

Election '98

State republicans split over speech

By TODD ANDERSON
Senior staff writer

Though united physically at this summer's state convention, Nebraska Republicans felt more divided than ever following comments made by the state's senior Republican leader.

First district Rep. Doug Bereuter, addressing the state convention, called on Republican leaders convening in June to evaluate how well they represent Nebraska's voters.

"I urge each of you ... to constantly examine whether what our party does and says is really relevant to the most pressing problems and greatest opportunities facing our nation, and especially whether what we propose and do really has relevance for the daily lives of the average American," he said before a

standing-room-only crowd in Grand Island.

Bereuter criticized leaders who single out social issues and use them to make policy decisions, as well as politicians who have jumped on the religious conservative bandwagon.

"Although I don't wear it like an arm badge, religion, Christianity, is a keystone in my personal life," Bereuter said. "Yet I must tell you that I wince every time our prayers at Republican gatherings are overtly Christian and exclusionary of Jews, Moslems, Hindu or the Asian religions that are practiced by our fellow Americans."

The congressman's remarks shocked GOP conventioners and sent ripples of heated debate through the party and state media over the possible divide in the Republican party.

Bob Bennie, chairman of the Lancaster County Republican Party and treasurer of the state GOP, said he was offended by Bereuter's comments.

He said he was appalled by the idea that Republican leaders should moderate their views rather than stand up for what is right.

"The big issue here is who runs the Nebraska Republican Party: the politicians or the party," he said. "I think it's the party according to (our) constitution."

After reaffirming support for the Republican candidates and the state platform, Bennie found himself under investigation by a committee of the executive board of the Republican party for possibly failing to fulfill the duties of his position as county chairman.

However, despite the controversy, GOP leaders, including state GOP Chairman Chuck Sigerson, stressed that the party remains united.

"Although brothers and sisters will occasionally have squabbles, the next day we'll still be friends," Sigerson said.

Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns, Republican candidate for governor, also spoke about party cohesion and the importance of the GOP's friendship with conservative groups.

"There are a lot of people in Nebraska who are very Christian, very conservative and pro-life, and they are welcome in our party," Johanns said.

The convention played host to regional and national political figures, including GOP presidential nomination hopefuls Sen. John Ashcroft of Missouri, Family Research Council President Gary Bauer and Ohio Rep. John Kasich.

Republicans also welcomed the participation of conservative groups such as the Christian Coalition and Focus on the Family at the convention.

The Christian Coalition held a prayer breakfast and invited its national executive director, Randy Tate, to speak at a convention breakfast.

Sigerson said the state convention was a success and that his party is ready for victory in November.

"We've got great candidates," he said.

"I think when the smoke clears in November, you'll see a Republican in the governor's office."

Democrats emphasize opposition of spending lid

By TODD ANDERSON
Senior staff writer

As their candidate for governor took a strong stand against a proposed constitutional spending lid this summer, the Nebraska Democrats came together to prepare for the November election at their annual state convention in late June.

Bill Hoppner, the Democratic candidate for governor, addressed his party's state convention at the Ramada Plaza Hotel in Lincoln and criticized his Republican opponent for supporting a constitutional state spending lid submitted for approval to appear on the November ballot.

Hoppner said the Business Summit amendment would not allow state legislators to provide property tax relief to the state and would cut off state funding for education and local government.

Hoppner said the spending lid proposal was the fundamental issue in this year's campaign.

His Republican opponent, Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns, originally supported the spending lid, but decided to oppose it later in July.

Former U.S. Sen. Jim Exon supported Hoppner's assessment of the spending lid, saying it would be detrimental to several needed state spending programs.

In addition to hearing speeches and rallying support for candidates, delegates to the convention formally selected Lincoln attorney Pat

Knapp as their candidate for state attorney general.

The Democratic nomination had been left unfilled after Lt. Gov. Kim Robak decided not to accept the nomination by write-in vote in the May primaries.

Knapp accepted the nomination and later called on Nebraska voters to evaluate the performance of current Attorney General Don Stenberg.

"There's more to being the people's lawyer than just enforcing the death penalty," Knapp said in a statement.

Knapp also filed a formal complaint against Stenberg with the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission for misuse of state funds granted for consumer protection and education.

She also challenged Stenberg to promise to complete his full term as state attorney general if he is elected and not to run for U.S. senator opposite Bob Kerrey in the 2000 election.

Stenberg declined Knapp's challenge and stressed that he has not made a decision whether to run for the U.S. Senate seat in two years.

Ann Boyle, who was elected new party chairman, said the Democratic ticket lists several "top-notch" candidates.

"We feel like we have a really solid slate of candidates, from governor to attorney general," she said.

"It just doesn't quit," Boyle said.

"The state will be in very capable hands when they are elected."

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Alumna leaves UNL \$125 million

WILL from page 2

■ 12.5 percent would go to improve academic programs. Troutman said the chancellor will determine which programs will benefit from the endowment, pending approval from the regents.

The chancellor decided to allocate a large portion of the funds to the additions on the library and the engineering building to go along with the top two priorities on the priority list of Campaign Nebraska, an ongoing fund-raising drive.

The list identifies the top priorities for building and other improvements on each Nebraska campus, Troutman

said.

UNL is not the only beneficiary named in the will.

Planned Parenthood of New York; Brooklyn Botanic Garden; Long Island College Hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y.; the Brooklyn Historical Society; and the Omaha Board of Education are several of the beneficiaries named.

Those beneficiaries must agree on a court settlement before the gift is final, which could take about three months, the regents were told.

After Othmer's death, her niece, Mary Seina, challenged the 1988 will in court.

Othmer's surviving descendants will receive \$45 million before inheritance taxes, leaving them with a total of \$19.95 million.

The Othmers graduated from the University of Nebraska in the 1920s.

They each invested \$25,000 in 1970 with Buffett, who runs the Berkshire Hathaway investment company. One share of the stock was \$42 at the time.

Berkshire Hathaway stock closed at \$72,310 per share Wednesday. Othmer's estate included about 7,500 shares of the stock.

The Associated Press and New York Times contributed to this story.

Football tickets still available for students

By JOSH FUNK
Senior staff writer

The next 230 students who apply for football tickets will be pleasantly surprised.

Season tickets are still available for Husker fans who move quickly, Ticket Office Manager John Anderson said.

Though the Eddie Robinson Football Classic against Louisiana Tech is sold out, tickets are still available for the rest of this year's home games.

Last year, tickets were sold out a month earlier, but Anderson said the remaining tickets will sell quickly.

For \$107.50, which is up \$20 from last year, students can get tickets to six home games including Big 12 rival Colorado.

Students also can get tickets to this year's migration game Oct. 3 against Oklahoma State, which will be played in Kansas City, Mo., at Arrowhead Stadium.

One thousand migration game tickets will be sold for \$22.50 each in a ticket lottery Sept. 14-18.

Season ticket holders can pick up their tickets anytime between Aug. 24 and Sept. 4.

This year football ticket holders also will be given priority on basketball tickets until Sept. 4. Basketball tickets will go on sale to the public after Sept. 8.

The Ticket Office will have a booth at Sunday's Big Red Welcome, where any remaining football and basketball tickets will be sold.

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