

DeCamp predicts UNL win in Legislature

By Terry Hyland

UNL administrators and regents contacted last week said it is too early to forecast how the current legislative session will affect the university, but one state senator said he believes the school may come out a winner this year.

Sen. John DeCamp of Neligh said last week that he expects an increase in taxes, rather than budget cuts, to generate money needed to meet the state's revenue shortfall. He said this course of action will take some pressure off the university and may result in unexpected benefits.

"If you're going to raise money by expanding the tax base . . .," DeCamp said, "then the university is going to suffer minimally and, in fact, could end up with some funds they had not anticipated."

DeCamp said that since the university

is the largest consumer of tax funds, the school will be "on the firing line" during the current session. He said budget cuts and bills aimed at changing the UNL financing system, possibly giving more control to the Legislature, will be considered in the current session. A legislative resolution, introduced by Sen. Karen Kilgarrin of Omaha, would give the Legislature more control over UNL finances. Currently, the Legislature can offer spending recommendations to the UNL Board of Regents, but the regents have no legal obligation to follow the advice.

DeCamp said overall he believes the university will make progress this year. "The university will probably come out an even stronger institution from a financial standpoint than it did in the past," he said.

University officials are confident that the Legislature recognizes the needs and the importance of the university to the

state. But those contacted tempered their optimism, saying it is too early to tell what course the lawmakers will take.

Neale Copple, acting vice chancellor for academic affairs, said his six months as vice chancellor have convinced him that the university has cut its budget to the "bare bone." Copple said uncertainties exist because of the new legislative members and the new Democratic administration under Gov. Bob Kerrey. But Copple said he is confident that the state's lawmakers are aware of the university's financial situation.

Roy Arnold, vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said until the revenue and appropriation situation becomes clearer, it will be difficult to speculate on legislative action.

Regent Kermit Hansen, a retired Omaha banker, said the Legislature and the Kerrey

administration are aware of the support needed by the university because the UNL budget was submitted last September.

"I'm optimistic. The Legislature has always listened carefully to the needs of the university," Hansen said.

Regent Edward Schwartzkopf said he believes the Legislature understands the problems facing the university, but that it is too early in the session to make any predictions.

Schwartzkopf, a Lincoln Public Schools administrator, emphasized the importance of the university to the state. He said Gov. Kerrey's emphasis on agriculture stresses that importance because of the research and development carried on by the university. Schwartzkopf said that link between agriculture and education will be important in decisions affecting the university.

THE GALA AFFAIR

Kerrey and a cast of thousands

By Terry Hyland

A cast of thousands helped Gov. Bob Kerrey play out the final act of his dramatic drive toward the governor's office Thursday as Kerrey became Nebraska's 35th chief executive.

Between 1,500 and 2,000 supporters crowded into the Legislative chamber and the Capitol rotunda to cheer the first Democratic governor in four years and the youngest governor since 1918.

The celebration continued Thursday evening at the Governor's Inaugural Ball, as 6,000 celebrants danced and mingled with the state's political elite.

The pomp fit the circumstances of the occasion as 39-year-old Kerrey, a political unknown a year ago, took the oath of Nebraska's highest office. He received a thunderous ovation as he entered the Legislative chamber, accompanied by his son, Ben, and his daughter, Lindsey.

Following the swearing-in ceremonies, Kerrey headed a reception line in the Great Hall of the Capitol. He left the Capitol about an hour later to attend a reunion with military friends.

The festivities continued early Thursday evening at a \$50-per-person champagne reception at the Lincoln Hilton.

More than 1,700 people attended the reception. Part of the money raised from the reception will be used to help pay Kerrey's \$229,000 campaign debt.

The long day of ceremony and celebration climaxed Thursday night at the Governor's Inaugural Ball.

More than 6,000 people crowded into Lincoln's Pershing Auditorium to await the presentation of the state's political celebrities.

Men in tuxedos and women in formal evening gowns filled the gallery seats and the reserved tables that ringed the auditorium floor.

At 8 p.m., the Grand March began.

For the next hour, 107 state senators, political party heads and other elected and appointed officials and their escorts were introduced by Masters of Ceremonies Mark Ahmann and Carol Shrader.

Illuminated only by spotlights in the darkened auditorium, each couple descended steps from the stage and strode across the floor between two lines of silver-helmeted National Guardsmen.

Kerrey, escorted by his two children, was the last participant in the march. He received a standing ovation that drowned out his introduction.

After posing for photographs, Kerrey led the first dance. His partner was his mother, Mrs. Jim Kerrey of Lincoln.

Dancing continued until 1 a.m., when the ball ended. Rock'n'roll from the Rumbles drew the younger celebrants to the lower level of the auditorium. The Big Band Sound of Bobby Layne entertained dancers on the main level.



Staff Photos by Dave Bentz



Left: Gov. Bob Kerrey is sworn into office by State Supreme Court Chief Justice Norman Krivosha. Above: At the Inaugural Ball, Kerrey has the first dance of the evening with his mother.



More than 5,000 people attended the ball at Pershing Auditorium Thursday. Here, Kerrey's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Kerrey; Kerrey and his children, Ben and Lindsey; and Lt. Gov. Don McGinley and his wife line up before the crowd.