



Drug arrests

Lincoln Police, Lancaster County Sheriffs and the Nebraska State Patrol rounded up 20 to 25 people Thursday as a two-year-long drug investigation rolled on.

Police said the suspects were wanted for dealing drugs including marijuana, LSD, methamphetamines and cocaine.

The arrests Thursday were the result of a two-year undercover investigation by the three law enforcement agencies and the Lancaster County Attorney's office.

"We've got a real drug problem right now and we'll use every deterrent that we can to try and bring it to a closure," Lincoln Police Capt. Duaine Bullock said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Christensen's departure opens up House election

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many elections. He said Steve Kupka, chief of staff for Omaha Mayor Hal Daub; Clarke Stevens, an Omaha orthodontist; and Kyle Hutchings, Douglas County commissioner, have expressed interest in running.

Sigerson said Omaha voters are still attracted by the conservative reforms proposed in the GOP's Contract With America, which the party introduced while sweeping to control both houses of Congress in the 1994 elections. He predicted Omaha voters would do their part to continue the "Republican revolution."

"I think people generally understand that the Republican reforms aren't done yet," Sigerson said. "The Republicans have been the only ones to at least make steps to reduce government and give people their money back."

Christensen, who was first elected to Congress in the 1994 GOP victories, will leave after four years in office. He served on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee during both terms.

Kerry Winterer, chairman of the Douglas County Republican Party, said Christensen's decisive re-election in 1996 indicates voters are likely to elect a conservative candidate in 1998.

"I think it's safe to say the district has liked what Jon has done since 1994," he said. "The candidates in next year's race can take a lesson from that."

Terry, who has served on the Omaha City Council since 1991, said he favors a balanced budget and the return of power to state and local governments.

"Coming from local government, I have a lot of trust in local government," Terry said. "That's an attitude that Washington lacks."

Terry said he, like many voters, was skeptical about the recent congressional resolution to balance the federal budget deficit by 2002. If elected, he said, he would push to make the balanced budget a reality.

Winterer said Meredith Christensen will bring a conservative message of tax cuts and a balanced budget to the race.

Also, he said, the Washington connections and fund-raising ability she developed while working for her then-husband's 1994 campaign will be beneficial in her congressional bid.

Democrat officials excited about possible candidates

BY BRIAN CARLSON
Assignment Reporter

Election '98

Republican Jon Christensen's decision to run for governor has provided the Democratic Party with what it views as a golden opportunity in the 2nd District congressional race.

Christensen's gubernatorial bid means he will be leaving his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, and the stage is set for a battle for the open seat in the November 1998 election. Democratic Party officials said they like their chances of winning the race and are eager to place some candidates in the mix.

"We were delighted when Jon Christensen decided to run for governor," said Gary Randall, 2nd District chairman of the Nebraska Democratic Party.

The makeup of the Democratic field in the May primary election, party officials said, will be largely dependent on the intentions of a man familiar to the Omaha district: former U.S. Rep. Peter Hoagland.

Hoagland, a Democrat who represented the district in Congress from 1989-95, has expressed interest in regaining his old seat. Defeated by Christensen in the 1994 election, he is now working as an attorney in Washington, D.C.

Randall said he expects Hoagland to announce in the next seven to 10 days if he will run.

Other possible candidates will probably wait until after Hoagland's decision before deciding whether they will run, Randall said.

Tricia Bruning, executive director of the Nebraska Democratic Party, said four to five Democratic candidates besides Hoagland are considering bids, although none has entered the race yet.

She said Chris McClean, who has worked in Washington for 15 years as a staff worker for U.S. Sens. James Exon and Bob Kerrey, is pondering a bid. She

"The voters want someone who will represent them, not further their own political ambitions."

TRICIA BRUNING
State Democratic Party director

would not name the three to four other possible candidates.

Two Republicans have announced their candidacies in the 2nd District race. Omaha City Councilman Lee Terry and Meredith Christensen, Jon Christensen's ex-wife, will appear on the May primary ballot.

Randall said the party would like to field a candidate with a "broad-based appeal" to Omaha voters and a concern with issues such as minimum wage, health care and family issues.

"These are basically the traditional issues that the Democratic Party has worried about, because we're worried about our fellow man," he said.

Bruning said the candidates would address such Omaha issues as city expansion, infrastructure and bridge construction across the Missouri River.

In addition, Bruning said, national issues like campaign finance reform and re-engaging voters in the democratic process will be important to voters.

"The message for voters is that our candidates are going to do what's best for Omaha," she said. "The voters want someone who will represent them, not further their own political ambitions."

Randall said he expects potential candidates will make their decisions in the next 30 days.

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