

Candidates prepare for election

Old, new faces prepare for Lincoln mayoral race in May

BY ERIC RINEER
Staff writer

Five mayoral candidates are ready to kick off their campaigns for the May election.

The race includes some new faces seeking office for the first time, and a couple of old pros with years of political experience under their belt.

The three first-time political candidates are Randall Reichert, a University of Nebraska law student; Terry Kubicek, an attorney and self-employed farmer; and Jim Wrenholt, the leader of the P Street petition drive, and owner of Nordic Software at 301 P Street.

The more experienced candidates – City Councilwoman Cindy Johnson and former state Sen. Don Wesely – plan to continue their political careers with this campaign.

Reichert, a Republican, said he was eager to fix problems in the community pertaining to public transportation, big businesses and public safety.

But most importantly, he said, a major goal would be to veto any ideas about developing in Antelope Valley.

The Antelope Valley Study is a \$200 million project geared toward downtown rehabilitation and Antelope Creek flood protection.

Reichert's main concern, he said, was the cost mentioned in the proposal. He said he expected about \$115 million of that \$200 million to be billed to the city.

Reichert also stressed concerns over proposals by the city to develop at Wilderness Park in the Stephen's Creek area.

"It's foolish," Reichert said.

Any development near Wilderness Park would interrupt the park's natural process of soaking up large amounts of water that normally would rush into Lincoln, Reichert said.

"If we develop Wilderness Park, then that area can no longer hold the water that it currently does," he said. "So, basically all of downtown and South Salt Creek neighborhood, the bottoms – all that area – will be under water."

Reichert said he seeks to bring a fresh perspective to the mayor's office.

"My two main opponents – Don Wesely and Cindy Johnson – are career politicians," he said. "They've been in the business so long they have blinders on to other alternatives of

City Elections

how to do things."

Kubicek, also a Republican, said he, too, was concerned about numerous developing projects proposed by the city.

One example, he said, was a proposal in the Antelope Valley Study that calls for a rerouting of traffic flow from the city campus through the Malone Center, east of the Beadle Center. This would, ultimately, eliminate traffic flow at 16th and 17th streets.

"This would put research at the Beadle Center at risk," Kubicek said. "It hurts the integrity of the building."

Kubicek said the best way to deal with proposed developing areas was to conduct a full study of Antelope Creek, Salt Creek, Stephen's Creek, Dead Man's Run and Beal Slough.

Another issue Kubicek said he would stress as mayor would be historic preservation. One example, he said, would be a full restoration of the Old 710 steam engine in the Historic Haymarket.

Kubicek, who owns a timber-growing farm, said his experience in policy development, his managerial expertise and small business ownership made him a well-rounded candidate for mayor.

City Councilwoman Cindy Johnson, a third Republican in the race, said her time served on the council provided an excellent political background for her to be mayor.

One of her main priorities, Johnson said, would be to continue the development and growth of the city. Her knowledge of the different proposals and studies for the city, gained on the city council, would give her a head start as mayor, she said.

Johnson said she was the most qualified to deal with infrastructure issues – such as the Antelope Valley study and traffic-congestion problems – that could total up to \$1 billion.

One traffic issue in particular will be decided today when the city council votes on one of two designs aimed at widening East O Street.

"Our infrastructure literally has to be a priority," Johnson said. "And I think someone with experience is going to set the right priori-

ties."

Former state Sen. Don Wesely, the lone Democrat in the race, said his 20 years of experience in the Nebraska Unicameral made him the strongest candidate for mayor. Wesely left the Legislature, he said, for the new and bigger challenge of running for mayor.

Wesely said he supported the Antelope Valley study, but called for better planning for that project.

"The Beadle Center should never have been built where it's built," Wesely said.

"Its location makes it more difficult to move forward with this Antelope Valley project," he said. "It's so close to the Malone Center that trying to move traffic between the two is problematic."

As mayor, Wesely said, he could ensure stronger planning which, in the long run, would help Lincoln deal with rapid population growth projected for the future. Wesely said he expected Lincoln's population to add between 50,000 and 80,000 people in the next 20 years.

"People know that I can get the job done," he said. "I'm the guy who can pull the pieces together and move the city forward."

Jim Wrenholt, the fifth and final candidate for mayor, said he was running to give people a greater "say-so" in the government.

Wrenholt, a Republican, said it was time to look at big issues such as Antelope Valley and Stephen's Creek.

"They're trying to make the Antelope Valley decision without letting people approve it or deny it," he said. "It's very important that we have the consent of voters before we undertake these projects."

Wrenholt said he wanted the general public involved in decision-making, rather than just a few individuals.

"They don't have to vote on every little issue, but it's not up to the developers to decide the big issues for us."

The recent privatization of Bryan Memorial and Lincoln General hospitals, he said, is a prime example of a select few people trying to make major decisions for the city. The two are now known as BryanLGH Medical Centers East and West. "We need to send out direct mail in questionnaire form to every registered voter on a regular basis," Wrenholt said.

"I can make sure we don't lose our electric system, too. I want to make sure they don't privatize it like they did the hospital."

Chinese New Year party plans are set

■ Despite low funds this year, Chinese students plan to celebrate.

BY VERONICA DAEHN
Staff writer

Because of a shortage of money, the Chinese Students and Scholars Association will not have the Chinese New Year's bash it had last year.

Instead, a small party will be held Saturday at 6 p.m. in the Nebraska Union to celebrate the cultural tradition, which begins today.

Fuming Zheng, former Chinese Students and Scholars Association president, said a large party was not possible this year.

"Members will miss the party of last year," Zheng said. "But the purpose will be the same even if the party's smaller."

Zheng said the main event Saturday night will be a videotape of the Chinese New Year celebration held in China, followed by dancing and games.

Zheng attributed the lack of money to fewer contributions than the organization had last year.

Previously, the chancellor's office, International Affairs, and various Chinese restaurants in Lincoln donated money, he said.

Admission for the event has yet to be decided, but Zheng said it won't be more than \$1.

The Free China Association also held an event for the Chinese New Year.

Ann Hou, a senior pre-medicine, biochemistry and French major, said the event took place Sunday evening.

It was a potluck get-together with students from Taiwan, as well as Asians from the community, she said.

Chinese New Year is not a big event here, said Kay Kwang, a senior finance major, because the Asian population is small.

"There's no big official thing because we're in Nebraska," she said. "If we were in Chinatown in L.A. or Chicago it would be a much bigger deal."

Zheng said students of all nationalities are invited to the celebration Saturday night.

"The party is a good chance for Chinese students to communicate with each other and American friends," he said. "I hope students from other countries will join us."

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