

## State and Local

# 'Aggie bar' may provide sweet deal for University

By Mary-Lynne Rice  
Staff Writer

For loyal Aggies, other Texas A&M fans, or simply the hungry, there is a new A&M souvenir of sorts — the "Official Aggie Bar," a chocolate, caramel and peanut confection. Michigan-based University Foods, which is officially licensed by A&M's administrative services office to use distinguishing A&M marks, produces the candy bars in maroon and white wrappers decorated with the A&M logo.

University Foods also produces "official" candy bars for more than 200 other universities across the nation, including the University of Texas and the University of Houston.

The candy bars, sold so far through Circle K stores, have sold well in Houston, said Barbara Anderson, a Circle K regional office manager.

"It's a clever marketing program," she said.

But the bars have yet to reach College Station, said Barry Nelson, A&M's administrative services manager. Local Circle K stores expect shipments soon, said Tom Brown, manager of the Circle K on Highway 21.

The only money A&M has received from the licensing agreement is \$100 in royalties, Nelson said.

*"... If they think they can benefit the school, we're all for it."*

*Barry Nelson, A&M administrative services manager*

"As for sales to date," Nelson said, "there have been none."

But Douglas Darling, University Foods' vice president for marketing, said the university candy bars have sold successfully in other areas of the country and he expects the 3-for-99-cent Aggie Bar to gain popularity.

As sales are made, Darling said, A&M will receive royalties totaling 7 percent of the sales. That revenue will be used to support student organizations, Nelson said.

A&M's prominence among universities was a strong factor in deciding to produce the Aggie Bar, Nelson said.

"A&M being one of the leading schools in the Southwest Conference, they (University Foods) saw it as a marketable item," he said. "And if they think they can make the sales and in turn benefit the school, we're all for it."

He said A&M had no reason to deny University Foods use of A&M

marks, but the administrative services office does make sure the marks are used properly.

"Basically that's what we look at," he said.

University Foods originated the concept of producing university candy bars in 1985, testing response at two state universities.

"We're a small company, and we started basically in our own back yard," Darling said.

And although the company now serves hundreds of universities, Darling said it company initially had poor marketing techniques.

"They had no idea of timing," he said. Some contracts were arranged in September, and the candy bars often would not reach the universities until well into the football season, the biggest selling time for the candy bars.

He said 70 percent to 75 percent of potential sales were lost by missing several football games.

Although the Aggie Bar was not available for most of the A&M football season, it arrived in Houston in time for the Cotton Bowl. Anderson reported brisk sales of the Aggie Bars at Houston Circle K stores.

"We didn't order many — with a new product, we usually don't flood the market," Anderson said. "But obviously they are selling really well, so we will probably make more orders."

## Court OKs San Antonio sign ban

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — San Antonio officials may continue a ban on new portable advertising signs in the city, the Supreme Court ruled Monday.

The court, without comment, rejected arguments that the city ordinance violates the free-speech rights of those who supply and rent the signs.

The city adopted the ban in 1986 but it permits portable signs up be-

fore Sept. 22, 1985 to remain in place.

The ordinance says the signs are "not consonant with aesthetic values of the community" and "present unique safety problems."

A federal judge in 1986 issued a preliminary injunction barring the city from enforcing the ban. But last July the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals threw out the injunction.

The appeals court noted testi-

mony that there are many non-portable signs in San Antonio that are eyesores. But the appeals court said city officials should be accorded deference in deciding what to do about visual blight.

It said the ban was not too sweeping, adding, "There are ample methods of communication that are available as alternatives to portable signs."

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