

Daily Nebraskan

petaluma: more unanswered questions and looking for the truth in Opinion/4



Folk god Gordon Lightfoot brings a '70s feel to the Lied Center tonight in Arts/8



Jeremy Scletcha and a cast of defenders look to slow KSU's newfound ground attack in Sports/12



Nelson eeks out victory

New senator pledges to keep vows

BY BRIAN CARLSON

Sen.-elect Ben Nelson made a victory tour around Nebraska on Wednesday, repeating his campaign pledge to forego partisanship for partnership in Washington.

He said that vow won him the race.

"Nebraskans believe that if we want Washington to be less partisan, we have to send less partisan people to Washington," he said.

Nelson, a Democrat who served as governor from 1991-99, will succeed retiring Democratic Sen. Bob Kerrey. Nelson claimed victory early Wednesday morning at a gathering with supporters in Omaha.

His opponent, Republican Attorney General Don Stenberg, did not concede the race Tuesday night, saying the results were

close enough that he wanted to wait.

On Wednesday morning at about 10 a.m., he called Nelson to concede. Nelson said Stenberg was "very gracious" in his call, congratulating Nelson and wishing him well.

In the final tally, Nelson got 329,914 votes (51 percent) to Stenberg's 317,863 votes (49 percent). Stenberg won 68 of the state's 93 counties, many of them in Western Nebraska, but Nelson prevailed with strong showings in more populous counties.

Nelson won Lancaster County by more than 21,000 votes and Douglas County by more than 17,000.

At a press conference Wednesday afternoon at the Lincoln Airport Authority, Lincoln

Please see **NELSON** on 5



Steven Bender/DN

Stenberg loses counties in east

BY JOSH FUNK

Fourteen hours after the polls closed, Republican Don Stenberg called to congratulate Democrat Ben Nelson on a narrow victory in securing Nebraska's open U.S. Senate seat.

After a harrowing night watching the returns, Stenberg acknowledged that his come-from-behind campaign fell just short of victory.

"We ran a very strong race," Stenberg said. "We started 30 points behind (last spring), and we came up just short of being successful last night."

After Stenberg came within 1 percent of Nelson on Tuesday night, the Republican refused to concede anything until all the votes could be counted.

By Wednesday morning, it was clear that Nelson had beaten

Stenberg by only 12,000 votes — 51 percent to 49 percent — in a race that only a week before Nelson had led by 12 percentage points in an opinion poll.

Stenberg said he was honored to have won 68 of the state's 93 counties, but he accepted the decision of Nebraskans.

As Stenberg gave his concession speech in his Lincoln campaign office, the Republican's staff stood teary-eyed in the background, consoling each other with hugs after an exhausting race.

Nebraska Republican Party Chairman Chuck Sigerson commended the way Stenberg closed the gap in what he called an "uphill battle against a de facto incumbent."

"My feeling is that we ran one

Please see **STENBERG** on 5



Steven Bender/DN

ABOVE: Senator-elect Ben Nelson held a victory conference Wednesday at the Lincoln Municipal Airport. Nelson defeated Republican candidate Don Stenberg in Tuesday's election. At the conference, Lincoln mayor Don Wesely presented Nelson with a key to the city.

LEFT: Nebraska Republican Senate candidate Don Stenberg, with his wife Sue, conceded the race to Ben Nelson Wednesday at Stenberg's campaign office in Lincoln.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine it would be this close."

Jeb Bush
Florida governor

Focus is on Florida recount

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida officials began recounting nearly 6 million ballots Wednesday to determine the next president, while Democrats and some voters complained of irregularities in the election.

The recount in all 67 counties was triggered by state law because Republican George W. Bush led Democrat Al Gore by less than one-half of 1 percent. State officials said they will count every ballot over again, and expected to be finished by the end of the day today.

Florida elections supervisors also waited for an undetermined number of overseas ballots, primarily from military personnel and their families.

The state allows 10 days after the election for the ballots to come in.

The Florida totals, including all absentee ballots received so far, showed Bush with 2,909,135 votes and Gore with 2,907,351 — a difference of 1,784 in a state with 8.75 million registered voters.

After 28 of Florida's 67 counties were recounted Wednesday, Gore had gained 351 votes.

Pinellas County, which includes St. Petersburg, will have to redo its count because a poll worker inadvertently failed to run an unknown number of ballots through its computer Wednesday, county Supervisor of Elections Deborah Clark said. The county retracted its original announcement that Gore had gained 404 votes and Bush dropped by 61 votes in its recount.

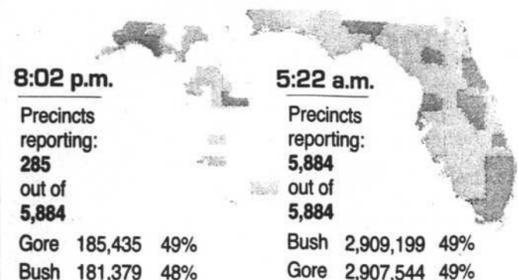
The scrutiny was intense because Florida, with its 25 electoral votes, will decide the winner of the presidential cliffhanger. In an added twist, the state's governor, Jeb Bush, is the younger brother of the Republican nominee.

"We thought it would be close. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine it would be this close," Jeb Bush

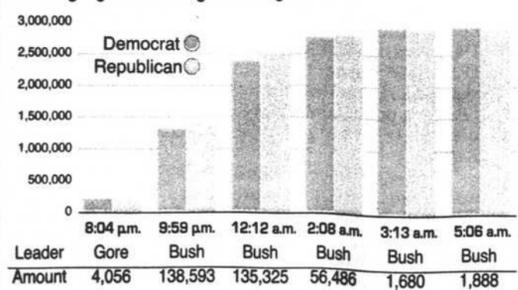
Please see **FLORIDA** on 5

Trying to get a handle on the Sunshine State

With its 25 electoral votes, Florida is the key to the next presidency. The state's dramatic race — the most closely watched election night, has triggered a recount after both candidates finished with 49 percent of the vote.



Getting tighter through the night



Judge says he's fit for death-penalty panel

BY JOSH FUNK

One of three judges appointed to resentence convicted murderer Randy Reeves rejected the prosecution's motion that he was unfit to decide the death penalty case.

In an order that was written before Wednesday's hearing, Lincoln County District Judge Donald Rowlands said he would disregard his personal beliefs and apply the law fairly.

Rowlands said that as a practicing Catholic he "held the personal belief that the death penalty is inherently immoral."

Reeves, 44, was convicted of two counts of felony murder for the 1980 stabbings of Janet Mesner and Vicki Lamm at the Quaker meeting house in Lincoln.

In January, the state Supreme Court ruled that Reeves' case should have been sent back to district court for re-sentencing when errors were found in 1991.

Instead, the Nebraska Supreme Court re-sentenced Reeves to death.

That action effectively eliminated an appeal because every death sentence handed down by Nebraska's courts is automatically reviewed by the state High Court, and the court could not review its own re-sentencing. Rowlands heard testimony from one of his Lincoln County colleagues, County Judge and former prosecutor Kent Turnbull, about philosophical conversations the two had about the death penalty over the last decade

"I know Judge Rowlands, and I think he will do what is right."

Kent Turnbull
Lincoln County judge

Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey submitted an affidavit from Turnbull to support his motion in September, but Lacey had to subpoena Turnbull to testify this week. "That's the only reason I'm testifying," Turnbull said of the subpoena. During Turnbull's tenure as Lincoln County Attorney from 1989 to 1999, he and Rowlands had several conversations about the death penalty.

Turnbull said their conversations were general, but also based on then-current murder cases.

Turnbull said he often argued in favor of the death penalty while Rowlands argued against it, but that did not affect either man's ability to apply the law.

"I know Judge Rowlands, and I think he will do what is right," Turnbull said. Reeves' lead attorney, Paula Hutchinson, told Rowlands that if he had spoken out against the death penalty, he would be in good company with several federal judges who have criticized the laws they must enforce.

Please see **JUDGE** on 3