

PACT aims to curb violence at youth level

By Kasey Kerber
Staff Reporter

Gov. Ben Nelson was joined in his weekly media teleconference by Assistant U.S. Attorney General Laurie Robinson to discuss Nebraska's efforts at reducing youth violence.

Robinson is visiting Lincoln to learn Nebraska's participation in a program called Pulling American Communities Together (PACT).

The program was created in 1983 as a partnership between the governor's office and the U.S. Attorney General's office. Only three other cities in the nation have PACT programs. They are: Atlanta, Denver and Washington.

And Robinson said she was pleased with what she had seen so far.

"I think a valuable part of this pro-

gram is that it recognizes that youth violence did not develop overnight and will not be solved overnight," Robinson said.

Nelson stressed the importance of reducing youth violence through the program.

"We unfortunately put more young people away in detention for longer periods of time," he said. "Yet I have no doubt that prevention and intervention can be implemented at the youth level."

Nelson said PACT's goals included ensuring safe communities and building these communities by increasing youth participation in them and strengthening individual and community values within the community.

Robinson did stress that she was observing the program from an "unofficial" evaluation standpoint.

Open forum to address campus violence tonight

The first forum on tackling campus violence will be tonight, sponsored by the chancellor's task force to study violence.

Peg Blake, co-chairwoman of the Task Force on Conduct Standards and Behavioral Expectations, said the open forum would be at 6 p.m. in the Nebraska Union.

"They are open for anyone in the university or outside community who has ideas, concerns or perceptions of the issues the task force is dealing with," Blake said.

All issues are open for discussion, she said.

"I don't know what to expect," she said. "We want to give everyone an outlet to express concerns in a forum where all members of the task force are present."

The 12-member task force was appointed by Interim Chancellor Joan Leitzel in light of an assault last semester by NU football player Lawrence Phillips on a former girlfriend.

Members are working to evaluate

and research violence and crime on campus.

The task force also is meeting in closed sessions with different organizations on campus to discuss their perceptions of violence on campus.

Three additional dates have been set for open forums.

The dates, times and places are:

— Thursday from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Union.

— Feb. 6 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the East Union.

— Feb. 7 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Nebraska Union.

The dates for the forums are close together, so the task force can get public opinion as soon as possible, Blake said.

"We want to get this wrapped up in February as soon as possible," she said. "We want to hear from everyone as soon as we can."

The task force's preliminary report to the chancellor is due at the beginning of March.

— Julie Sobczyk

Fate of destroyed presidential house still being evaluated

Almost two weeks after fire ravaged the University of Nebraska's presidential residence, the fate of the gutted building is still undecided.

Joe Rowson, director of university public affairs, said the university administration was working with Allendale Mutual Insurance Company of Johnston, R.I.

Theresa Klein, director of public relations for the NU Foundation, said representatives from the foundation, administration and possibly Paul Shorr III, the son of the house's donor, would meet this week to discuss alternatives.

The Jan. 18 blaze caused \$650,000 damage to the house and its contents. The fire was caused by an electric heater that ignited the ceiling of the

garage in which it was contained.

Some of President Dennis Smith's personal property was recovered from the house, Rowson said. Smith's library, research materials and artwork were undamaged in his office, Rowson said.

Most of the house's furnishings, which were owned by the university, were destroyed, Rowson said. Some cabinets were damaged but intact, and the crystal and dishes inside were salvaged.

A grand piano was also intact, but insurance adjusters were determining if it could be salvaged, Rowson said.

— Chad Lorenz

UNL: No policy for snow days

By Erin Schulte
Staff Reporter

The next time you're trudging through a blizzard on your way to class and cursing UNL's school-cancellation policy, just stop it.

There isn't one.

Paul Carlson, associate vice chancellor for business and finance at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said the decision to close the university was a "judgment call." Inches of snow or extreme temperatures are not criteria that directly affect the decision.

"We do not have a policy that says 'We have to have 5 inches or 24 inches to close school,'" he said.

And sub-zero temperatures are not necessarily a factor, he said.

"That's not a good reason to close school. We believe that in Nebraska, we have winters, and you just expect to have cold weather," Carlson said.

One thing he said would affect school closing was students' inability to get to class safely.

The chancellor's office decides if classes will be canceled, Carlson said. The business and finance office gives input because they have employees—such as the university police—who monitor campus 24 hours a day and are aware of the weather, he said.

The chancellor's office also checks with Accu-weather and the weather service before cancellations are made, Carlson said.

Student and faculty safety is important to the university, Carlson said. Because recent temperatures have not been "life-threatening," proper clothing should be enough to keep students safe.

Two weeks ago, UNL canceled daytime classes for the first time in two years, with a two-hour delay in the start of morning classes, Carlson said.

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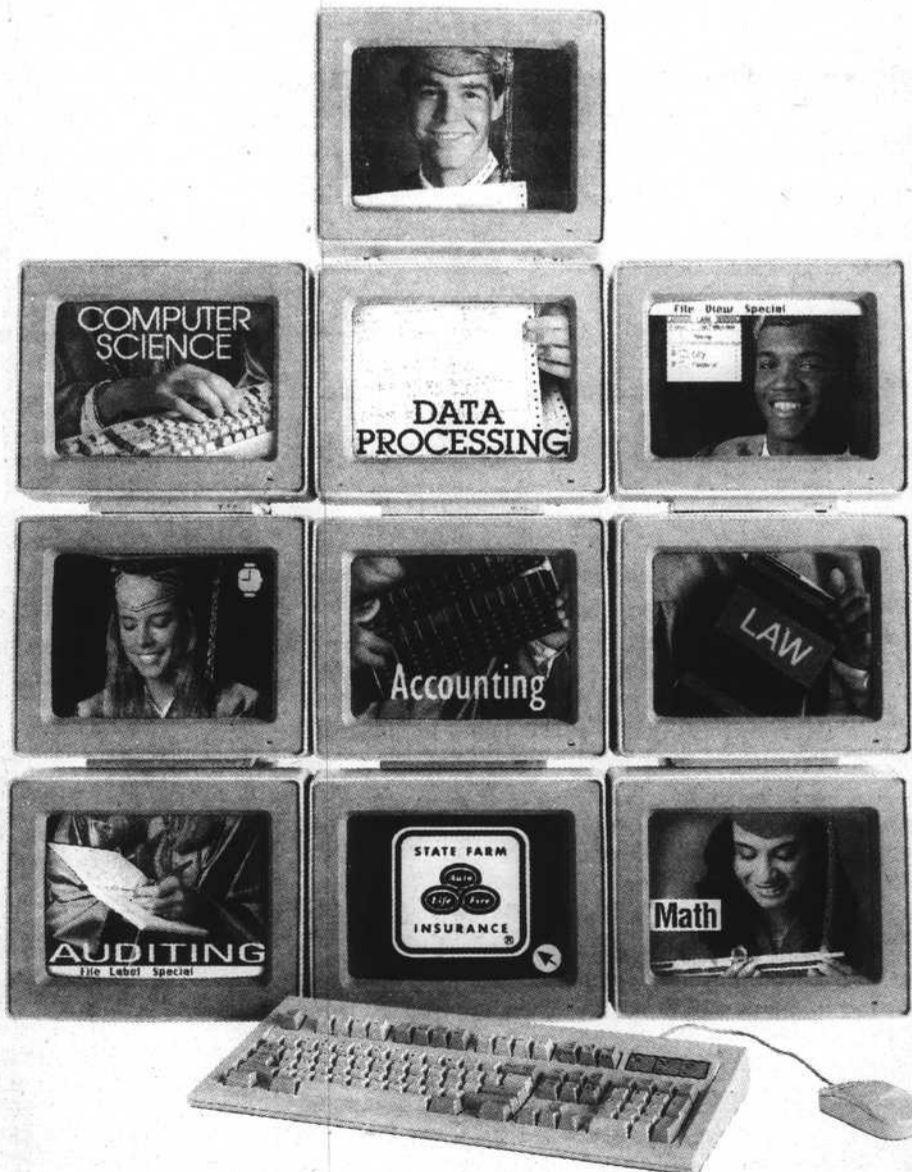
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