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Astronauts push for new test-firing

SPACE CENTER, Houston (AP) — Senior astronauts are worried about flaws found in a solid rocket booster tested last month and are pushing for an additional mandatory full-scale test-firing before the space shuttle is cleared to fly again.

A spokesman for Morton Thiokol Inc., manufacturer of the rocket engines, confirmed Monday that "discussions are under way" about adding another mandatory test-firing.

Daniel Brandenstein, chief of the astronaut office at the Johnson Space Center, said in an interview Friday that he and others in his office feel that the Dec. 23 full-scale rocket firing, during which part of the rocket nozzle assembly came

apart, shows that more testing is needed to assure safety.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration planned four full-scale rocket firings to verify a new design for the solid-fueled booster. One test, called DM8, was conducted in August and was successful. It was followed by the Dec. 23 test, called DM9, in which a new nozzle boot ring design was used. Engineers found after the test that the boot ring had come apart.

Navy Rear Adm. Richard H. Truly, a former astronaut who heads the shuttle program, announced earlier this month that the new boot ring that failed on DM9 would be replaced with the boot ring

that worked on DM8. He said it then would be tested twice more to certify it for flight.

But Brandenstein said he does not think that is good enough.

"The DM9 outer boot ring test was not a success, so that should not count as one of our 'get ready to fly' tests on the nozzle," he said. "My feeling is that we ought to redo the nozzle part of that" and test it three full times again before certifying it.

The shuttle program manager announced earlier this month that the failure in the December rocket test will require a delay in resumption of space flights until late July or August. Flights had been scheduled to resume in June.

Party reverses vote on petition decision

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Republican Party reversed course Monday and decided to allow all six GOP presidential candidates to keep any delegates who won in the March 8 primary.

Party Chairman George Strake announced the decision, saying it had become impossible to verify signatures submitted on petitions by the various campaigns since news reports surfaced 11 days ago detailing alleged forgeries on some petitions.

"All six candidates are men of integrity," Strake said. "It would be grossly unfair to the candidates themselves and especially to the voters of Texas to let the misguided actions of a few individuals deny the

voters' right to make their judgments."

In another political development Monday, Railroad Commission candidate Jerry Langdon said Texas' slide to No. 2 among oil-producing states shows the need for a stronger commission voice in Washington.

Langdon, a Democrat who is challenging incumbent Commissioner Jim Nugent, said he doesn't think the commission has done enough to speak up for oil and gas producers with federal regulators.

"It's real important for a good, balanced national energy policy to have input from the production side," Langdon said. "Right now, we've got a national energy policy —

if you can call it that — which is completely consumption-driven.

"The Railroad Commission has the responsibility to go in and make those kinds of production interests known."

In a news conference at Republican Party headquarters, Strake acknowledged that the party had been embarrassed by the reports that petitions submitted by four candidates included signatures of dead people, Democrats and voters who said they supported someone else.

The party originally said any candidate who failed to submit the 5,000 valid signatures required would be barred from receiving delegates.



Photo by Jay Janner

Reading between the lines

Students waited in long lines at the Texas A&M Bookstore on Monday. Many opted to wait until the first day of the semester to buy and sell textbooks.

A&M begins search for new president

By Karen Kroesche
Staff Writer

A nationwide search will begin soon to locate a new president for Texas A&M, but University officials may not have to look farther than their own backyard, Chancellor Perry Adkisson said Monday.

"We'll look for the best-qualified person wherever that may be," Adkisson said. "But in the past 10 to 15 years we've recruited some really fine people to A&M, so I think we have some who will be considered."

Adkisson wouldn't speculate on exactly who will be considered, but said there are many qualified people already at A&M.

"We have a number of people in administrative positions and deans who would make fine University presidents," he said.

Adkisson said the search committee will leave no stone unturned in its search for the most qualified candidate, but that there should be no shortage of applicants because of A&M's growing reputation.

"We'll be looking for someone who has demonstrated abilities in administration and a person who's a proven leader and who has the highest academic credentials," he said. "Right now Texas A&M University would be a highly desirable place for a person to come."

President Frank E. Vandiver announced last week that he will leave his job by Sept. 1 to head up a new military think tank, or the Mosher Institute for Defense Studies.

The institute is expected to be



Photo by Jay Janner

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— Chancellor Perry Adkisson

approved formally at next week's meeting of the Board of Regents, and Adkisson said the search for Vandiver's replacement will probably begin formally at that point also.

"The search has not begun, but Mr. (David) Eller has asked me to draft up some recommendations on the search for the consideration of the Board at the January meeting," Adkisson said. "I would expect at the meeting that a search advisory committee will be established and the ground rules and procedures for making the search will be put in place and it will start."

Adkisson praised Vandiver for his role in gaining quality faculty, research dollars and a national reputation for A&M, and said he would like to see the University continue to grow.

"My major commitment is to quality, and I would like to see us continue to add to the quality of the faculty that we already have here," he said. "I'd like to see us get more people recognized for their achievements and elected to the national academies of science and engineering. I would like to see us advance in our research rankings nationally. I would like

to see us gain one or two national research centers, like the advanced ocean drilling project.

"And I want to see us maintain quality instruction in the classroom. I think A&M has a good reputation for quality instruction and the way our professors teach, and I'd like to see that tradition continued."

In a *Battalion* story last week, Student Body President Mason Hogan voiced concerns that A&M administrators would lose sight of the undergraduate students in their pursuit of graduate students and research funds.

Adkisson said Hogan expressed a legitimate concern but said the problem is not inevitable.

"I know that (losing sight of the undergraduate student) is always a fear, and I share his concerns," Adkisson said. "But I also believe that good research people also make good teachers and that they're not incompatible."

Adkisson said a new president inevitably will bring new ideas to the administration of A&M, but he said he doesn't anticipate any problems in the turnover process.

"Every person has his or her own vision of what they want to accomplish in life, and I would suspect that the new president would have some different visions than the old one," he said. "Our aim is to have a new president in by September, and I don't anticipate that there'll be any difficulties in the transition between Dr. Vandiver and the new president."

Adkisson said he will miss he and Vandiver's solid working relationship.

U.S. pays homage to King's 'dream' of racial harmony

(AP) — Arizona marchers called for restoring the Martin Luther King Day holiday, and Philadelphia's mayor set churchbells pealing with a tap on the Liberty Bell as Americans paid homage Monday to King's still-unrealized dream of racial harmony.

In Atlanta, Coretta Scott King and her children laid a wreath at the slain civil rights leader's tomb on the third national holiday in his honor.

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The graveside ceremony was followed by the now-traditional ecumenical service at Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King served as co-pastor.

"The disease (of racism) . . . is still among us, and it has global implications," said the church's pastor, the Rev. Joseph Roberts, before a gathering that included Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., and Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young.

The Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, urged the audience to remember the ideals that King stood for.

"The holiday honors an individual, but also a struggle," he said.

Some 5,000 marchers braved a downpour in Phoenix to rally at the state Capitol to make Martin Luther King Day a state holiday despite opposition from that state's embattled governor, Evan Mecham.

"It is time to stop having the rest of the country think of us as the site of a three-ring circus," Phoenix Mayor Terry Goddard said.

State House Minority Leader Art Hamilton, D-Phoenix, told the crowd, "There is never enough rain in Arizona to quench the fire that is in us. We will not rest until we have been successful."

Shortly after noon, Philadelphia Mayor W. Wilson Goode, the grandson of a slave, tapped the Liberty Bell with his fist to symbolically start the nation's bells ringing in King's honor.

Over 1,000 people rallying at the state Capitol in Oklahoma City heard former state Sen. E. Melvin

Porter urge a continued fight against racism.

One of the most dramatic moments in King's life was to be recalled Monday night in Selma, Ala., where a candlelight march was planned to commemorate "Bloody Sunday," the 1965 demonstration when state troopers confronted civil rights marchers.

King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968. The Nobel Peace Prize laureate's birthday was Friday.

Students at at least two New Jersey high schools that stayed open walked out of their classes in protest.

Black woman claims bank racially biased

FORT WORTH (AP) — Bank teller Clara Watson says she tried to endure racial slurs and customers saying they didn't want a black person counting their money.

But when she was passed over four times for promotion, she started a legal battle that has reached the nation's highest court and, she says, has badly damaged her health along the way.

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments Wednesday in what could prove to be a landmark civil rights case and change the way employers nationwide hire and promote employees, attorneys said.

Watson, however, only wanted a promotion to supervisor at the Fort Worth bank where she had worked for eight years when she asked attorney Art Brender in 1981 to take her case.

In the seven years since, Brender has put together a four-year statistical study he claims proves Fort Worth Bank & Trust discriminated against blacks and used subjective hiring and promotion criteria to thwart their progress.

Faculty wants role in finding new president

By Karen Kroesche
Staff Writer

Texas A&M faculty — and possibly A&M students — should be involved in the search for a new University president, Faculty Senate Speaker C. Richard Shumway said Monday.

In his opening remarks at the year's first Faculty Senate meeting, Shumway said that he has requested that the faculty be part of the replacement process, and that he has received positive response.

"Provost McDonald and I have jointly spoken with Mr. David Eller, chairman of the Board of Regents," Shumway said, "and recommended that the faculty be formally involved in the search process for a new University president."

"We've received no commitments, but a very receptive response from the administration. He has apparently received that recommendation from other sources, including the chancellor (Perry Adkisson)."

After the meeting, Shumway said he hopes the faculty participation would take the form of Senate inclusion in the nomination process. "I think it would be likely that the Faculty Senate — at least the speaker — would be asked to nominate someone — possibly," he said.

A decision regarding who will participate in the selection of a new president will probably be made at next week's Board of Regents meeting, Shumway said.