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Professor discusses economic plan

By Karen Okamoto
Staff Reporter

President Clinton's economic plan will have little if any effect on Nebraska, a UNL economics professor said.

John Anderson, who was one of 600 economists to endorse Clinton's plan during the campaign, began his speech in front of about 30 people in the Nebraska Union Wednesday by saying:

"I will do my best to be an objective observer of the Clinton plan and not be a political apologist for elements of the plan; that is, I'm not here to defend every aspect of the Clinton plan."

With that noted, Anderson said he didn't expect Nebraska to feel the effects as much as other states.

"There are some states that will probably do better than we do and some that will undoubtedly do worse," he said. "But on the balance, I don't see this as a plan that makes life a lot more miserable in Nebraska."

Anderson cited a study by the

Regional Financial Associates. The group reported a zero-percent average annual effect on Nebraska's per-capita gross state product for the years 1992 through 1997.

Arkansas topped the group's list with a 0.3 percent effect, while the District of Columbia was at the bottom, showing a negative 0.4 percent effect.

However, Anderson said he did not know how much credibility to give the study.

The study's zero percent figure given for Nebraska does not match figures he has seen in the newspapers, he said.

Anderson said there was a popular conception that Nebraska would be hurt by the proposed energy tax.

Some economists say an energy tax will affect the agriculture sector more in Nebraska than in non-agricultural states, he said.

But Anderson said the energy tax was only a portion of the proposed taxes, and individual income taxes also needed to be considered.

Because Nebraska has few high-income taxpayers, income tax aspects of the Clinton plan will work to Nebraska's advantage, he said.

The impact of the proposed tax changes start at the \$20,000-in-

come level, but the impacts are concentrated in the high-income tax levels, Anderson said.

At the national level, Anderson said, Clinton's economic stimulus package will have a "relatively small" short-term impact, as it has become the least important part of Clinton's plan.

In political debate, opponents of the plan say the package is spending, not stimulating.

Originally a \$30 billion stimulus package to create 500,000 jobs, Clinton's plan now calls for only about \$16 billion in spending to develop 200,000 jobs, he said.

Referring to the stimulus package as "window dressing," Anderson said the figures of the package still were shrinking, and spending in some areas probably would be eliminated as a result.

As far as Clinton's long-term investment package, Anderson said a problem existed in converting defense jobs to non-defense jobs.

Anderson said Clinton's deficit-reduction plan was a "modest amount of reduction."

He said Clinton's deficit-reduction plan was not as severe as Ross Perot's plan, but it was more ambitious than President Bush's plan.

Benes

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Board of Regents.

Benes said another challenge would be to get more students involved in ASUN.

ASUN is more than just a political body, Benes said. It also provides student services such as an information center and student legal advice. There are numerous ASUN positions that still need to be filled, Benes said.

Benes said he planned to recruit students personally for ASUN involvement by attending meetings of campus organizations and talking directly to individuals.

Benes said his personal approach in his campaign helped him win the election.

But the win did not come easy. Benes suffered a string of bad luck that caused him to miss almost all major campaign appearances.

In February, a crucial campaign month, Benes said he started feeling sick but kept up his schedule because he didn't want to jeopardize the election. His condition worsened and culminated when he passed out on the day of his party's announcement.

Six days before the election, Benes was in a car accident that left him with a concussion and kept him in bed for four days.

Some said Benes' bad luck was the result of nervousness. But Benes disputed that explanation and said he loved public speaking.

Benes said he was able to win the election in spite of his bad luck be-

cause of his "grass-roots" campaign. He said that because of his party's strong organization, he didn't have to rely on debates and last-minute campaigning.

Benes said his early campaign planning, which began in October, enabled him to gain enough support to carry him to victory in the end.

Benes said his unlucky streak ended when he won the election, and that he spent some of his spring break recuperating.

Since the election, Benes said, he has been preparing to take office by gathering information, reading by-laws, studying the budget, asking questions and preparing himself for his position on the board of regents.

Although this is the first time Benes has held an ASUN position, he said he would be able to get things accomplished.

Benes said he was eager to begin his new job, and was especially excited about working with the regents.

"It's a great opportunity for me to take part in decisions that will affect students long after I graduate and move on," he said.

In an interview on the night before his installation, Benes appeared relaxed and laid back, sporting his hat backward and cracking jokes.

Benes said he was looking forward to serving UNL students, but that he was not going to forget to have fun.

"Too many people get caught up in stuff they are doing," Benes said.

"I kind of like to hang onto the kid (in me)," he said. "That's why I like to wear my hat backwards."

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