

Schools may gain from extra state funds

By Cindy Coglianese

Active spending by Nebraskans last year has resulted in an excess of \$42.5 million in tax revenues above Revenue Department projections when the fiscal year began July 1.

Some state senators are calling for a

special session to decide what to do with the extra money. Authorizing it for state educational aid is one of the possibilities presented by State Sen. Orval Keyes of Springfield.

If the money is approved for state educational aid, some senators are predicting a battle of the schools—the NU system versus public element and secondary

schools.

NU President Ronald Roskens told the Daily Nebraskan Tuesday, that his office is as aware of the money as "any other citizen, by virtue of reports from the state financial office."

The excess money in the general fund was brought about by high farm prices, according to Keyes.

An aide to Keyes said that Keyes, who had originally called for the special session, would like the money either to be used to lower state taxes or to be distributed in public schools, thus lowering property taxes.

The aide said a battle could arise if the money is appropriated among the schools. He said NU, which normally takes a large share of state aid, and public schools—particularly Omaha and Nebraska City—would be on opposite sides if the Legislature approves the excess revenue as educational state aid.

VOTERS IN Omaha and Nebraska City this summer approved zero percent property tax freezes for their school districts.

Roskens said there was no doubt in his mind that education at all levels needs to be kept healthy, and that he did not foresee any battles among the schools if the money is appropriated to education.

Although Roskens said he has a personal preference as to how the money should be appropriated, he refused to comment on that preference, saying that it might be misconstrued to be representative of the NU system's thoughts.

"We are aware of the increase in the balance," Roskens said. "But we are not sitting here with bated breath waiting to jump on it."

Roskens said the university has not sent any lobbyists to the Legislature at this time.

WILLIAM SWANSON, NU vice president of governmental relations and corporate secretary of the NU Board of Regents, said the university is not involved with the excess revenue matter because it is only pertinent to the Legislature and state administration.

"All I know is what I read in the newspapers," Swanson said. "We will be highly supportive of our proposed budget when we present it, but the purported excess is a matter of the Legislature."

The university will go to the Legislature this month with a request for a 15 percent increase in state aid over last year for their 1980-81 operating budget.

William Erskine, executive vice president for administration, and Swanson agreed that no lobbyists have been sent from the university to support the use of excess revenues as state aid to education.

Keyes' aide said the Revenue Department had projected an excess of \$19,779,561 in unobligated funds left from the 1978-79 fiscal year. On July 1, 1979, the first day of the 1979-80 fiscal year, the State Administrative Office reported a beginning balance of \$62 million. The aide said the 1978-79 projection by the Revenue Department was underestimated by \$8 million, which is now in the \$42.5 million excess.

THE \$42.5 million figure is the difference between the projected unobligated balance of \$19,779,561 and what was actually left over in the unobligated general fund (\$62 million).

Keyes said the reason for the excess revenue largely results from high prices on farm commodities, creating more spending, thus pouring more money into the Revenue Department from sales income tax.

A 3 to 7 percent reserve in the Revenue Department, as required by State law, amounts to \$33,657,675, or 5.8 percent of the general fund.

Keyes contends that the "cushion" figure is too high and could possibly be lowered to 4 percent, freeing \$10 million that could be used to lower state taxes or for educational purposes.

This year, the Revenue Department is projecting that total funds for appropriations will amount to \$601,629,404, based on last year's left-over balance and general funds available.

According to Keyes' aide, using projections and increases from past years, he said Keyes' office is projecting at least \$75 million more than obligation at the end of the 1979-80 fiscal year.

Spending lids passed in Omaha and Nebraska City this summer have education officials and prospective teachers worried about education quality and job availability. See story on page 6.



Photo by M. Billingsley

Where next?

Twelve-year-old Bobby Packett of Omaha achieves a feat that would normally take superhuman strength—giving an elephant a piggyback ride.

However, in this case, the elephant was stuffed, a prize Bobby won at Septemberfest in Omaha last weekend.

For related photos from an event closer to home—the Nebraska State Fair—see page 13.

Law officials suspect foul play after UNL student disappears

Law enforcement officials said Tuesday that foul play may have been involved in the disappearance last week of UNL senior Thomas A. Eyth.

Eyth, 21, was last seen Sunday, Aug. 26 at a Lincoln sandwich shop with a friend. According to Eyth's father, William Eyth of Beatrice, Thomas left all of his clothes and personal possession in his fraternity room at Sigma Alpha Epsilon.

A press conference was scheduled today at 9:30 a.m. where Lancaster County Attorney Ron Lahners and law enforcement officials were scheduled to discuss the disappearance then.

"We have to assume the possibility of foul play in our investigation," Merle Hesser, deputy Lancaster County sheriff said Tuesday.

Hesser, who was chief of police in Bea-

trix, where Eyth grew up, said he thought it unlikely that Eyth disappeared voluntarily.

"All the evidence we have indicates that this is not a typical student disappearance," Eyth's father said. "It's been 10 days and we haven't heard anything."

"We want to find him to assure that foul play was not involved, or if foul play was involved, we want to get started on the case before it gets stale," said Detective Ron Tussing with the Lincoln Police Department.

Eyth may be driving his 1974 metallic brown Firebird with Nebraska plates 3-A5950. The car has not been found.

Persons with information concerning Eyth's whereabouts should contact the UNL Police, the Lincoln Police or the Lancaster County Sheriff.

Selection of cheerleaders needs revision—Devaney

By Sara Martens

Athletic Director Bob Devaney said Tuesday a revision of the process used to select UNL cheerleaders is needed, following the controversy that arose over the appointment of a black female cheerleader to the squad.

Devaney said the girl may be made an alternate this season and a second member next year, as proposed by members of the Yell Squad. By then Yell Squad adviser Bill Murphy "believes they will have her to a point where she can keep up with the routines."

In a written statement issued Friday, Devaney defended the appointment saying, "In view of the fact that the Yell Squad is part of the Athletic Department and funded solely by Athletic Department funds, we were concerned about the lack of minority representation on the Yell Squad."

"After all, a large number of blacks are solid contributors to our athletic program and we felt they should have representation on the Yell Squad. It was not a case of helping recruiting, seeking a token representative or anything else. We simply feel that minority members of our program have the right to spirit representation and we asked that the situation be reviewed

and, if possible, rectified," the statement read.

Devaney said the addition, rather than substitution of the new girl for another, made the situation more acceptable.

"I can see how those cheerleaders feel the change might not be the way to go about it," Devaney said, but this represents the first move in revision of the selection process.

Devaney said he has asked Murphy to survey other Big Eight schools' selection process in search of a better method.

The present selection board, composed of Murphy, a band member, representatives from Corncocks and Tassels and a senior, non-returning woman on the Yell Squad, is not diversified enough, Devaney said.

He has no specific recommendations about to membership of the board, but since the Athletic Department sponsors the Yell Squad, Devaney said the department should be represented.

"I don't want to be the one," Devaney said, suggesting that someone from sports information might serve in the selection process.

Devaney said the current process has not proved itself 100 percent, because the department still receives criticism about the squad.