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WEATHER:

Today - Partly sunny. South wind 5 to 15 mph.

Tonight - Mostly cloudy. Low in the mid to upper 30s.

November 21, 1995

Skywalk to shine for holidays

By Thor Schrock
Staff Reporter

A Christmas tree made of garland, lights and a star will decorate the O Street skywalk when downtown Lincoln gets its annual holiday face lift.

Holidays



The skywalk decorations will be part of more than 230,000 lights, 150 timers, 37,000 feet of wiring, 60 trees and 136 buildings that will light up Dec. 1 when Mayor Mike Johanns flips the switch.

Kay Davis, director of finance and administration for the Downtown Lincoln Association, said the group had planned to add the skywalk to decoration plans last year, but the skywalk wasn't constructed in time.

"It was a decision by the committee that this would be a perfect place for a display," Davis said. "It is central downtown and it's on O Street."

Unlike some of the other buildings that have permanent mounting devices for holiday displays, the skywalk requires special removable supports to ensure that its silhouette is not permanently affected.

Davis said such precautions were common.

"There has been extra care taken because of what the skywalk is made of, but each building has its own technicalities we had to deal with," she said.

After the display received approval from many organizations, including the State of Nebraska and the Urban Design Committee, restrictions were made to protect the skywalk and those driving below it, said Gene Langdale, a maintenance supervisor for the downtown association.

"Nothing can touch the windows or touch or bang the aluminum at all," Langdale said. "It's a very touchy place. Nothing can be loose."

The holiday decorations throughout downtown, especially the skywalk, will serve as a backdrop for the Star City Holiday Parade. The annual gala will make its way through downtown streets Dec. 2 at 11 a.m.

A pre-parade drawing will be held for 40 viewing spots on the skywalk. Those interested in entering the drawing should send their name, address, phone number(s) and number of tickets desired to: Festival Central — Skywalk, 129 N. 10th St., Suite 111, Lincoln, Neb. 68508.

Requests can be made for up to four tickets.



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Gusty winds forced Glenn E. Keating Sr., left, and Lyle Disney to re-secure the garland on a downtown light pole Monday. Lincoln's downtown district will light up Dec. 1 with 230,000 lights as Mayor Mike Johanns throws the switch for the annual holiday display.

Candidate strikes chord during visit

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

One of the three chancellor candidates at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln says he's not afraid to use the 'f-word.'

James Moeser, provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of South Carolina, said UNL could hold its own as the flagship campus in the NU system.

Moeser met with more than 60 faculty members, administrators, staff and students at a reception Monday at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

"I don't know of another state that more emphatically supports its university," he said.

UNL's land-grant mission, research goals and academic excellence make it stand out, he said.

"I am going to use the word — the f-word," he said. "This is the flagship university of the state."

And Moeser wants to be the captain, which would be a step up from being a provost.

"A provost is like a night watchman at a cemetery," he said. "You have a lot of people under you, but no one is paying a lot of attention."

The reception crowd was paying attention, however.

Faculty members who met with Moeser said

See RECEPTION on 3

WSU provost to jazz Lincoln campus today

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

During the day, Thomas George can be found in the provost's office at Washington State University.

But on Friday nights, he can be found at the Hilltop restaurant in Pullman, Wash., tickling the ivories.

He also can be found in record stores and on radio stations across the country.

And today, he can be found at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, meeting with faculty and staff. A reception will be held for him in Sheldon Memorial Art

Gallery at 4:15 p.m.

George, one of three candidates for the chancellor's seat at the UNL, has made a name for himself swinging on the root of American music — jazz.

He started playing the piano when he was 6. Although he entered Yale University as a chemistry student, his mother offered to pay for organ lessons and asked him to keep playing.

But George needed a tutor.

He contacted the head organist at Yale — who didn't have time to tutor a chemistry student — so he was referred to six graduate students. There were five men and one woman.

The five men were too busy to tutor him, he said, so he called the woman, Barbara Harbach.

Harbach was the organist at the Methodist Church on the Green. She said she would be George's tutor on one condition — that he

Congress' compromise good until Dec. 15

Federal workers wonder about future shutdowns

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Federal workers were smiling as they returned to their jobs Monday at the Robert V. Denney Federal Building. But their happiness was mixed with concern over how long their return to work would last.

More than 200 federal employees in Lincoln returned to work Monday after Congress ended a six-day government shutdown by passing a bill to finance the government through Dec. 15.

Bill Blomberg, district manager of the federal Social Security office in Lincoln said his employees were happy to return to work but apprehensive about the new deal. Blomberg was not sent home during the shutdown because of his position at the office.

"People were apprehensive as to whether they would get paid or not," Blomberg said. "They had plenty of work to do, and they were concerned how that would get done."

Part of the agreement allowed unemployed workers to be paid for the days that they were sent home.

Linda Zumpfe, who works for the National Park Service, said NPS employees were wondering Monday if they would have needed to apply for unemployment benefits if the furlough had continued.

Zumpfe also said many NPS employees were told that they couldn't volunteer to work at their jobs during the furlough and would be fired if they showed up.

"It seems kind of strange that somebody could tell you not to come to work," Zumpfe said. "We have to listen to Washington, and it's kind of sad that we have to do that. It feels like they own us, and that kind of feels strange."

Jim Mau, the district director's representative for the Internal Revenue Service, said he was glad to be back at work. Mau, who has been furloughed before, said he was busy catching up on work missed during the shutout.

"We have been rescheduling appointments that were missed last week, and we are making sure all the tax payments have been made," Mau said.

Gov. Ben Nelson was among those with mixed emotions.

"While the compromise is certainly good

See GOVERNMENT on 2

Bill ends federal freeze, budget yet to be wrestled

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Nebraska Sen. James Exon said he was pleased with the legislation agreement that sent the nation's federal employees back to work Monday.

The House of Representatives and Senate passed a bill to finance the federal government until Dec. 15. This will return the country to a degree of normalcy, Exon told reporters Monday in Lincoln.

But, he said, the government still has a long way to go before the Dec. 15 deadline.

"The real heavy lifting starts now," Exon said. "This was a minor skirmish to get to the point where we could get a continuing resolution to keep government working for the next three weeks."

"Nothing was settled. All of the heavy lifting, all of the details of the budget, all the decisions we wrestled with have to be done over again, and nothing is for certain."

See EXON on 2

See GEORGE on 3