

Spending cuts result in state employee pay raises

By Steve Miller

An attempt to decrease state spending will result in more money in fewer state employees' pockets.

Gov. Charles Thone at a news conference last week said that some 1,350 employees could receive wage increases starting next month.

The governor's emphasis on quality instead of quantity in regard to employees is the main reason for the wage increase, according to Personnel Department Director Jan Pieper.

Pieper said that when the governor took office he asked all state agencies to cut back wherever possible, and a hiring freeze which took effect July 1 provided the ini-

tiative to evaluate the need for some positions.

An evaluation of job positions during the freeze by the state Personnel Department pinpointed the 1,350 employees in 60 different positions as underpaid.

A pay increase will come to the employees as their job titles are reclassified, Pieper said.

"Right now, up to 1,350 employees could get a raise," Pieper said. "It depends on how they fit into new job titles."

Agency directors have the final word on whether or not to accept the recommendations, reclassify positions and whether to allow the increases, Pieper said.

Some of the reclassifications will combine separate job titles, Pieper added, decreasing the total number of employees. If the freeze is lifted, directors still will

be able to hire as many employees as they think necessary, but they will be limited to their budget which could change if reclassifications are accepted, Pieper said.

None of the employees getting wage increases work for NU, Pieper said. The university is completely separate from the Personnel Department and was not affected by the hiring freeze or wage increases.

"The increases only affect those employees in our system," Pieper said. "If the university wanted to do this, they'd have to initiate a program on their own."

The recommended plan to increase wages is similar but not related to recommendations made by the Governor's Task Force on Governmental Improvement, Pieper said.

UNL student sexually assaulted

A 19-year-old UNL student was attacked and allegedly sexually assaulted Tuesday night after she left work at Sweep Left.

As she was getting into her car, about 9 p.m., a white male, described as being in his 30s and having a deep voice similar to Sylvester Stallone in "Rocky," allegedly grabbed her and told her to get on the floor in the back seat of her car.

He reportedly hit her several times in the face, and drove her to an unknown location, where he allegedly demanded that she take off her clothes.

She told police that before the assault, she was able to get out of the

car and run, but he chased her, and caught her, and then beat and kicked her.

The man, described as being 5'10" to 6' tall, and having dark, collar-length hair, allegedly took her back to the car and sexually assaulted her.

She told police that they drove to Antelope Park and that he discussed whether he should kill her and leave her in the car, or whether he should kill her and dump her out.

Although there is no suspect in the case, police said investigation in the case is continuing.

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