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Local GOP aids Senate hopeful

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Jack Loumsa — astronaut turned politician, Texan turned Michiganian — needs \$3 million and a few snappy one-liners.

"We're going to launch the campaign and land in the senate," said Loumsa with a laugh last Tuesday during an interview at Farmington Hills' Boisford Inn, proving that he's already trying his hand at the latter commodity.

Loumsa, the steely-eyed, ramrod-straight retired Marine Corps colonel, will be referring often to his 17 years in America's space program in the months to come if he decides to act on his notion to run for the U.S. Senate as a Republican from Michigan.

Assuming he can get by East Lansing's Jim Dunn in the August primary, the 47-year-old Loumsa will face Democratic incumbent Carl Levin of Detroit in the November general election. Loumsa said he intends to announce his candidacy at the end of January "if I see the degree of support I've seen in the last six months."

If Loumsa does decide to run, he'll be coming home after a long absence — and perhaps with a tainted image — to do so.

Although Grand Rapids born and Ann Arbor reared, Loumsa hasn't seen that much of the Wolverine state since he earned a degree at the University of Michigan in the late '50s.

Logically enough, considering his occupation, he's been living near Houston with his wife Gratia, whom he met while they were students at Ann Arbor Pioneer High, and their four children, ages three through 20.

BUT SOME state Republican bigwigs, including National Committeeman Pete Secchia of Grand Rapids, figured that Loumsa, with his record of public service and his astronaut hero image, would make a strong challenger to the popular Levin.

"Jack Loumsa is a certified hero in this country," said Tom Burcham, a Detroit attorney and Loumsa's financial chairman. "Walk him into a high school and they all go crazy."

"There's no better time to be an astronaut or a marine than now."

Loumsa, who had to avoid political activities during his military career, seemed to agree with the logic.

"I feel I've accomplished what I went to Houston to do," said Loumsa, who commanded the third test flight of the Columbia Space Shuttle in March 1982 and who spent two months in space during a 1973 Sky Lab mission.

"It's time to come back. I feel there's a real opportunity to serve here."

So now Loumsa, who plans to relocate near Ann Arbor, is seeking media exposure, raising money, bouncing up on the issues — and trying to shed the

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Fred Hughes

Ex-Mayor Hughes leaving for N.J. job

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

Shock reverberated through the Farmington Hills council chambers Monday as former Mayor Fred Hughes announced his intention to resign from council in mid-January to become an assistant vice president with the newly reorganized telephone company.

Hughes' successful campaign for re-election last November to a two-year council seat made the announcement even more of a surprise for council members, who had expected a run-of-the-mill organizational meeting this week with the former mayor passing the gavel to the 1984 mayor, Charles

Williams and taking his seat among the other members.

Hughes' resignation, however, is still unofficial, according to the Farmington Hills City Clerk's office.

BUT HUGHES, who had spent much of the 1983 election campaign in New Jersey working with the telephone system break-up, said just before he made his announcement that as a 37-year veteran with the phone company, he could not pass up a promotion as assistant vice president of access charge development for the firm's Central Services

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Williams takes helm as mayor

The Farmington Hills City Council Tuesday unanimously elected former mayor pro-tem Charles Williams as mayor for 1984. Councilwoman Jan Dolan will serve as mayor pro-tem.

"I think it is going to be a real asset to have someone who is so involved in the community," Dolan said in nominating Williams, a Farmington Chamber of Commerce director.

In touting Williams' qualifications, Dolan pointed to his year as mayor pro-tem, adding, "He did very well and has the tenacity of a bulldog." A bonus, she said, is that "his high profile in the business community is a plus for us." Williams, who owns a Farmington Hills accounting firm, was first elected to the council in 1981.

WILLIAMS "HAS earned this position," said Councilwoman Joan Dudley, supporting his nomination. Dudley and Councilman Joe Alkateeb were sworn in at Monday's organizational meeting.

"I look forward to working under his leadership," Dudley also referred to Williams as an official who could serve as a "unifying person" between the council, city administration and public.

In nominating Dolan as mayor pro-tem, Councilwoman Jodi Soronen referred to the veteran council member as "the longest serving council member among us."

"I have faith in her . . . her ideas, devotion and leadership," Soronen said, just before the council unanimously elected Dolan, who has previously

served in that position as well as mayor.

SHE WAS first appointed a council member in 1975 to replace Margaret Schaeffer, who had then been elected district judge. She was most recently re-elected to a four-year term in 1981.

Williams, who at the time of his council election in 1981 indicated he eventually wanted to serve as mayor, classifies the coming year as one in which the council will have to make some big decisions about the city's needs.

Some of those needs, he said, are the Spicer property, a proposed new or expanded police facility and major drainage improvements.

With the development last year of a major capital improvement plan, council members must decide what improvements will be made and how they will be financed, Williams said.

"We've got to come up with some answers," Williams said. Council members must "narrow down on much we should fund in the capital improvement plan."

"**WE DIDN'T** funnel any money into the plan," he said, referring to last year's budget sessions and the public's successful push to prevent the City Council from raising taxes.

"The public does not want tax increases. Then, on the other hand, I think we have reached that stage that we're going to need a little." Farmington Hills taxes are lower than any other major city in Oakland County, Williams said. The city tax rate is 7.855 mills (\$7.85 per \$1,000 of assessed value).

If the necessary improvements are to be made, "it will be the major consideration on how we do fund some of these necessary things."

"The public is going to have to be brought into these things." Better communication between the City Council and residents is needed, Williams said. Council members will have to better explain the needed improvements and the need for money to help pay for the projects, he said.

"We have a lot of needs. The citizens of the community have gotten by with a very low tax rate for many, many years."

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City focuses on new look to boost downtown shops

By Steve Barnaby
editor

Shifting its emphasis from refurbishing housing to sprucing up the central business district, the Farmington City Council has accepted \$48,000 in Federal Community Development Block Grant funds.

"The community development subcommittee has developed a comprehensive program for the use of community development funds which will aid the elderly, the handicapped and provide economic development for our

downtown center," Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman told city council Tuesday evening.

The loans and grants program to continue improving housing will continue, with separate money being set aside by the county, Deadman said.

VOTING FOR acceptance of the money were council members Bayard Tupper and Roger Walker as well as Mayor Ralph Yoder. Absent from the meeting were council members Alton Bennett and William Hartsock.

In recent years, the downtown shop-

ping area at the intersection of Grand River and Farmington Road has been besieged by competition from malls in developing sections of Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield and Novi. Farmer Jack is leaving its store on Farmington south of Grand River and moving to a new center on Nine Mile.

New owners of the Downtown Farmington Center also are re-examining the kinds of stores in that center. Some stores are moving out after being unable to agree on leases renewals with



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

U.S. Senatorial candidate Jack Loumsa: "I feel I've accomplished what I went to Houston to do. Now it's time to come back."

Old vies with new in hardware

By Diane Hofsoos
staff writer

Walk into Jean's Hardware store in Farmington Hills and the first thing you see is a stack of garbage cans — galvanized and plastic.

Past the register, items are crowded onto full shelves along aisles too narrow to swing a cat in — at least not for the safety of the cat, as Mark Twain would say. The place resembles a warehouse.

"I sell from every inch of the place,"

says owner Al Jean, 51. And he's not kidding.

What doesn't fit on the shelf, goes on the floor. What doesn't fit on the floor, goes there anyway. Customers sometimes have to step over boxes, salt bags and employee coffee mugs to get what they want.

But customers don't seem to mind the delightful disorder of his mom-and-pop store that has been on 12 Mile since 1954.

ABOUT A mile away, off Orchard Lake at 13-Mile, is ACO Inc. Hardware,

one of 40 such stores in Michigan. Here a basketball player could lie down crosswise in the neat, orderly aisles without touching either side.

Every item has its place and every aisle is clearly labeled — housewares, automotive. Products come with elaborate do-it-yourself directions. The shop is airy, the displays colorful.

Jean's and ACO are examples of two very different marketing philosophies used by area hardware stores.

Other area hardware stores, such as Datsunan, Merchandise Mart and ACE Inc., fit somewhere between the styles

of the other two.

AS SHOPPER Jack Lawing put it, "Al (Jean) has everything. But it might take him a while to find it." ACO, on the other hand, might not have everything, but what they have, they know right where it is.

"I carry things I hate to even carry," says Jean, "I lose money on some of it. If I don't have it, people ask me where am I going to go? And people get mad. So I have at least two of everything."

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oral quarrel

Comments, please, on Jackson's plan

Navy Lt. Robert O. Goodman has tempt to embarrass President Ronald Reagan after a month's captivity in Syria thanks to the efforts of the

Today's Oral Quarrel question is: Rev. Jesse Jackson, a Democratic presidential candidate who traveled to Damascus and appealed to Syrian matic initiative in Syria affected the President Hafez Assad for the filler's way you feel about him as a presidential candidate?

To answer this question, call us at Jackson has called the release "a gl- 477-5498. You have until 1 p.m. Friday stop toward peace" in the Middle to respond. To see how your neighbors East. Critics, however, have termed feel about this issue, please look in the trip "a political move" and an at-

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Jean's Hardware gets the keys made, despite cramped quarters in the store on 12 Mile Road.