

Hoppner, Johanns want race focused on issues

Both candidates seek campaign that keeps voters' concerns first

BY TIM KARSTENS
Staff Reporter

educational choices such as home schooling and school-voucher programs.

"Home schooling should be embraced and supported," Johanns said but added, "but I don't think you can be governor of Nebraska without supporting education."

Little is known about voucher programs and it is not proven they can work said Hoppner. Furthermore, too many questions remain about funding and which students such a program would include.

"I have got real concerns with school-voucher programs," Hoppner said. "It would deteriorate our public-school system and we can't afford that."

Both candidates said improving higher education and looking for ways to ease growing tuition rates were also areas deserving change.

"We need to have priorities and fund them to excellence," Johanns said referring to education.

Another priority for both candidates is crime prevention and curbing the influx of drugs into Nebraska. Of special concern to both candidates is the growing methamphetamine problem in Nebraska.

"I think we need to beef up the state patrol and drug interdiction efforts in Nebraska," Hoppner said. "We need to coordinate well our entire effort."

Johanns also said he would increase the Nebraska State Patrol's presence to stem drug traffic along Interstate 80.

"My number one priority for state funding is the state patrol," Johanns said.

One source of revenue would be the increased income a sound economic development policy would ensure. Convincing businesses and people that Nebraska is a great place to be is crucial to economic development, both candidates said.

"On business trips, I have run into former Nebraskans who commute two hours a day and are concerned about quality education," Hoppner said. "They want to come back."

Both candidates said they were happy with the primary's results and looked forward to the campaign ahead. Although Johanns said the Republican primary sometimes veered into negative campaigning, he remains confident the governors race will stay clean and issue-oriented.

"I expect to focus on the issues and debate the role of government," Johanns said. "We will avoid most of (the negative campaigning) if we focus on the issues."

Both men profess a profound belief in the potential of Nebraska.

Both have made careers in Nebraska government and both wish to claim the grand prize of Nebraska government in the Nov. 3 governor election.

Democrat Bill Hoppner and Republican Mike Johanns say they can govern and they want voters to know about it.

"In some respects it isn't the next level," Johanns said when asked if he was ready to move up from Lincoln mayor to Nebraska governor. "I have dealt with the same things a governor has, I'm ready to go on day one."

On the other side, Hoppner has his own opinions and beliefs.

"I have experience in a government founded on public principles," Hoppner said. "It's important to develop policies to benefit all of Nebraska's 1.6 million people."

The primaries are over and Nebraskans are left with Hoppner and Johanns as candidates for the soon-to-be-available governor's job.

For the next five months voters will be inundated with campaign issues and promises in a seemingly endless parade of commercials, advertisements and roadside signs. Pay attention because the message is important, the candidates said.

Perhaps the most talked about issue will be tax relief. As a whole, Nebraska citizens shoulder one of the greatest individual tax burdens in the U.S. Relieving that burden, especially for working families, is a major concern, the candidates said.

"The greatest need for relief is in property tax," Johanns said. "And the people who need it are property owners. We need to continue to focus on that."

Hoppner said the state is already working on reducing taxes but needs to continue lowering taxes without sacrificing important programs such as education.

"We are on the road to reducing taxes already," Hoppner said. "But the question is whether we are going to increase education funding as we reduce taxes."

The Hoppner campaign has made education funding and improvement major campaign issues.

Johanns said education funding was a great concern but he's focused more on

Campaigning for the Capitol

As the gubernatorial race gains momentum, Johanns and Hoppner give their views of what's best for Nebraska.

Candidates	Personal Information	Goals	Experience
 Johanns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Born in Osage, Iowa ■ Married: wife, Stephanie Justin and Michaela ■ BA from St. Mary's in Minnesota in 1971 ■ Juris Doctorate from Creighton University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce government spending ■ Lower taxes ■ Grow the economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lincoln Mayor 1991-1998 ■ County Commissioner ■ City Council Member
 Hoppner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Born in Pender, Neb. ■ Married: wife, Nancy Jill and Amy ■ Business degree from UNL in 1972 ■ Law degree from UNL in 1974 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce property tax ■ Improve public education ■ Develop economy for all sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Legal counsel to Gov. Jim Exon ■ Sen. Jim Exon's Chief of Staff ■ Bob Kerrey's Chief of Staff as governor and senator



Johanns



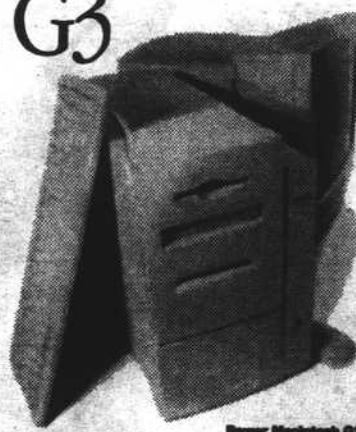
Hoppner

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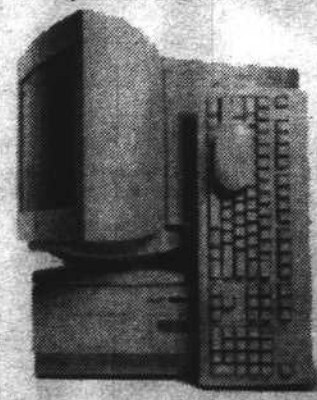
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