

Omaha mayoral aspirants catch breath, hit trail again

By Anne Carothers

Omaha mayoral candidates Betty Abbott and Al Veys had a brief rest after winning the primary before starting what they both refer to as entirely new campaigns. Abbott, 54, led in the primary with 19,395 votes while Veys, a write-in candidate who filed two weeks before the election, received 18,859 votes. Mike Albert, the only other candidate on the ballot, received 13,235 votes.

Abbott said she received her strongest voter support in the southwest, west and northwest areas of Omaha while Veys won in southeast Omaha. She added she received support from all age groups with no group particularly stronger than another. Veys said he had not received a voter analysis report yet.

Veys, 58, said he stressed his qualifications and how to vote for a write-in candidate in his primary campaign.

Abbott, a Republican, said the primary did not involve issues and was mainly a qualifications race. She said serving on the Omaha City Council for 12 years helped her "tremendously." Abbott said she also stressed her experience on various state and federal commissions.

Serving 16 years on the City Council also helped him in the primary, Veys said. He added that he stressed his business experience and using it to run an efficient city government.

Veys said he spent \$15,000 in the primary, mostly on radio, television, newspapers and some flyers. He said he follows a rule of thumb not to spend more than the office's first year salary.

Abbott said she spent about \$13,000 of the \$35,000 to \$40,000 she plans to spend on the total campaign. She added that she campaigned steadily for one month before the primary.

Both candidates said they had spent the week after the primary planning for their new campaigns. Both declined to comment on specific strategies they might use in the upcoming campaign.

Abbott said she planned within the next week to bring out "precise proposals for the first two years of her mayoralship." She said she thought the upcoming campaign would be very issue oriented.

Both candidates said they had students working for them on the UNL campus but neither had plans to come to the campus to campaign.

Veys, a Democrat, said he thought the people's confidence in him and word of mouth had helped him win the primary in two weeks. He said he had wanted to file in time to be on the ballot but his wife had "held him back." Two weeks before the election, he talked to his wife and children and they agreed he should run if he really wanted to, he said.



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