

State teachers prepare to fight lid petition drive

By L. Kent Wolgamott

A community-by-community campaign to combat the proposed constitutional amendment to place a five percent limit on local government spending is planned by Nebraska teachers, according to Herb Schimek of the Nebraska State Education Association.

Schimek said the local focus is necessary "to make people realize what is going to happen to their community, not somewhere down the road."

"People in Gothenburg care about what's going to happen to Gothenburg. They don't give a damn about what's happening in Omaha," he said.

The constitutional amendment was placed on the ballot following a successful petition drive led by S.H. "Zeke" Brauer of Lincoln.

If passed, the amendment would limit local governmental bodies, including schools, to a five percent annual increase in their budgets with a provision for a special election to go beyond the five percent limit if approved by the voters of the local subdivisions.

Additionally, the Nebraska Legislature passed a law during a special session this summer which would place a seven percent increase limit on local governments.

The law was proposed by Gov. J. James Exon who also supports the petition drive.

Both candidates for governor, Lt. Gov. Gerald Whelan and Rep. Charles Thone, signed the petition and support the amendment.

Schimek said candidates "positions on the amendment will play a large part in endorsements of and contributions to candidates from the Political Action Committee for Education, the political arm of the NSEA.

He said information packets on the amendment have been sent to local teachers groups and there have been training sessions on organizing opposition to the amendment.

Schimek said the state office will continue to provide help for the local groups as the election approaches.

Schimek said he thought the effort had "a good chance" of succeeding through emphasizing the local consequences of passage of the amendment.

Nitrate levels lowered

Three UNL professors have found a way to lower the nitrate levels contaminating ground water in the Central Platte River Valley.

Agriculture Professors Paul Fischbach and Dean Eisenhauer, and Agronomy Professor Ken Frank have developed a schedule telling farmers how to use ground water nitrates to supply the nitrogen needs of plants. This will lower nitrate levels and eventually improve the quality of ground water for human and animal consumption.

The ground water nitrates have been associated as a cause of blue baby syndrome, the Nebraska Health Department reports. Infants ingesting high levels of nitrate may suffer from a lack of oxygen in the blood causing a bluish coloration of the skin. It is fatal, if untreated. Doctors in the affected

counties along the Platte are aware of the problem and direct parents not to use the water in their baby's formula.

Fischbach said the principal cause of the ground water nitrates along the Central Platte are manure, alfalfa and chemical fertilizers. The problem was reported in 1961, and research began in 1970.

The professors' nitrate schedule indicates how many pounds of nitrogen farmers can expect their plants to absorb when irrigated with ground water containing a specific amount of nitrate.

The schedule also shows how much additional nitrogen will be needed for commercial fertilizers to obtain a given yield.

Fischbach said that if all farmers use the methods they have developed, the nitrates will gradually be reduced.

Book exchange expands east

This year, east campus students will have the same opportunity as those on city campus to participate in the ASUN book exchange.

The textbook exchange service will be in the Nebraska East Union's Sunflower Room this year, as well as in the basement conference rooms of the Nebraska Union, where it has been the past several years, said Sue Dwyer, organizer of the service.

Students wanting to buy or sell books can stop by the rooms in both unions from

noon to 5 p.m., Aug. 28 through Sept. 7, Dwyer said.

Book sellers decide on the prices, she said.

Students are encouraged to participate in the book exchange, Dwyer said, because it is a student sponsored activity. By eliminating the middle man, those selling the books generally get more for their books, and those buying books pay less, she said.

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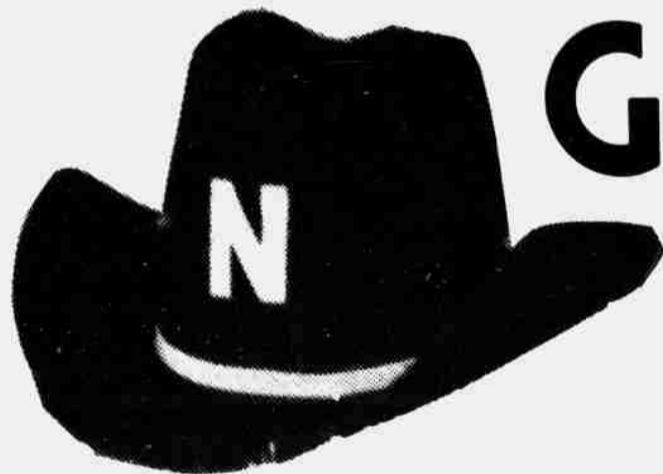
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