

CAPITOL VIEW: Valentine's Fischer tosses hat into ring for Republican senate nomination

Written by Wauneta Breeze
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Deb Fischer did it.

The two-term lawmaker / rancher from Valentine joined the race for the Republican nomination to the U.S. Senate.

Several Nebraska governors – Jim Exon, Bob Kerrey, incumbents Ben Nelson and Mike Johanns – have won Senate elections. State senators? Can't recall any.

Leading GOP candidates already in the Nebraska GOP contest are State Treasurer Don Stenberg and Attorney General Don Stenberg.

All three must be encouraged by recent news from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. The DNCC says that if it doesn't reach fundraising goals it won't provide money to some campaigns, including that of U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson, the Nebraska incumbent.

Welfare watchdogs

Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services remains No. 1 in the nation when it comes to policing the federal food stamp program, now known as SNAP.

In fiscal 2010 the state had a zero rate of error in denying food stamps to those who weren't qualified for them.

That effort earned Nebraska bonus from the feds, in excess of \$300,000.

Flooding and football

It's easy to understand the national and international attention draw by Nebraska's two nuclear power plants as they ward off flooding on the Missouri River.

From Japan to Germany and around the globe, the citizenry has grown leery and weary of problems and potential problems associated with nuclear generation of electricity.

A central element of coverage and commentary has centered on the credibility of the federal government – via the Army Corps of Engineers – in keeping the public informed on the status of things at the Fort Calhoun nuclear power plant and the Cooper Nuclear Station.

The situation is remindful, to some, of the famous admonition from the late Robert Novak, who was among the most conservative of conservative national columnists: "Always love your country. Never trust your government."

Some observers have always viewed Novak's advice as absolutely sage. Others have seen it as reflective of a somewhat too cynical view.

The view from here: To paraphrase Ronald Reagan, "Verify before you trust!"

Will it matter?

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In some states, Democratic candidates for the House and Senate are expected to enumerate and laud the projects, programs and jobs that resulted from the economic stimulus package pushed by President Obama and approved by Congress.

After all, lots of incumbents from both political parties took lots of bows, in person, when those things took effect in their territory. In Nebraska, the federal funds were used largely to balance the state's budget, and thus saving Nebraskans from higher state tax rates.

In Nebraska, however, it might appear the stimulus in general had such negative political connotations among the electorate that it couldn't serve as a political plus.

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