

# Daily Nebraskan

Wednesday

**WEATHER**

Today, mostly sunny, northwest wind 5-10 miles per hour, high in the mid 30s. Tonight, clear and cold, low near 20. Thursday, sunny and a little warmer, high in the mid to upper 40s.

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## Governor's race down to the wire



Jeff Willett/Daily Nebraskan

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ben Nelson and running mate Maxine Moul raise their hands, confident of a win, at the Lincoln Hilton Hotel Tuesday night.

### Nelson in the lead; refuses to declare victory over Orr

By Jennifer O'Cilka  
 Senior Reporter

**O**MAHA — After Gov. Kay Orr went home early Wednesday morning, challenger Ben Nelson decided to stick it out at campaign headquarters as incomplete election returns showed him clinging to a slim lead.

With 94 percent of precincts reporting, Democrat Nelson led Republican Orr by about 5,000 votes after 2 a.m. Both had 50 percent of the vote, making a recount possible.

Although the outcome remained undecided, spirits ran high at Nelson's Peony Park headquarters.

"Nobody seems to be that interested in leaving," Nelson said.

Nelson supporters' cheers echoed as he made the announcement to stay on.

About 350 supporters had gathered earlier to support Nelson in his close race. Although the crowd dwindled during the evening, several supporters stayed on into the morning hours.

With 92 percent of the returns in, Nelson said things were looking good, but that the race wasn't over yet. He refused to declare a victory.

"Very honestly, you just can't jump the gun," Nelson said.

Although the race was close at that point, Nelson said he still would be comfortable serving as governor without a stronger win.

"I look at a one-vote majority as a mandate," he said. "If you don't look at it that way you can't be comfortable governing."

See NELSON on 8

## Voters give teeth to commission

By Paul Domeier  
 Senior Reporter

**N**ebraska voters gave some teeth to the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education on Tuesday, voting to amend the state constitution.

In early returns, the amendment was supported by 58 percent of voters, while 42 percent voted against it.

The next move belongs to the Nebraska Legislature, said Don Blank, chairman of the NU Board of Regents.

Amendment 4, placed on the ballot by the Legislature this spring, gives the commission, which was only an advisory body, the power of budget submission and program review.

The Legislature must pass enabling legislation to give the commission more specific duties.

"I've always been in favor of coordination," Blank said, but he talked of limitations the commission should

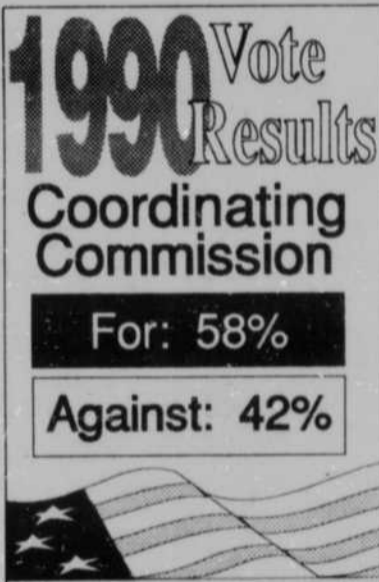
have. Blank said the Legislature should grant the commission power to coordinate the role and mission statements of Nebraska state colleges and universities, to develop a statewide comprehensive education plan and to help avoid duplication among institutions. The only new power for the commission would be to look at new university programs before they are begun, he said.

"I don't think the role of the Board of Regents will be changed at all," Blank said.

The board had endorsed the amendment, but some members had expressed reservations. Blank gave qualified support to the measure Tuesday.

"As long as this commission does what it's intended to do... it will be a very workable situation," he said.

See COMMISSION on 6



## Early returns register defeat of spending lid

By Jana Pedersen  
 Senior Editor

**A** University of Nebraska-Lincoln student who helped form a committee to defeat the 2 percent spending limit initiative said he was ready to celebrate Tuesday after early returns signaled defeat for the measure.

"I don't want to do a Dewey beats Truman here," Students Against 2% Organizer Doug Oxley said, referring to the 1948 presidential election, when early returns falsely predicted Thomas Dewey would defeat Harry S. Truman.

"But if this keeps up, I'll be extremely happy."

Early returns Tuesday night showed 68 percent of Nebraska voters defeating the 2 percent initiative.

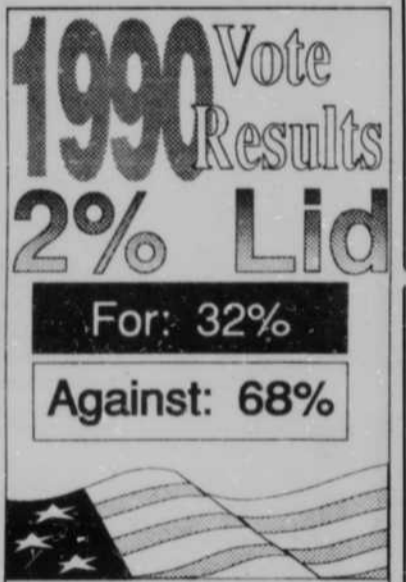
NU Board of Regents Chairman Don Blank of McCook also said he was happy with the projected defeat of Initiative 405, which would have placed 2 percent annual limits on state and local spending increases.

"I was very much in opposition, as was anyone who thought this proposal through," he said.

Although Lee Rupp, NU vice president for relations, said he, too, was pleased with the prediction, he said he was surprised by the wide margin of defeat.

That margin, he said, was due in part to universitywide efforts.

"I've never seen such an effort by the university community," Rupp said. "The university recognized it



for what it was — very dangerous."

Oxley also said he was impressed by the strength of university forces against the measure.

"It really was encouraging," he said. "... I've heard some universities called a 'hotbed of unrest.' Our university was called a 'hotbed of rest,' and I certainly believe that was proven wrong."

UNL Student Regent Phil Gosch added praise to efforts to defeat the measure.

"I think students can really punch themselves in the arm on this one," he said.

Regent Nancy Hoch of Nebraska

See 2 PERCENT on 6

## Exon records thumbs-up victory

By Kris Karnopp  
 Staff Reporter

**P**roclaiming his victory with two thumbs up, U.S. Sen. James Exon said he hoped his reelection would "send signals to future candidates that there is no chance of winning in Nebraska with character assassinations."

"The size of the victory was beyond what anyone imagined," Exon said to a cheering audience of more than 800 at the Lincoln Hilton after early returns showed him leading Republican challenger Hal Daub 60 percent to 40 percent.

Promising to "tackle early the many problems that face Nebraska in the future," Exon said he and fellow Democratic Sen. Bob Kerrey need the "advice, counsel, and help of all Nebraskans."

Throughout his victory speech, Exon thanked his family and supporters for their hard work in his campaign.

"It's clear this time that if we don't have the best candidate, we have the best supporters," Exon said.

Exon's speech closed with the audience singing "Happy Birthday" to his wife, Pat.

Mrs. Exon said her granddaughter

had asked her earlier what her birthday wish was.

"I want Grandpa to win tonight," she had replied to her granddaughter's question.

Before Exon arrived to give his acceptance speech, campaign supporters mingled as if they were at a family reunion rather than at a political party.

Exon supporters were enthusiastic about the large margin of victory.

State Sen. Don Wesely of Lincoln attributed part of Exon's victory to Daub's invitation of former Texas Sen. John Tower to support his cam-

See EXON on 7