

Food Bank gets new building

Area businessman donates space in north Lincoln

By **LORI ROBISON**
Staff Reporter

The Food Bank of Lincoln will soon have more room in its pantry.

Beginning next year, the organization will move into a new building donated by an area businessman.

Harley Bair, owner of Bair Investment Company, donated 21,000 square feet of building space five blocks north of Superior Street. The new space measures twice the size of the Food Bank's current 8,300-square foot building on 4800 N. 57th St.

Wende Baker, the Food Bank's executive director, said in a press release that a 117 percent annual growth since 1987 has made storage space a precious, limited commodity.

Even though it needed food donations, the Food Bank had to turn away food because it had nowhere to store it.

"We cannot operate efficiently in such a small space," Baker said. "A

bigger facility will allow us to receive larger quantities of dry, frozen and refrigerated products."

After Bair, a longtime supporter of many area charities and causes, learned about the organization and toured its facilities, he said he realized just how badly the bank needed extra space.

Not wanting to wait until the Food Bank could find and buy a suitable site, Bair donated the lot at 48th and Superior streets, bought the bank's current building at 4800 N. 57th St. and hired Ayars & Ayars Inc. to begin construction of the new building.

The organization should be able to move in by January.

"As our population ages, we're going to have more people who will need assistance of one sort or another," Bair said. "People are living longer and there's more homeless people now who need help."

Outbacks in the federal food stamps program are likely to increase the num-

ber of applicants for help, Baker said. Recently, the Lincoln Interfaith Council Emergency Network reported an increase from 4,567 served in 1982, to 15,788 in 1995.

It also reported a 16 percent increase in meals served through area soup kitchens.

To keep up with the growing need, the Food Bank's directors will launch a public Capital Campaign in January to raise \$500,000.

In the meantime, other businesses are joining Bair in showing support.

NIFCO Mechanical Systems Inc., a Lincoln company that installs sprinkling systems, eliminated its profits from the estimate for installing a system in the new building after the company found out the building was for the new Food Bank.

"I don't have a lot of time to give, but I can give money," Bair said. "I have been very fortunate to be able to do these things."

He said what matters "is my own recognition that I did the best I could."

Teachers support Nelson's views

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important for all the little people — people whose families are not elite."

Nelson said he supported the U.S. Department of Education but wanted the agency to give funding to states in block grants. Nebraska educators can better decide how to spend funds than federal bureaucrats, he said.

Nelson said he visited Nebraska schools last week, where school children told him their dreams and hopes for the future.

Children know a solid education will dramatically increase their opportunities to succeed in the future, he said.

"Our children's future deserves nothing less, and we will give them nothing less," he said.

Don Olson, a disabled World War II veteran from Omaha, said he supported Nelson because the governor gave straight answers about the future, his plans for Nebraska and for Washington D.C.

"Ben Nelson is a man of truth," Olson said. "He doesn't beat around the bush."

After the rally, Olson was one of 200 supporters who joined the governor Saturday in canvassing neighborhoods statewide and talking to more than 200,000 Nebraska households about the senate race.

The governor knocked on doors in Omaha, greeting parents, children and a few friendly pets with campaign

"We cannot afford in this country to lose the public education that we have. It's important for all the little people — people whose families are not elite."

BETH FELDMAN

teacher at Omaha Central High School

hopes.

For example, a brown-spotted dog ran from its home when its owner opened the front door to greet Nelson. The governor whistled and snapped his fingers to call the animal back, and the dog trotted immediately to his side.

One man ran down a neighborhood street to catch up with Nelson and offer support for the Senate race. The governor appeared surprised by the man's overwhelming enthusiasm and support — and his offer of a \$500 check.

A recent poll shows the campaign enthusiast is not alone in his support for Nelson.

The nonpartisan Mason-Dixon poll released Friday puts Nelson in a 13-point lead in the Senate race and a 60 percent "favorable" approval rating.

Polls released by the Hagel campaign Oct. 11 showed the race closing to a 3 percent lead.

Arlene Newell, a teacher at Hale Middle School in Omaha, said Nelson is pulling ahead in polls because voters trust him on the issues, including school funding.

Although educators and the governor have not agreed on all funding issues, Nelson can be trusted to care for public schools, she said, while Hagel would endanger schools by cutting federal funds.

"We have had our disagreements with Nelson, just like you have disagreements with your kids," Newell said.

"Sometimes the budget gets tight, and you have to cut their allowance. "But you don't cut them off."

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Note: The statements and opinions expressed by the speakers are personal and do not represent official positions of the Department of Defense.

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