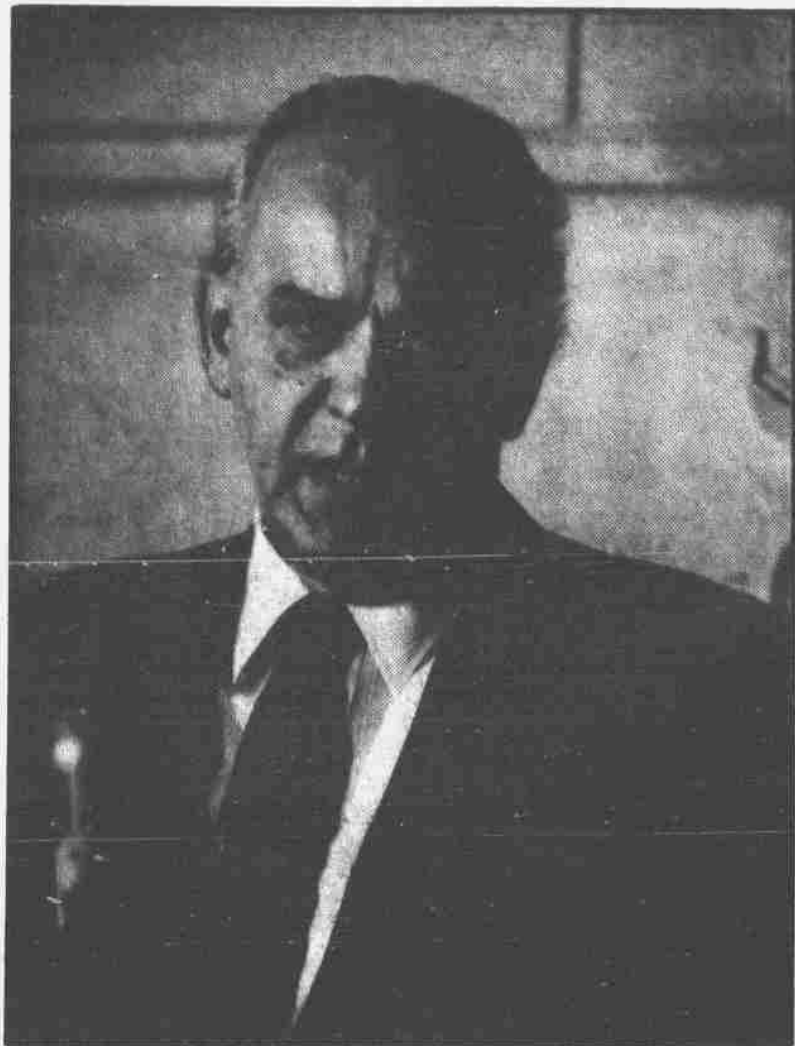


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Staff Photo by Dave Bantz

Gov. Charles Thone speaks at a press conference Thursday in the state Capitol.

Thone says 'no' to state tax increase

By Vicki Ruhga

Gov. Charles Thone said he will not raise state taxes, although total receipts for September were 7 percent below projections.

The tax receipt figures were released at a press conference held by Thone Thursday at the State Capitol. Donald Leuenberger, state tax commissioner, said sales and use tax receipts were 2.8 percent below September projections, individual income tax receipts were 3.7 percent below, corporate incomes tax receipts were 9.7 below and miscellaneous tax receipts were 36 percent below projections.

Thone said the continuing lag in state receipts because of the recession is disappointing. However, he said, he refuses to take the easy way out and raise taxes to solve the budget problem. Instead, he listed five administrative actions to correct the problem.

First Thone called for a mandatory hiring freeze effective immediately for all agencies under his control. He also asked state agencies not under his control to comply. There will be some exemptions on non-administrative positions for the corrections department and State Patrol, as well as case-by-case reviews if there is appropriate justification for hiring. However, Thone said, exceptions will be few and are between.

Second, Thone ordered the reinstatement of a freeze on all out-of-state traveling for state officials, with the exception of corrections officials transferring prisoners.

Third, Thone said the budget office will reduce

state agency budget allotments to 45 percent, rather than the 50 percent they had been reduced to last spring. He estimated that this action alone will save \$30 million to \$35 million.

The fourth measure requires agencies to use conference calls wherever possible. This should save time and traveling expenses, Thone said.

Finally, prior approval by the budget office will be required for purchases of equipment over \$500, he said.

Compared to neighboring states, Nebraska is in relatively good shape with \$45 million in the state treasury, Thone said. He cited Kansas as an example. In the first quarter, actual receipts for Kansas were 7.4 percent below projections, compared to Nebraska's 6.6 percent deficit.

Thone said the reason he will not raise taxes is because Nebraska's families, farmers and businessmen are experiencing the same revenue shortages as the state. A tax increase would unfairly shift the burden onto them, he said.

If the administrative measures are not successful, Thone said, he will not hesitate to call a special session of the Legislature in November to further cut spending.

"We will do whatever we possibly can do to cut spending," he said. "The special session would be a last resort."

Complaints from special-interest groups will have no effect on the administrative measures taken, Thone said.

"The real needs of Nebraska are still being well met," he said. "Special interest complaining will not prevent me from seeking cuts in spending."

Candidates discuss views on university, economy

Religious beliefs strongly affects Heider's stands

By Linda Liekhus

Stan Heider, 46th District challenger, said he originally planned to run for office in four years, but the "thing that was the catalyst was Sen. Dave Landis' support of the gay rights amendment."

Heider said he opposed the gay rights amendment and believed the district voters agreed with him on the issue. In the May primary election, the 46th District voted against the amendment nearly 4-1, he said.

The challenger said although he doesn't have a "whole lot" of political experience, he has had an interest in politics.

Heider is running for office as a registered Republican, but until last May he was a member of the Democratic Party.



Daily Nebraskan File Photo

Stan Heider

chance to life," he said.

"The humanist would say abortion is all right in this situation. From my standpoint, because of my religious convictions, that (deformed or retarded) person has as much a chance of life as someone considered normal," he added.

Heider's campaign has focused on issues such as the gay rights amendment, sales tax increases and spending bills. Heider said he is opposed to sales tax increases and large spending bills; however, he supports welfare programs such as Aid to Dependent Children and their control by state law.

Concerning students at UNL, Heider said they should be "concerned with receiving a quality education."

"The university should be a priority of the state to work with in order to maintain quality education," he said.

The candidate said he also believes the university budget "is justified," but that some areas could be made more efficient.

Heider said he would discourage students from getting student loans because of the problems they later could have trying to repay the loan.

Heider and his wife, Laura, are district managers and distributors for their franchise of "Successful Living," a firm that sells inspirational and motivational books and records.

Landis supports quality education, faculty pay raise

By Linda Liekhus

Incumbent State Sen. Dave Landis worked for the Nebraska Legislature even before his election as the representative for the 46th District four years ago.

By working so close to the Legislature as a researcher, Landis concluded that "many of the senators didn't do their homework." Landis said he believed he could participate in the legislative process and be more diligent at it. This prompted him to run for office.

Now, four years later, the senator has prepared a campaign platform based largely on his record, bills suggested for the coming legislative session, and public exchange between himself and



Photo Courtesy of Dave Landis

Sen. Dave Landis

the people of the 46th District on a wide variety of issues.

One issue important to Landis is the economy.

"People's jobs and homes are their chief assets. That is the primary basis of their individual support and their individual welfare is the basis of the extension of governmental services to others," Landis said. "The economy determines the individual's well-being and social well-being, which is the most important concern."

Landis said he is working on lessening this concern. During the last legislative session, the Nebraska Economic Development Finance Act was passed, allowing tax exempt bonds to underwrite economy development, he said.

Also, the Home Mortgage Finance Act allows tax exempt bonds to be used to underwrite mortgages. This allows individual mortgages at lower interest rates, Landis said.

"(This) act has brought in roughly \$90 million into Nebraska from outside

lenders for the purpose of giving mortgages at more affordable rates," he said. "If these trends hold true, this could mean an influx of money from outside Nebraska to Nebraska to underwrite new economic ventures; economic ventures that will employ people and provide us with an incentive for new growth."

Landis cited two issues he believes are the most important for UNL students to consider. "(Students) need to be concerned about the quality of education they're getting, and that's why they've got to be concerned about faculty salaries," he said. Students need to be concerned about tuition so that their education will be affordable, but also about teachers' salaries to keep them in the classroom, he said.

Landis said he has never voted against the university on budget questions. He said he would support a pay increase for professors.

One university proposal that Landis is opposed to is a new veterinary school. Landis said it would be better to transfer some of the money away from that proposal and put it into the mainstream of the college.

Landis has a law degree from UNL and is employed as a lawyer for his family's real estate firm, Four Stars, Inc.



He said he switched political parties after hearing the Democratic Party platform.

Heider said he didn't approve of the Democratic leaders' support of the gay rights amendment or the party's support of abortion, "at least in a vague way."

There was also a plank about the need for a comprehensive sex education program, Heider said. The challenger said he believes "a sex education program doesn't need to be done or should not be done from the standpoint of the government running the schools, but it (sex education) should be something that is worked out with the parents."

Heider said his religious beliefs play an important part in his campaign and his life. Religious beliefs are the difference between the candidates, he said.

"The difference is that the quality of life says everybody should be entitled to the same opportunities, rejecting the idea that an unborn child that is deformed or perhaps mentally retarded has the