



photo by Ted Kirk

MARVEL

By Lynn Silhasek

The letters in his name, M-A-R-V-E-L, are five inches high, cut out of red and blue paper, and pasted on one of his campaign headquarter's white walls.

His campaign yard signs bear the same colors, the same name and the phrase "proudly Republican."

But State Sen. Richard Marvel, Republican candidate for governor, has not made a showing at the voter opinion polls to match the boldness of the colors and the phrase.

A Sept. 30 survey of 960 Nebraskans, conducted by Community Response, Inc., a Lincoln polling firm, showed that 62 per cent favored incumbent J. James Exon for governor. Marvel was supported by one-fourth of the respondents.

Support lacking

But there is additional lack of support for a Republican candidate for governor that the polls don't show.

The Lancaster County voting record is one example. The county election commissioner's statistics were still unofficial, but as of Oct. 24, 41,383 persons in Lancaster County were registered Republicans and 41,389 persons were registered Democrats. Four years ago, according to the election commissioner's statistics, Republicans in Lancaster County outnumbered the Democrats by nearly 10,000.

And since 1958, five out of six Nebraska gubernatorial races have been won by Democrats.

Image misleading

"They tell me I'm a reserved, serious individual," Marvel said. "That's supposed to be a liability. The only ones supposedly who get elected are the backslappers."

"We entered the fight knowing it was going to be a tough fight."

What makes it a tough fight is the image Exon projects as a governor who would do more for Nebraskans if his hands weren't tied by the Legislature, Marvel says.

Chairman of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee since 1961, Marvel said he has vetoed actions of the governor particularly in the areas of education and taxes.

Marvel currently is chairman of the Political Science Department at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Previously he was a political science instructor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Teaching priority

Last year the Legislature overrode Exon's veto of the \$105 million NU budget.

Exon "just took a red pencil and marked through teaching. He cut several thousand dollars off of it and sent it back to us (the Legislature)," Marvel said.

Increases in allocations for education should "receive a top, if not the top priority" in the Legislature, Marvel said. Teaching should receive a large part of these funds because students are more directly affected by teaching than anything else at NU, he said.

Marvel also backs increased aid to education in grades kindergarten through high school. LB 772, which would increase state aid to schools, was passed by the Legislature over Exon's veto. The bill more than triples state aid from

approximately \$50 million to over \$150 million.

Support equal

According to Marvel, the bill would equalize state support of education and provide property tax relief. Under the present state aid method, money from the state property tax composes 85 per cent of education support funds. The bill would equally divide the state aid between the property tax and the income and sales taxes.

Results of various polls indicated that the property tax is the most unpopular tax with Nebraskans, Marvel said. Property tax relief would mean increasing income tax 4-5 per cent and sales tax another 1 per cent, he estimated.

The state income tax presently is 11 per cent and the sales tax is 2.5 per cent. Marvel last session wanted to keep the income tax at 11 per cent, despite Exon's support of a 13 per cent tax rate.

Shift needed

The tax shift the bill provides, however, is necessary "because it (the property tax) is not a measure of wealth like it was 50 years ago" when the state property taxes were determined, Marvel said.

As chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Marvel also supervises a staff that investigates state departments to determine their efficiency.

In one department, the State Department of Roads, Marvel's staff estimated a 60 per cent efficiency rate. One staff member was sent to the Omaha area to study highway construction efficiency, according to Marvel. The staff member was told by a district manager there that his safety could not be guaranteed in the rest of the state should he continue his investigation, Marvel said.

'Goof-offs'

Inefficiency in the department has cost the state over \$6 million this year, Marvel said.

"I've seen the strong points...and where the goof-offs are. We don't attack them (Department of Roads personnel) personally. But Tom Doyle (department director) has no business at the head of the department. He's a chemical engineer...With that administration, you can't set up a program that spends \$70-\$100 million a year."

Department costs have increased with inflation in the area of highway construction, Marvel said. The costs could have been avoided had Exon spent available highway bonds for construction, he said. Over \$21 million in bonds were made available by 1969 legislation, according to Marvel.

Then Gov. Norbert Tiemann spent \$10 million of this amount on highways, Marvel said. But Exon, when he assumed office in 1970 "knocked out the bonds" despite prior legislative approval.

Dept. evaluations

Marvel estimated inflation costs of highway materials 50-90 per cent higher than construction costs four years ago under bonds financing.

If elected, Marvel said he would investigate state departments and evaluate department directors. The departments then would be grouped along four lines—human resources, natural resources, community affairs and

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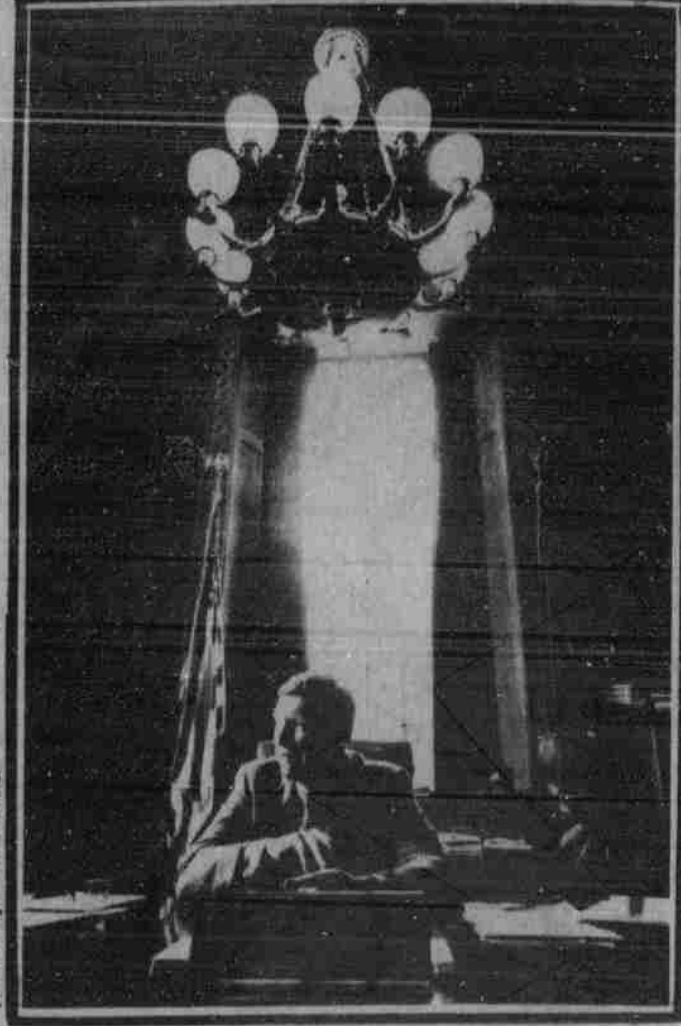


photo by Gail Folfa

EXON

By Lynn Silhasek

and Randy Gordon

He doesn't have his own campaign headquarters.

He shares building space with a congressional candidate's campaign organization. And there's not much space, with empty pop bottles left on desks and the floor, state district maps pulled out for studying and an assortment of yard signs piled in the backroom.

It's nothing like his office at the state capital.

Gov. J. James Exon is running for re-election. And according to polls, he doesn't have to do much running. A September poll, conducted by Community Research, Inc., of Lincoln, had 62 per cent of 960 Nebraskans polled naming Exon as their first choice for governor. According to his Republican opponent, State Sen. Richard Marvel, polls have indicated 43 per cent of the state's Republicans support Exon.

But criticisms come with the support. In three out of five scheduled joint appearances by gubernatorial candidates, Exon has cancelled at the last minute. For this he has been accused by Marvel of avoiding the issues and the people. Other criticisms cut into deeper issues, attacking his financial policies.

'Pocketbook issues'

Exon's record as governor is the main issue of the 1974 campaign, according to Marvel. Exon, however, in an interview in the governor's office said "pocketbook issues" are the campaign issues and also are a part of his record.

"Inflation is excessive spending, deficit spending and the improper use of taxpayer dollars," he said. "I've exercised more vetoes on spending matters than any governor in the history of this state..."

One spending matter the governor particularly has been opposed to is the issuing of bonds for road construction.

Pay-as-you-go

The Exon administration is committed to a pay-as-you-go plan for financing road and highway construction. Exon has repeatedly stressed.

"If the choice is issuing bonds or not having a road program, then I say don't issue bonds," Exon said. "I think that with inflation, we have to start facing up in America and pay for things as we go along and not defer those payments to a later date."

The Legislature has not helped combat inflation, considering its expenses and appropriations, according to Exon.

Growth in expenses

Legislative expenses "have grown 260 per cent in just four years, from \$1.3 million to anticipated expenditures for this current fiscal year of \$3,394,000," he said. "And I think somewhere along the line you have to practice what you preach."

In addition, "the Legislature is paying salaries in excess of the governor's salary of \$25,000," Exon said.

Appropriations by the Legislature for fiscal year 1974 are now \$13.5 million over available state resources, Exon said.

"We wouldn't be facing this situation" if the State Board of Equalization members Nov. 15 had voted to set the state income tax rate at 13 per