Student lawyer running for post

By Pat Moynihan

Bruce Hamilton, one of ASUN's student lawyers and a Democratic candidate for Lancaster County Commissioner, plans on attacking the political contest with a lot of time and effort.

Hamilton, 31, a candidate from the Third District, said he is running for the post because he thinks it is time for new, more youthful and more vigorous leadership in county government.

"The thrust of my career has been devoted to trying to help people and trying to work for constructive change," he said, "and county government is one area that needs change."

Hamilton said he agrees with his Democratic opponent David Hibler that a merger between city and county government is desirable. Hibler is an assistant professor of English at UNL. First, however, county government must be strengthened, he said.

Currently county government is extremely weak, he said. Although there are more than a dozen elected county officials no one exercises any real authority, he said.

In city government, he said, the mayor is allowed to appoint a number of officials and give them a general direction, but in county government no one has this authority.

Strengthening county government would make the proposed city-county merger possible on a more equal basis, he said.

New officials then will be needed and the county commissioner probably will not be one of them. However, the loss of this job would not bother Hamilton.

"I was not planning on making the post a life-long position," he said, "because I feel elected officials should not stay with one job too long. They become stagnant."

Hamilton said he plans on running a very active and personal campaign. He plans to "knock on every Democrat's door in this district" but if that proves impossible, he has several co-workers to help him.

The campaign also will include tours of the campus, newspaper publicity and posters, he said, he added he will campaign mostly "on the personal level."

Hamilton expressed confidence he can win.

"The Republican opponent has the advantages of incumbency and money to spend on an expensive campaign," he said, "but the job can be done.

Before the November general elections, Hamilton must face two opponents in the May 14 Democratic primary. He will be running against Hibler and Henry Gerdes, 71, of Lincoln.

"The May primary will be decided not on issues but, rather, on who is more qualified for the job," Hamilton said.

However, Hamilton said he is making no campaign promises because factors may appear after the elections to prevent him from keeping those promises.

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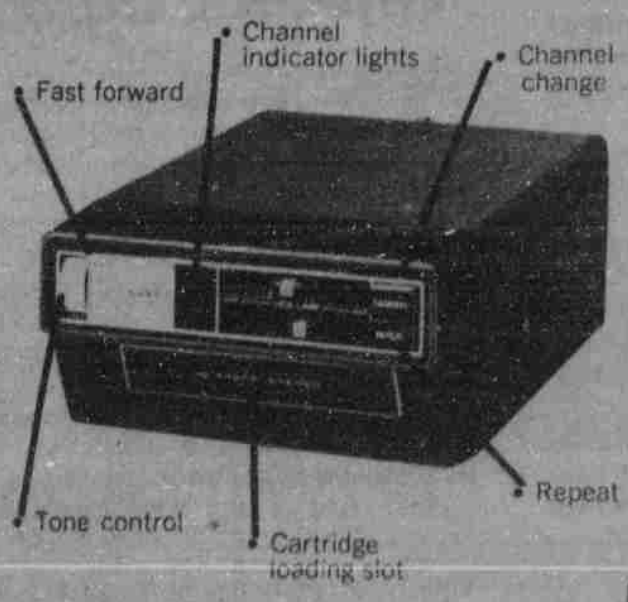

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