

## Unity made possible today's groundbreaking

**T**oday's groundbreaking ceremonies at Naval Station Ingleside of course mark the beginning of the construction phase of the Homeport project, but in a sense they also mark a conclusion: the culmination of literally years of effort by the individuals and groups who were instrumental in winning this enormously valuable prize for the Coastal Bend.

The campaign to win Homeport has come a long, long way since the days back in 1983 when local elected officials, civic leaders and business interests first began mapping the strategy they would follow in pursuing the homeport designation that the Navy proposed to confer on the Gulf Coast port that made the most attractive and compelling bid. The goal — selection as homeport for the battleship Wisconsin — seemed at times elusive, but those involved in the enterprise persevered. The result was that the Coastal Bend site in 1985 won designation as homeport not only for the Wisconsin and its support vessels, but for the aircraft carrier Lexington as well.

This outcome reflects great credit on all those who were involved in the effort to bring homeport here. U.S. Sens. Phil Gramm and Lloyd Bentsen and U.S. Reps. Solomon Ortiz and Kika de la Garza worked with single-minded energy to bring the trophy home, as did the members of the area's delegation to the Texas Legislature. On the local level, S. Loyd Neal Jr., chairman of the South Texas Homeport Task Force, and Jimmy Lyles of the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce put together a highly effective effort to sell the Navy on the merits of the Coastal Bend site. Adm. James Scott (USN-ret.) contributed his tremendously valuable expertise. Dr. Hector Garcia lent the project to his prestige. Dozens if not hundreds of others contributed in large and small ways to the effort.

In the process of doling out kudos, however, it should not be overlooked that the people of the Coastal Bend and of the state as a whole were among the most pivotal players in the entire drama. It was the people of Nueces County who voted \$25 million in bonds to help finance the Homeport project, should the Navy choose the Ingleside site. And it was the Texas Legislature which voted another \$25 million in bonds to make the state's offer to the Navy even more attractive. In financially straitened times, such acts required both vision and a certain amount of *chutzpah*.

Even now, with Naval Station Ingleside in the process of becoming a reality, the magnitude of what the community has accomplished has yet to sink in fully. That will take time. It bears remembering, too, that there is still plenty to do — area governments must assess the adequacy of everything from streets and roads to schools to sewage treatment facilities. But for today such concerns can be put on the back burner: This is a day to celebrate the concrete proof of what a determined — and united — community can do.

Tuesday, February 23, 1988,

# Group seeks to add referendum on official language to ballot

The Associated Press

AUSTIN - The head of the American Ethnic Coalition on Monday touted a non-binding referendum on the GOP primary election ballot that asks whether English should be the official language of Texas and the nation.

"Official English is a subject that we Americans had better get serious about if we intend to keep America as we know it, and as we grew up, and as we would like to transmit it on to our children and our grandchildren," Lou Zaeske told the Republican Forum of Austin.

Zaeske, of Bryan, questioned spending tax dollars on bilingual education programs, which generally are English-Spanish.

"All of us, of whatever ethnic background, are being taxed to enrich one foreign ethnic language and ethnic culture at the expense of enriching our American culture and our American language, which is

English," he said.

"Not that people shouldn't celebrate their ethnic heritage, but it ought to be done at private expense, not at public expense," Zaeske said.

Although many in the audience appeared receptive to the "official English" proposal, Juanita Tijerina received a smattering of applause when she defended bilingual education.

Bilingual education was started to help children who speak only Spanish learn English, said Tijerina, who identified herself as a member of the Travis County GOP.

"If you really must put something like this on the ballot, why don't you make it a constructive effort?" she asked, suggesting that a similar effort be made to promote literacy.

Zaeske says the American Ethnic Coalition supports literacy, but

does not think bilingual education is an efficient way to promote learning.

Establishing English as the official language of Texas and the United States "is vital to preventing the division of our country along ethnic or language lines, and the ultimate resulting fragmentation," he said.

"Here in this country, if we don't have something to unite us, we have the real seeds for ethnic squabbling ... we've got people here with brown faces, white faces, black faces, yellow faces and red faces."

The non-binding language referendum on the March 8 Republican primary ballot has no legal effect, but supporters hope it will create momentum for action by lawmakers.

## MALDEF education suit will be forum focus

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund lawsuit claiming the state discriminates in higher education funding will be discussed at a public forum tomorrow night at Corpus Christi State University.

MALDEF attorney Norma Cantu of San Antonio; Robert Bezdek, CCSU associate professor of political science; state Reps. Hugo Berlanga and Eddie Cavazos, and state Sen. Carlos Truan will address the forum, which is free and open to the public. The forum will begin at 7:30 p.m. in Room 101 of the Center for the Sciences.

The lawsuit was filed late last

year in 107th District Court in Brownsville. Discrimination in funding for higher education, particularly in South Texas and the Valley, is alleged in the lawsuit.

Defendants include the State of Texas, all state-supported four-year universities, their presidents and boards of regents.

Each panelist will speak for about 10 minutes. Questions then will be accepted from the audience.

Leo Carrillo, president of the CCSU chapter of the Texas Association of College Teachers, will be moderator. The chapter is sponsoring the forum.