive officers, by former students and by the regents themselves. More than 1,000 nominations were received, he said.

Members were chosen so each agency and institution is represented," Shutes said. "We tried to strike a balance between former students and non-former students. We have about 55 percent to 60 percent Aggies on our committee."

No faculty member or students serve on the Target 2000 Project Committee, but "careful efforts will be made to obtain input from both groups," he said.

"Some faculty members will serve as resource team facilitators — they will provide information and serve as a pipeline to bring faculty and staff recommendations to the committee," Shutes said.

"The students of each institution will be represented on the academic task force by the vice president for student services (of each institution)," he said. "We expect those people to bring students to some of the meetings." Dr. John J. Koldus, vice president for student services, will represent the Texas A&M student body on this committee.

Shutes said the academic task force will survey students on certain issues facing the group. "The interest of the academic task force members in student opinion is high," he said.

Speaking at the Target 2000 executive committee meeting Sept. 25, System Chancellor Dr. Frank W. R. Hubert said issues facing

the committee include to preserve the Permanent University Fund.

The PUF is an endowment fund shared by the University of Texas System and the Texas A&M System.

The PUF plays a vital role in the support of "this mega-buck conglomerate of higher education in the state of Texas," Hubert said. "We hope that growing out of this study will be a network of support and assistance that could be used in the protection of the PUF."

The Target 2000 Project will encompass the 11 major parts of the Texas A&M System: Texas A&M University, Prairie View A&M University, Tarleton State University and Texas A&M University at Galveston.

The seven service branches included under the study are: The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station (TAES), the Texas Agricultural Extension Service

(TAEX), the Texas Forest Service (TFS), the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL), the Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES), the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI).

The Target 2000 Project is the first long-range planning study since 1962. The Century Council was established in 1960 to develop plans for the University to be applied through 1976.

"The Century Council assisted the University in making changes in policy and organization and set the groundwork for A&M to become the University it is today," Hubert said.

Issues addressed by the Century Council included changing the name of the A&M College of Texas to Texas A&M University, the admission of women to the then all-male institution and making membership in the Corps of Cadets voluntary.

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