

WEATHER: Mostly sunny and warmer with a high in the mid-30s. West wind 10 to 15 mph. Partly cloudy. Low 10 to 15. Partly cloudy and cooler Friday with a high about 30.

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The DN Critics' Poll**

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ASUN Senate hears plans for new rec center

By Eric Paulak
Staff Reporter

A \$16 million proposal for a new recreational center was presented to the ASUN Senate, Wednesday, that would not cost students anything for its construction.

James Grieson, the vice-chancellor for student affairs, made the proposal in which \$10 million would be raised from surcharges on sales of athletic tickets to non-students, \$3 million from private donations and \$3 million from a surplus of student fees.

The up-keep for the building would come from student fees. Grieson said that would raise student fees by \$30 to \$35.

Robert Furgason, the vice-chancellor for academic affairs, said the same proposal would be presented to the Board of Regents Saturday, but it was not on the agenda to be voted upon.

Regent Kermit Hansen said he thought the proposal would come on emergency status at the meeting so that they could solve the issue before the end of the year.

Hansen said he thought the committee that was sponsoring the proposal was trying to push it through before the end of the year when the new tax laws take effect. Donators would not be able to claim as much of the donations on their income tax return if they waited until after the new year.

The group that was looking to

proposals for a new recreational facility was chaired by Chancellor Martin A. Massengale.

Grieson said the proposed recreation center would be where the Coliseum, the tennis courts north of the Coliseum and the Men's P.E. Building are now.

The new building would add 149,000 square feet to the Coliseum and would house basketball, volleyball and racquetball courts, a new weight room, a swimming pool, an indoor football practice facility and an indoor track.

Regent Don Fricke said current recreational facilities are not very good and he was in favor of new ones.

UNL is rated eighth in the Big Eight in recreational facilities.

The Faculty Senate tabled the proposal Tuesday at their meeting because some of them said the money raised for the new center should be spent on academics.

Chris Scudder, ASUN president, said the money would not even be raised if it were not to be for the indoor practice facilities. She said the majority of the money would be raised from the sale of football tickets.

"We know the power of the 'Big Red' at this campus and in the state," Scudder said. "We can raise the money with a team effort."

Fricke said there was a better chance of getting the facility by working with the athletic department that if they

waited for the Legislature to appropriate the money.

Hansen said he did not think the proposal would pass if Scudder and ASUN did not support it. The Senate did not pass a resolution Wednesday, but it has passed three such resolutions in the past, Scudder said.

No one spoke against the proposal in the ASUN meeting, but Tim Howard of the Graduate College said he was disappointed that UNL had to rely upon the football team to support its programs. Regent Nancy Hoch said she favored the idea of a recreation center, but she would not comment on his proposal. The rest of the regents could not be reached.

Nursing cuts restored

By Michael Hooper
Senior Reporter

After refusing to provide \$100,000 for the four-year nursing program at Scottsbluff Monday, Nebraska senators changed their minds Wednesday and approved the nursing program that was targeted for cuts in Gov. Bob Kerrey's budget-cut proposal.

During the second-round of debate over LBI — which consists of \$6.5 million in budget cuts — lawmakers voted 25-13 to restore \$100,000 for the NU nursing program.

Without further debate over the \$1.6 million cut to the university, senators debated over a series of amendments to LBI and then gave second-round approval to the budget cut bill.

Chadron Sen. Sandra Scofield, who sponsored the amendment to provide \$100,000 for the nursing program, said, "If you vote for this one, you're not being a wild-eyed spender."

"Create opportunities and invest in the West," Scofield said. She said currently 40 freshmen are enrolled in the nursing program, and the Legislature

cannot forget them.

"It's not a new program," she said. A three-year program has been offered in Scottsbluff for many years. The buildings and the facilities already are there, she said. The \$100,000 provides start-up money for the four-year nursing program, she said.

Upholding Monday's decision to eliminate funding for the nursing program would have been "an irrational choice" that would have speeded up the "downward spiral" in Nebraska, Scofield said.

Scottsbluff Sen. Bill Nichol said the money for the four-year program was necessary because the current program's three-year baccalaureate degree is not acceptable anymore. Nurses need a four-year degree, he said.

Hastings Sen. Jaclyn Smith encouraged senators to vote down Scofield's amendment to restore the \$100,000 because the state cannot afford to fund new programs while it has a budget deficit.

Scofield said the program is a commitment to the West and to the health of its people.

Budget cutting bill passes

By Jen Deselms
Senior Reporter

A bill that would cut the state budget by \$6.5 million survived an attempt to end the session and was passed on to final reading by a 33-8 vote on Wednesday.

After Sen. John DeCamp of Neligh withdrew a motion to send LBI back to the Appropriations Committee, Sen. Daniel Lynch of Omaha moved to end the session. Lynch's motion failed 17-24. This was the third attempt to end the special session. The first attempt on Friday received five votes and Monday's got 19.

Before moving the bill to final reading, senators passed amendments to restore \$100,000 for the Scottsbluff nursing program and \$300,000 to mental retardation aid.

Senators also approved an amendment to cut \$150,000 that would allow implementation of the telephone deregulation law.

The amendments offset one another,

allowing senators to advance a bill which contained the same dollar amount in cuts as in Gov. Bob Kerrey's original proposal.

A petition to hold a third special session to consider tax increases failed. The petition, started by Sen. Vard Johnson of Omaha needed 33 signatures.

On the floor of the Legislature, Wednesday, Sen. Johnson said, if he didn't have 33 signatures by the end of the day he would rip it up. Sen. Johnson got 25 signatures.

Another attempt to consider tax increases was ended Wednesday by the State Supreme Court. DeCamp told fellow senators that his requests to have the Supreme Court address whether tax increases could be included in the call was denied.

"I believe this Legislature and this state are in violation of the constitution by not being allowed to deal with the sales and income tax," DeCamp said.



Richard Wright/Daily Nebraskan

Lisa Pepin, 7, tells Santa Claus what she wants for Christmas this year while at Lincoln's East Park Plaza. Lisa is the daughter of Nebraska track coach Gary Pepin.

A 'pole' of Lincoln Santas

Love of kids, extra money reasons for becoming St. Nick

By Shirley Roenfeldt
Staff Reporter

Santa Claus. He may be the most popular man this time of year.

Children of all ages line up to tell him their Christmas wishes and to get a picture taken on his lap. A Santa Claus can be found every day in Lincoln at the Centrum, Gateway and East Park shopping malls.

Most Santas start work the day after Thanksgiving and work each day until Christmas Eve, said Merritt Anderson, Santa Claus at the Centrum.

Children who sit on his lap are between 3 and 8 years of age, Anderson said.

Carl R. Hines, a Santa Claus at East Park Plaza, said some of the younger ones are a little scared.

"The ones who are scared seldom

get their pictures taken," said George Dittoe, Santa Claus at Gateway Mall.

Other children are different.

"Some kids hang around me as much as possible," Anderson said. "I had one little girl come up and just hug me. I asked if she was a happy girl and she said, 'yes.'" All she wanted was a Barbie doll, Anderson said.

All three men said they work as Santas because they like kids and can earn extra money for the holidays.

Pay for Santa Claus ranges from Anderson's \$3.50 per hour to Dittoe's \$4.50 per hour.

"Someone asked me if I'd like to be a Santa Claus. I thought about it overnight and decided to do it," Dittoe said.

Anderson, Hines and Dittoe all

said they are retired from their previous professions and enjoy their seasonal jobs.

"I had one little boy ask for a blow torch," Anderson said. "I asked him if his dad knew. He said, 'Yes, but he won't give me one.'"

Another little boy asked for a best friend, Anderson said. The boy had just moved to Lincoln from Michigan.

"Some children ask for a real live baby brother or sister," Dittoe said. "I just kind of laugh and say Santa can't do much about that."

One of the best things about being Santa Claus is "when I'm in my Santa suit, I can talk to people and they don't mind," Anderson said. "I catch myself in civilian clothes wanting to do the same thing."