

# Orr, supporters retain hope in tight match with Nelson

By Michael Ho  
Staff Reporter

Supporters of Republican Gov. Kay Orr endured an emotional ride on election night, and by 1 a.m. Wednesday, the roller coaster was still spinning.

With 94 percent of precincts reporting by 1:30 a.m., Democratic challenger Ben Nelson led Orr by about 4,000 votes, 258,000 to 254,000. Both held 50 percent of votes, making a recount likely.

The mood was one of quiet confidence as Orr's backers filed into the party at Haymarket Square, 7th and P streets.

Despite early returns showing a Nelson lead, campaign leaders maintained their optimism.

"As far as the campus goes, I feel great," said Kristine Hubka, coordinator of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's chapter of Collegians for Orr.

Her organization spent Monday night covering campus with Orr posters, she said.

"We just plastered them everywhere," she said. "A lot of them were down this morning, but oh, well, that's life."

The consensus among partygoers was that early returns reflected mostly Omaha and Lincoln voters.

Orr pulled away from Nelson in the 10 p.m. election reports, but treading supporters' optimism and evoking cheers and cries of "Four More for Orr" from the crowd.

Deb Fiddelke, a senior advertising and political science major and state co-chairwoman of Young Nebraskans for Orr, predicted that 3rd District voters would nail down an Orr win.

"She's very strong out there," Fiddelke said. "I have a feeling she'll maintain or increase her lead."

But the next television report gave the lead back to Nelson, and by 11 p.m., he led by about 3,500 votes.

Even the six-piece band couldn't lift the spirits of the shocked and surprised Orr supporters.

The governor joined her backers in huddling around the big-screen television awaiting better news. Scattered cheers came as other Republicans solidified their leads, but it was clear that these were small victories for those who worked on the governor's cam-



Al Schaben/Daily Nebraskan

Gov. Kay Orr rests in a private office Tuesday at her Depot headquarters while trailing Ben Nelson in the governor's race.

paign.

Scott Matter, an Orr campaign spokesman, warned Nebraskans to brace themselves for what would be "a long night."

Orr's stunned supporters looked on as Nelson's lead built to nearly 8,000 before midnight.

Jennifer Jorges, a freshman political science major and Orr's canvassing coordinator for Abel-Sandoz Residence Hall complex, said she could barely believe the news.

"It's just a shock to me," she said. "Western Nebraska was what

we expected to carry the governor."

But even with the bad news, she didn't give up hope of an Orr win.

"I think it's still very possible," he said. "I know she still has strong support in western Nebraska. I'm still optimistic."

As of 1 a.m., Orr declined to concede defeat, especially after reports showed her closing to within 3,300 votes of Nelson. She urged Nebraskans to "wait it out."

She returned to the party at 1:50 a.m., thanked her supporters, and left.



Jeff Willett/Daily Nebraskan

Jim Exon and his family thank supporters after his victory in Tuesday's election.

## Exon

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paign effort. Tower had called Exon a "boozier" in an October campaign appearance in Omaha.

"When an outsider comes into Nebraska and makes accusations about a man who has served the state as a governor and a senator, the hometown folks don't like it," Wesely said.

Mike King, a UNL graduate student, said he thought Daub's mistake was in the way he ran his campaign.

"Daub couldn't really attack Exon on the basis of his record so mudslinging was the only choice he had," King said.

Maxine Moul, Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, said Exon's strengths were his name recognition and his seniority in the Senate.

"Exon's seniority and his positions on many key committees gives Nebraska a lot of clout in Washington," Moul said.

Other Exon supporters also pointed to his success in representing Nebraska.

"Exon is a people's senator because he votes on legislation with Nebraska's best interests at heart," said Jerry Edmunds of Lincoln, a clerk for Burlington Northern Railroad.

Chris Beutler, who won his bid for state senator, said Exon represents "something solid and stable" in Nebraska politics.

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Beutler  
newly elected state senator

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Beutler said.  
"Exon is a straightforward, honest man," said Ron Melbye, a member of the Waverly City Council who worked for Exon during his first term as governor of Nebraska. "He really cares about Nebraska."

# Daub congratulates Exon on Senate win

By Sara Bauder Schott  
Senior Reporter

OMAHA — A Christmas tree covered with red Hal Daub balloons stood in the corner waiting with more than 300 Daub supporters at the Holiday Inn.

The campaign volunteers had begun gathering at 8 o'clock. At 9:30 p.m., Daub arrived and went to the microphone. With the crowd on its feet, Daub thanked his volunteers and told them he wasn't ready to throw in the towel.

Early returns showed Daub's opponent, incumbent Dem. James Exon, had 60 percent of the vote.

"Only 21 percent of all the votes that are going to be counted have been counted so far," Daub said. "It's like in Washington — they can't count."

Waiting until half the vote came in to concede the race was a fair way to do things, he said, since 21 percent of the vote did not represent enough of the state.

Less than an hour and a half later, the crowd had dwindled to about 80 people. Daub and his wife Cindy went to the podium again.

This time it was to concede victory to Exon. Daub said he had tried to call Exon but couldn't get through. He left a message, however, to congratulate the senator on his victory and wish him well in his third term.

The election loss had not dimmed Daub's outlook.

When asked if Nebraska would see Daub again, he said, "You can count on it."

In interviews after his concession speech, Daub said that if he runs for office again, he will once again turn down political action committee contributions.



Staci McKee/Daily Nebraskan

Republican Senate candidate Hal Daub enters the ballroom of the Holiday Inn at 72nd and Grover Streets in Omaha Tuesday night.

## Attorney general matchup remains too close to call

The Associated Press

The race for Nebraska attorney general was still too close to call Tuesday night with Republican Don Stenberg maintaining a slim 51 percent to 49 percent lead over Democrat Gene Crump.

Crump, 43, current deputy attorney general, and Stenberg, 42, a Lincoln attorney, were locked in a close battle for the attorney general's office in a poll before Election Day.

Stenberg led Crump 33 percent to 30 percent with 35 percent undecided and 2 percent refusing to answer in a newspaper poll published last week. But the margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points made the lead statistically insignificant.

Crump, a New York native, has practiced law in Lincoln since 1976. He was legal counsel to former Gov. Bob Kerrey and served as acting attorney general in 1985 before Robert Spire was appointed.

Stenberg, a David City native, has practiced law in Lincoln for 15 years. He was legal counsel to Gov. Charles Thone and served as director of the Nebraska Policy Research Office, assistant to the governor and director of the Department of Administrative Services.

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