

Farmers may get training for new jobs

State to request funds to start new program

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Some Texas farmers and ranchers, driven off the land by the depressed agricultural industry, may be entering job retraining programs this fall, state officials said Tuesday.

The Texas Department of Agriculture hopes a share of the \$7.5 million in federal funds Texas should get this fall for dislocated workers can be used for training, career counseling and job placement for farmers.

Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower said: "Texas continues to lose more than 100 family farmers and ranchers a week."

At the department's request, the state's Job Training Coordinating Council has agreed that retraining services are needed by the displaced farmers and ranchers, Hightower said.

He said seven states — Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, North Dakota and South Dakota — already offer such assistance to farmers.

Andy Welch, a spokesman for the agriculture department, said TDA officials will make a formal proposal to the Job Training Coordinating Council in August for extending job training services to displaced farmers and ranchers. A request for funding also will be made at that time, he said.

Hightower said he hoped some of the state's federal job training money then will be made available so programs for farmers and ranchers could begin on Oct. 1.

Job training, counseling and placement would be overseen by the Texas Department of Community Affairs and provided by local agencies statewide. The agencies currently provide similar services for other displaced and unemployed workers.

Hightower noted that the nation's farmers have continued to face difficulties while other sectors of the economy have improved.

"Call them bankruptcies, foreclosures, voluntary liquidations or early retirements," Hightower said. "The truth is, it's still costing farmers more than they receive to produce every major commodity grown in Texas — cotton, grain sorghum, wheat, corn or rice."

Hightower said farmers deserve the chance to get training for another type of work since current government farm policies keep the prices paid to farmers artificially low.

Cisneros: Democrats must change

Associated Press

TOKYO — San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros said Monday the Democratic Party has been "caught off base" by changes in U.S. society and must begin to address public issues this changing U.S. scene has brought to the fore.

Cisneros, a leading contender to become Walter Mondale's running mate on the Democratic ticket last year, also said he had no plans to run for national office in 1988 or for some time.

The Texas mayor arrived in Tokyo Sunday for an eight-day visit to encourage Japanese businessmen to invest in his region. His 14-member delegation also will travel to South Korea and Taiwan.

At a press conference, Cisneros said his party had been left behind by the recent technological changes, massive movements in population, entrepreneurial explosion and trend toward decentralization.

He said the party has remained tied to the declining industrial base in the United States amid the trauma of social change. But the party can regain its former strength, Cisneros said, by expanding the Republican Party concept of supply side economics to include more investment in cities, education and research.

"I think the Democratic Party is yet the best vehicle to address the equity issues, the long-term issues," he said.

But he cautioned that the party may have serious problems if it cannot win the national office in 1988. He added that the current top Republican contenders for the presidency — Vice President George Bush, New York Congressman Jack Kemp, Kansas Sen. Robert Dole and former Tennessee Sen. Howard Baker — are now all stronger than Democratic hopefuls.

Cisneros' list of hopefuls includes the Democrats' standard-bearer Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt, New York Sen. Bill Bradley, Delaware Sen. Joseph Biden, Colorado Sen. Gary Hart, Texas Gov. Mark White and New York Gov. Mario Cuomo.

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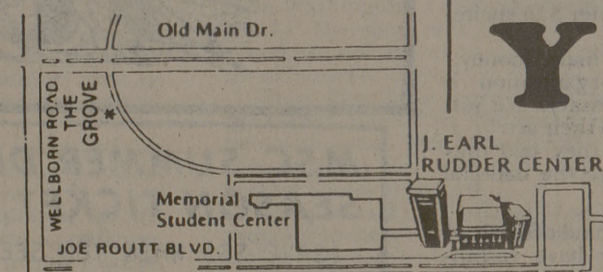
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