



Photo by Ted Kirk

Surrounded by reporters at his campaign victory party is Gov. J. James Exon, who was elected to the U.S. Senate Tuesday night over Republican opponent Don Shasteen of Hastings to fill the Senate seat held by Carl Curtis.



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Don Shasteen conceded defeat to J. James Exon early Wednesday morning. He said he would send a hand written letter to Exon Wednesday.

Exon defeats Shasteen, looks ahead to Senate work

By L. Kent Wolgamott and Mary Jo Howe

As expected, Gov. J. James Exon Tuesday was elected to the U.S. Senate by an overwhelming margin. This will be the first time Nebraska has had two Democratic Senators and the first time a Nebraska Governor has been elected to the Senate.

Exon lead his Republican opponent Don Shasteen by 137,214 votes. The pattern in the race was clear early as Exon was declared the winner by CBS News only 20 minutes after the polls closed.

Exon said he ran a "very positive, optimistic campaign" which was careful and involved no trickery. He said he was gratified by the results, that the campaign went well and that he received "help from very unexpected sources." (referring to charges by Shasteen that Exon used his influence to pressure state agencies to buy equipment from his office supply firm.)

Exon thanked his campaign workers at a victory party at the Legionnaire Club in Lincoln saying "this appears to be a very successful campaign you have waged. I was just the guy you worked hard for."

Family victory

Exon, who was joined on stage by his wife Pat and four grandchildren, said the triumph was "not only an appropriate victory for you, and hopefully the state of Nebraska, but also for them (his family) as well."

At the same time Exon was claiming victory, Shasteen refused to concede defeat. Surrounded by a handful of supporters at the Clayton House Motel, Shasteen said he would not concede until returns had come in from the predominantly Republican 3rd

District.

Shasteen said "it would be presumptuous to call this without looking at the third district returns. Douglas County is not exactly a (Republican) bellweather in this state."

Shasteen 'finances lower'

Shasteen said he had run a good sound campaign, but it was not as well financed as that of his Democratic opponent.

Exon predicted the 3rd District would come in with approximately the same percentages as in the other two districts.

"Pat and I are very proud of the workers here tonight. We are delighted that the people of the state have shown such confidence in us for the last eight years."

Exon said the last eight years have been good ones for his family and for Nebraska.

He said to be chosen first lady and governor of the state was the highest honor the people could bestow on him and his wife.

"It is even a higher honor to be chosen to serve in the Senate along with my good friend Ed Zorinsky."

Teamwork

Exon said he believes the team of Exon and Zorinsky will be good for Nebraska and that the team will continue to promote the ideas and thoughts of Nebraskans by listening to them and by carrying them out in the Senate.

"We thank God for having put us in Nebraska where we have enjoyed what is truly the good life."

"Thanks for the new honor and we pledge to do what we have always done."

Exon said agricultural policy and fighting inflation will be his two major areas of concern in the Senate.

He said he will work for a "more reasonable and responsible agricultural policy" than there has been in the past under both Republican and Democratic leaderships in Congress.

On inflation, Exon said he will try to form a coalition with the 15 or 16 former

governors who will be serving their first terms in the Senate next year to gather their ideas on fighting inflation.

At 3:40 a.m. Exon had 68 percent of the vote, and Shasteen had 32 percent.

Shasteen, who conceded the race at 1:30 a.m. on KOLN-TV, said he offers Exon his congratulations and best wishes for success in hew new career.

He said it would be Exon's challenge to work within the Democratic Party to curb excesses.



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