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ELECTION 2000

Senate debate lacks tension

By Brian Carlson
Staff writer

KEARNEY — Nebraska's seven U.S. Senate candidates squeezed together at one table for a forum here Saturday, but the close quarters didn't lead to much confrontation.

Former Gov. Ben Nelson, the lone candidate for the Democratic nomination, joined the six Republicans, John DeCamp, George Grogan, David Hergert, Scott Moore, Elliott Rustad and Don Stenberg, vying to fill the seat being vacated by Democratic Sen. Bob Kerrey.

Although the forum revealed differences on issues such as school vouchers and Internet taxation, it produced few fireworks and little real engagement among the candidates.

The Nebraska Associated Press Broadcasters Association sponsored the forum. Unlike in a debate, the forum allowed candidates to answer the same set of questions but not to issue rebuttals.

This clearly frustrated Moore, the secretary of state, whose campaign has struggled to gain traction thus far. With the May 9 primary just over five weeks away, he criticized his GOP opponents' tactics.

"Some people in this race are going into a four-corners offense and stalling," he said. "That doesn't work in May, and it certainly doesn't prepare the Republican nominee for November."

Moore, who entered the race after Kerrey's surprise decision in January to leave the Senate, has called on his opponents to participate in more debates.

Neither Attorney General Don

"Some people in this race are going into a four-corners offense and stalling. That doesn't work in May, and it certainly doesn't prepare the Republican nominee for November."

Scott Moore
Nebraska Secretary of State

Stenberg, nor any other candidate, responded to Moore's complaint during the forum. Stenberg, who entered the race in early 1999, has emerged as the front-runner for the GOP nomination.

A question about school vouchers for parents who want to send their children to private schools revealed differences among the candidates.

Rustad, a Lincoln dermatologist, said he favored tax discounts for families sending their children to

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REGENTS

Baseball stadium clears final hurdle

By Joshua Camenzind
Staff writer

KEARNEY — The waiting game is finally over for baseball fans in Lincoln.

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents unanimously approved five amendments on Saturday and agreed to join with the city of Lincoln and Nebco, Inc. to build a new baseball and softball stadium complex.

Ground could be broken as early as next week on the \$32.1 million project that will be located west of Memorial Stadium and north of the Haymarket.

Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne, who gave a short speech to the regents that included a two-minute HuskerVision presentation, said the complex is scheduled to be finished by spring of next year.

Byrne said the economic impact of the ballpark on Lincoln will include

many factors. The stadiums will add 2,000 more parking stalls for football Saturdays and provide NU's baseball and softball programs with top-notch facilities to compete and thus bring more people to Lincoln.

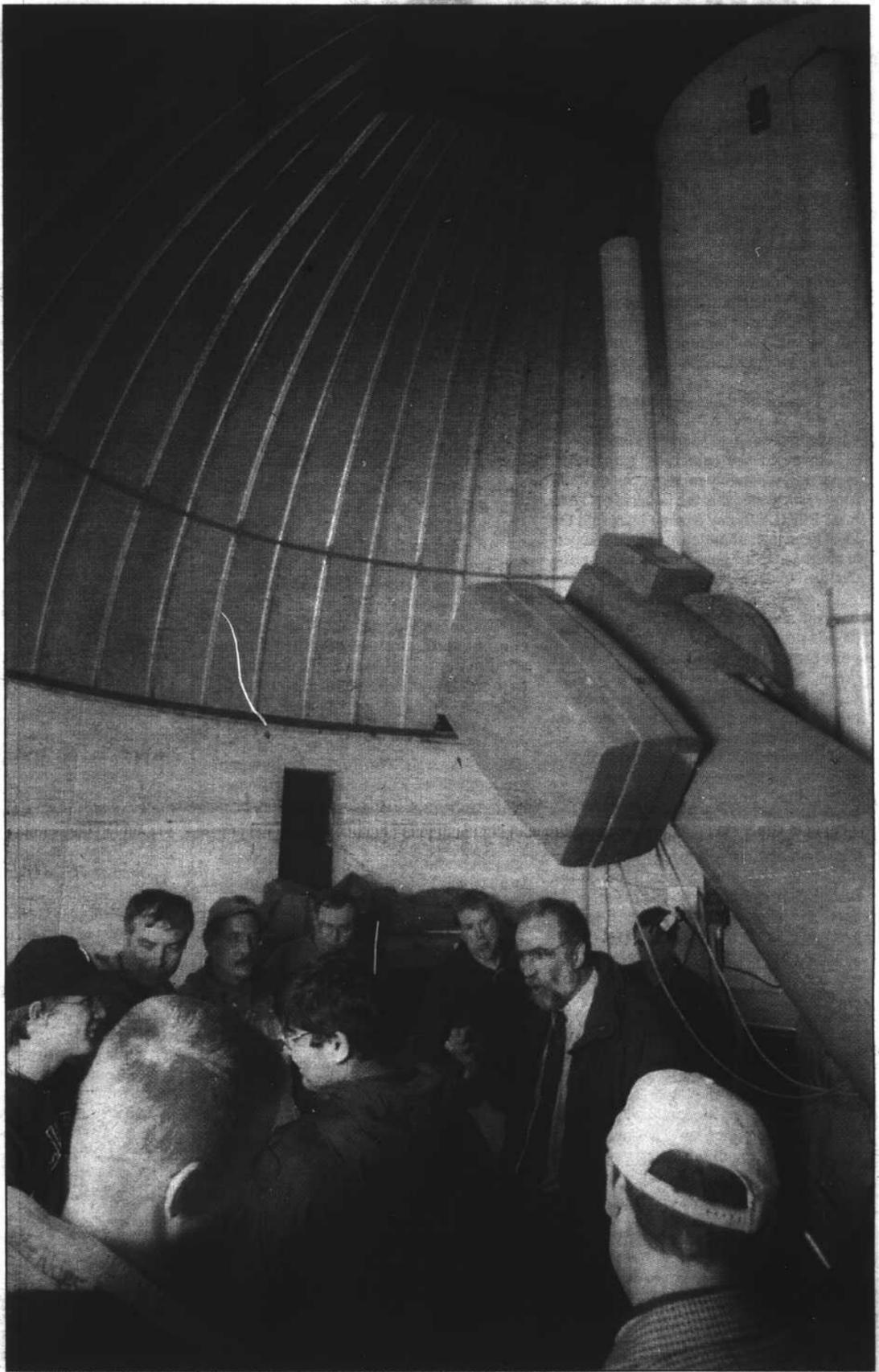
Byrne said it was also part of an obligation he had to Baseball Coach Dave Van Horn, who is in his third season at UNL.

"I told Coach Van Horn that within three to five years after we hired him, we'd have a new baseball facility," Byrne said. "We reached that faster than anticipated."

The university contribution of \$10.6 million has already been raised, with \$8.6 million coming from private donations and fundraising.

The other \$2 million will be paid through Athletic Department funds, and no taxpayer dollars will be used,

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Nikki Fox/DN

AT A SPRINGTIME viewing show at Behlen Observatory, near Mead, Dr. Martin Gaskell speaks to visitors and answers questions about the 30-inch telescope in an old World War II silo Friday night. Dr. Edward Schmidt, associate dean of the college of arts and sciences, gave a slide show and presentation called "Star Clusters." Unfortunately, stargazers were unable to look through the telescope because clouds blocked the stars.

Stargazers flock to UNL observatory

By Kimberly Sweet
Staff writer

Mead resident Victor Humlicek remembers the first time he tried to peer at a star up close.

"I started out when I was 8 years old," Humlicek said. "My parents bought me binoculars."

"I've been at it about six and a half decades since then."

The gray-haired stargazer is one of many amateur astronomers across the state whose obsession is fed by staking out a piece of minimally lit land and staring at a star-studded sky.

For those stargazers, UNL's Behlen Observatory near Mead,

about 35 miles north of Lincoln, is the perfect place to get a fix — even when it's cloudy.

On Friday night, people still milled around the building that houses a 30-inch, 700-pound automated telescope, despite the cloudy sky that foiled stargazing plans.

The observatory's spring viewing night drew amateur astronomers of all ages, even though the only stars in sight were projected through slides onto a screen.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Physics and Astronomy Professor Edward Schmidt lectured about star clusters to those who attended the event, despite the cloudy sky.

On a clear night when the stars are out, the observatory can draw hundreds, said Kevin Lee, coordinator of the observatory.

Children and adults take the steps up through a silo-like structure to peer at various celestial objects through the region's only 30-inch telescope.

The telescope has a special optical system that allows students and faculty to measure the spectrum of stars and other galactic objects.

"The 30-inch telescope is primarily used for variable-star astronomy, which is the change in the star's

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