

# Underground slated to open next month

By Wes Swift  
THE BATTALION

Food Service officials overseeing the final touches to the new Underground Food Court expect it to be finished in time for a February opening.

Peggy Gideon, the food services manager who will oversee the operation of the food court, said everything is on schedule to open sometime next month.

"We're supposed to take the building over Feb. 5," Gideon said. "There's a tentative date of Feb. 13 for the soft opening and Feb. 20 for the grand opening."

Originally slated to open in Fall 1994, food services delayed the food court's opening because of unexpected structural problems that were discovered under Sbisa Dining Hall. Dr. Donald Beard, interim executive director of the food services department, said that several problems arose from the fact that Sbisa was such an old building.

"When you get into an old building, you uncover one of the age-old things old buildings run into: asbestos," Beard said. "That caused delay because of

asbestos abatement."

Beard said the food court also had to be brought up to building codes and American Disability Act requirements. The wheelchair route had to be rebuilt, along with another entrance to Hogg street and additional emergency exits, all without disturbing the grand appearance of Sbisa dining hall. A sprinkler system was added, forcing the Underground Market, which was originally planned to stay open, to close temporarily.

"We thought we could accomplish some of the demolition, like putting in the sprinkler system without closing it," Beard said. "When the construction people came in and saw that we intended to keep the market open, they said 'How can we put the sprinkler system in?'"

The food court will contain four restaurant franchises owned and operated by Food Services, as well as the Underground Market.

Whataburger, Taco Bueno and Chick-Fil-a will be included. Pizza Hut was originally included, but was replaced with Alonti Deli when problems arose over who would manage the franchise. Food services required control over management of all the franchises.

"We [Food Services] have been on this campus feeding Aggies for a hundred years. We feel we do a good job," Beard said. "We feel like we have exceptional managers."

Gideon said food service managers currently are being sent to the various franchise training schools to learn how to manage the restaurants. Each will have a limited menu recommended by the restaurants, but will have space to sell new items that the restaurants offer off-campus.

"We're going to offer about the same menu as other universities," Gideon said. Like other restaurants on campus, the food court will be manned by student employees. Beard said food services will begin advertising for applications in the next few weeks. Employees will be trained not only by food service managers, but also by training groups sent by the restaurants chains.

"We're going to hire as many student employees as we can," Gideon said. "We need a lot of them."

The restaurants will receive six to nine percent of the gross sales in return for the use of their names, Beard said. Gideon said the private franchises have

been great and have cooperated very well with the food services officials.

"You can't believe how nice they've all been," Gideon said. "It's going very smoothly."

Hours have already been set for all of the restaurants. The Alonti Deli will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. All other restaurants will be open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday.

Beard said he is ready to see the food court open.

"We are very anxious to get the food court open," Beard said. "Every person has worked beyond a n y o n e ' s imagination."



Nick Rodnicki/THE BATTALION  
Robert Milford, a worker for Britt Rice Electric works on the Underground Monday.

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## Funding: Officials differ in opinions

until the press published stories linking the University with the project," the audit said. This breakdown in controls cost the University money and media attention, causing embarrassment and ridicule.

The audit's final report commends the current management of A&M for their efforts to correct the causes of the problems.

"During our work we noted areas where the new leadership team at the System and University has taken initiatives to put into place control systems to help create an environment and cul-

ture to better allow the University to achieve its mission," the audit said.

A&M University and System were put under new management since

**"The breakdown in controls cost the University money and media attention, causing embarrassment and ridicule."**

— state audit of A&M system

the problems cited occurred, with Bowen being named president in June and Thompson being named chancellor in August.

The two largest units in the University — Finance and Administration and the Provost's Office — have new interim leaders in place.

Albert Baxter, power

plant superintendent, and Donald Thompson, assistant power plant superintendent, were placed on administrative leave, due to the audit's

poor review of the power plant's management.

Thompson said the new management is committed to doing everything in their power to correct the deficiencies that exist.

"We have already implemented many corrective actions to restore accountability," Thompson said. "Power is not in the hands of so few presently."

"The audit was a significant wake-up call, but we can say nothing to apologize for the students' and alumni's position of public humiliation because we didn't honor the public trust as we should have."

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## Gramm: Budget requires hard work

education will be important issues in this legislative session, but the only way to succeed in making changes is to cut government spending.

"For the next two years, no working American will see their taxes go up. We're not going to create a single new spending program over the next two years unless we cut another program that exists now by at least an equal amount.

"We're going to impose no new mandates on state governments, county governments or local governments and we are not going to impose new statutes or regulations on business," Gramm said.

According to Gramm, to balance the federal budget in seven years, it is necessary to cut only nine percent of what Congress is

already planning to spend. Families and small businesses across America have demonstrated that they can do that when money is tight, so he feels there is no reason the federal government should not be able to make those cuts as well.

The senator admitted that from one point of view, a balanced budget could hurt everyone because fewer federal dollars will be handed out. However, Gramm said that in the long run, big government spending costs the American tax payers more than a balanced budget.

"Government over the past 20 years has borrowed over 50 cents from every dollar saved in the American economy, and that's 50 cents that did not go to new homes, new farms, new factories—did not give new eco-

nomie growth. Now the economy is growing at a much slower rate than it did in the 1960s and 1970s," Gramm said.

Gramm also discussed making some current federal programs and responsibilities the responsibility of the state and local governments.

He said that when local governments are given more control, the costs of federal mandates are not passed on to the tax payers.

Bryan Mayor Marvin Tate agreed that federal mandates from Washington pushes up costs and those costs are in turn passed along to the tax payers.

"I'm a big believer in more local government. The local people are looking for the best distribution of the funds that are available," Tate said.

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