McGovern has not ruled out bid for nomination

By Jenny Perry
News-Press Staff Writer

Former Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern continued to refuse “until about Labor Day” to say whether he will be one of the “eight to 10” candidates from his party for the 1984 presidential nomination.

“It will be easier for me to get behind somebody else saying the right things, but I have not entirely ruled it out,” he said in a speech before the Channel City Club meeting Friday at the Sheraton.

McGovern later addressed the Channel City Women’s Forum on “Alternatives for the Future” and earlier spoke to a UCSB class on “Religion and the Impact of Vietnam.”

(While here, McGovern was the guest of John and Betty Stephens, who have a lot of financial clout in party circles and who were hosts earlier to former President Jimmy Carter and U.S. Rep. Tip O’Neill. Listed by McGovern as Democratic possibilities were Sen. Alan Cranston, his own former campaign manager Gary Hart of Colorado, Mondale, Glenn, Askel of Florida, Bumpers of Arkansas.)

McGovern limited his criticisms of President Ronald Reagan to his “telling the U.S.S.R. they are ahead of us militarily... when there isn’t a single admiral or general in the U.S. who would trade” and an economic policy that piles up deficits rather than taxes when 12 to 13 million are out of work, he said.

He argued not against defense spending but against spending for both the MX missile and the B-1 bomber, saying that alternatives such as a healthy economy, our physical resources, the health and education of the citizenry and world confidence in U.S. leadership “all have to do with our national defense.”

McGovern said the $30 billion-$100 billion the MX missile would cost should be used to resurrect the country’s deteriorating rail system, citing cost effectiveness and energy efficiency in moving heavy goods.

He said his own state, South Dakota, which needs rail transportation for its coal and timber, “has not a single foot of passenger service” and rails are in such bad shape trains must slow to 7-8 miles per hour through cities. He pointed to the vastly better rail systems of Europe, Japan “and even the Soviet Union.”

Citing the importance of U.S. railroads to victory in World War II, he said he sometimes thought he spent half the war on trains “and I was a pilot.”

McGovern ruled out the proposed B-1 bomber on the basis of cost, noting that each one will cost some $200 million to build, compared to the $200,000 for B-24s during World War II, and each can be shot down by $2,000 missiles the U.S. has and the U.S.S.R. has in the works.

Instead, he said, the country should beef up allocations for coal mining and solar power — plus steam, water and wind — saying the U.S. is even more dependent on mid-east oil than it was during the 1973 oil embargo.

McGovern called for expanding college loan and job opportunity programs. He cited the “net gain” from enormous GI Bill expenditures he said had probably aided “most of us in this room” and saw them through to a doctorate degree. He underlined the jobs that would be created if the nation addresses deteriorating physical resources such as highways, streets, bridges, tunnels, waste disposal.

And he stressed the needs, in peace and war, of an agricultural establishment “that depends on about one foot of topsoil,” calling for a 1930s-type soil conservation effort.

To a question about the current nuclear freeze issue, he said it was not as good as signing SALT II would have been but “would at least signal that America is prepared for a mutual freeze.”

Glenn kicks off presidential bid

COLUMBUS, Ohio (UPI) — Kicking off his unannounced 1984 presidential bid, Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, lashed out at the Reagan administration’s “loose talk” about nuclear war and urged the president to step up bargaining for a “durable peace.”

In a speech Friday at the largest political fund-raiser in Ohio history, Glenn criticized the administration’s economic policies and said the White House should be more concerned with equal rights, education and research and development.

Campaign aides said the lavish event was oversold and they expect to gross $200,000.