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Sutter making jobs an issue in campaign

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John Ben Sutter officially began his campaign for McLennan County Judge Wednesday by emphasizing the need for bringing new industry into the county.

"My immediate priority in office will be to maintain our present industry and recruit new industry into the county," Sutter said at press conference.

"As your next county judge, my principal goal will be to lead the fight to bring jobs and industry to McLennan County. Not just for a 'Weekend in Waco,' but for a lifetime," he said.

Sutter, an administrative aide to McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell, said a major task of his campaign will be to inform voters that the position of county judge in Texas is not a judicial post.

"The county judge in Texas is the chief administrator of the county," he said. "It's time that McLennan County caught up with the rest of the state by electing a business-oriented, trained public administrator who will run the county like a business — efficiently, effectively and economically."

Sutter is seeking the Democratic nomination in the May 3 primary. Filing deadline is Feb. 3.

Prior to joining Feazell's staff, Sutter worked as press secretary and congressional aide to former U.S. Congressman W.R. (Bob) Poage of Waco and was a national sales manager for Stevens Publishing Corp.

Sutter earned a master's degree in political science with an emphasis on public administration from Baylor University in 1983.

He said Wednesday his experience as an administrator would allow him to be an effective county judge.

"You'll hear some lawyers tell you that the county judge has got to be a lawyer. That's baloney ... The job of county judge of McLennan County today demands a full-time administrator, not a lawyer who wastes taxpayers' time and money dealing with a limited field of legal matters which existing courts are perfectly able to handle," Sutter said.

Sutter said legal matters County Judge Stanley Rentz now handles could be handled more adequately by the county's two county courts-at-law.

Sutter and Waco attorney Norman Hoppenstein have announced intentions of seeking the Democratic nomination for county judge. Rentz has announced he is seeking election to the 170th State District Court bench.