

SECRETARY OF STATE UPDATE

The Honorable John A. Gale of Nebraska

Summer 2008

Gale promotes Veterans Day with new program for middle schools

Veterans Day is a special day that allows Americans to show their gratitude for the sacrifices of veterans to preserve our country's freedoms. Secretary of State John Gale believes it is also an opportunity to educate the nation's youth.

Gale has started a program that encourages Nebraska middle schools to honor veterans for their service to the country.

Gale launched the Honor a Veteran program during a March 4 news conference at Grand Island's Barr Middle School that was attended by Governor Dave Heineman, an Army veteran, and Brig. Gen. Tim Kadavy, head of the Nebraska National Guard.

Gale got the idea for the program from an annual event at Barr to commemorate Veterans Day.

A unique aspect of the Barr event is that students are asked to provide the

names of relatives or friends who have served in the military. Those nominated can be current or former members (living or deceased) of the military.

The names of the nominees and the students who nominated them are read at the event. In addition, nominees are invited to attend the event.



Visiting with students at Grand Island's Barr Middle School are (from left) Governor Dave Heineman, Secretary of State John Gale and Brig. Gen. Tim Kadavy.

"The Barr event touches students and their community with a deep sense of patriotism and pride," Gale said. "It is so outstanding and so meaningful that

we wanted to offer this program to schools across the state."

Greg Morrow, a Barr teacher, said he got the idea for the Veterans Day event after visiting the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. The memorial is inscribed with the names of all the American military personnel who were killed during the Vietnam War.

That's when Morrow thought about having students provide the names of relatives and friends who have served in the military.

"It's all about the names," said Morrow, who said he and other teachers thought that would make Veterans Day more meaningful to the students.

Working as a co-sponsor with Barr Middle School, Gale's office will provide assistance to schools interested in holding Veterans Day events. The assistance will include a detailed event summary, a speakers bureau and help with arrangements.

The Honor a Veteran program encourages middle schools to plan ceremonies that could include such elements as the presentation of colors, the national anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance, information on the history of Veterans Day, patriotic music, a keynote speaker, and a short video or slide show.

Those interested in the program should contact Sharon Hambek at (402) 471-6044.

Four Nebraska counties begin utilizing all-mail voting precincts

Polling places are a thing of the past in 22 precincts in four Nebraska counties.

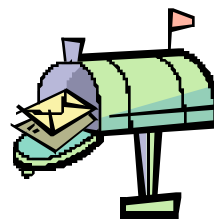
Voters in those precincts will no longer go to the polls on Election Day and will instead vote by mail. The all-mail precincts went into effect for the May 13 primary election.

The all-mail precincts in the four counties were approved in February by Secretary of State John Gale.

Using mail in these instances is an attempt to cut costs and reduce voter hardships in sparsely populated areas.

"The feedback we got with the all-mail precincts for the primary election was very positive," Gale said. "Voters were pleased with the new process, and it helped boost turnout."

Sixteen of Cherry County's 20 precincts were converted to all-mail. In terms of area, Cherry County is the state's largest county and is bigger than



Connecticut.

Other counties making use of all-mail precincts are Morrill County (three precincts), Boone County (two) and Keya Paha County (one).

The all-mail precincts were authorized by the Legislature in 2005.

Precincts approved for all-mail voting for the primary election ranged in size from 23 registered voters to 219.

"With declining populations in many Nebraska rural areas, I think we will see more all-mail voting in the future," Gale said.

Lewis wins honor for election service

Chrisella Lewis of Hastings, Adams County clerk and election commissioner, was honored for exemplary election service by Secretary of State John Gale in June.

Lewis is the first Nebraska recipient of the Meritorious Service Award, a medallion plaque made available through the National Association of Secretaries of State for outstanding service rendered by election officials.

"Chris Lewis is richly deserving of this award," said Gale, Nebraska's chief election officer. "She exemplifies the dedication and spirit of fair election administration that keeps our democracy thriving."

Lewis served as Adams County election commissioner from 1985-97. Since 1997, she has served as Adams County clerk and election commissioner.

International scholars honor Secretary Gale

Secretary of State John Gale has been made an honorary member of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln chapter of Phi Beta Delta, the honor society for international scholars.

He was honored for his efforts as Nebraska's chief protocol officer for international relations.

Gale was honored during the chapter's April 10 awards ceremony.

The chapter recognizes and encourages achievements in the areas of international education and exchange.

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This is a publication of the Nebraska Secretary of State's Office. Contact the office if you wish to receive the newsletter electronically. Send comments regarding the newsletter to gary.seacrest@sos.ne.gov.

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Students get to celebrate Nebraska heritage

Nebraska schoolchildren got to celebrate the state's birthday in style.

Some 2,800 students and 400 adults attended 10 Statehood Day birthday parties throughout the state from Feb. 25-29. Secretary of State John Gale, the NEBRASKAland Foundation and the Nebraska Humanities Council sponsored the parties.

The parties were held in Grand Island, North Platte, Scottsbluff, Chadron, O'Neill, Norfolk, Nebraska City, Lincoln, Omaha and Boys Town.

Participating students enjoyed musical entertainment, sing-a-longs, state history information and people in historical costumes, including Gale who portrayed "Cactus Jack."

"Our traveling troupe tries to provide fun in an educational setting," Gale said. "We want the kids to develop state pride and become good citizens."

The parties were geared for

fourth-grade students because they study Nebraska history during the school year.

The parties observed the 141st anniversary of Nebraska becoming a state on March 1, 1867.



Secretary of State John Gale, as "Cactus Jack," interacts with students at the Lincoln party.

Capitol Forum provides international education

High school students throughout Nebraska got an opportunity to debate important foreign policy issues at the 10th annual Nebraska Capitol Forum on America's Future.

The daylong event at the State Capitol on March 31 was attended by more than 90 students from 22 schools. The event is part of an international educational program sponsored by the Nebraska Humanities Council and Secretary of State John Gale.

The students heard from Gale, Governor Dave Heineman, U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel, and U.S. Reps. Jeff Fortenberry,

Adrian Smith and Lee Terry.

The students debated four distinct options for the future of U.S. foreign policy and considered such issues as immigration, weapons proliferation, terrorism, international trade and the environment.

The students attending the Lincoln event were there as representatives of entire classes. All students in the classes participated in aspects of the program.

"We're extremely proud to be celebrating the 10th anniversary of Capitol Forum in Nebraska," Gale said. "The program has been a great success."

Agricultural lien records go online in Nebraska

Certain agricultural lien records can now be filed online in Nebraska.

Beginning June 4, the Secretary of State's Office began accepting electronic filings of Effective Financing Statement (EFS) continuations and terminations. EFS filings secure lender interests regarding bulk agricultural products.

"This action meets two of my goals of office – to increase online services

and to make it easier to conduct business in Nebraska," Secretary of State John Gale said. "Having these filings online makes the process quicker and more accurate."

For the time being, filings of EFS original filing statements and amendments must be done with paper records. Gale said his office will be developing online service for those EFS records.

Diplomatic event to showcase state

Nebraska will have the welcome mat out for foreign representatives at the Secretary of State's Diplomatic Conference Sept. 23-24 in Omaha.

The event at the Embassy Suites is sponsored by Secretary of State John Gale and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce.

The conference will allow Nebraska representatives in a number of fields to network with diplomatic officials.

"The conference is a great opportunity for Nebraska to showcase its progressive and dynamic nature to foreign representatives," Gale said.

The conference will examine Nebraska's role in a variety of international subjects, including finance and insurance, transportation and distribution, agriculture and agribusiness, communi-



cations and information technology, cyber security and health care.

Gale is holding the conference in his role as Nebraska's chief protocol officer for international relations.

Previous diplomatic conferences were held in Omaha in 2004 and 2006.

Youth art contest brings out state spirit

Nebraska elementary school students demonstrated their creativity in the 2008 Nebraska Spirit Art Contest.

Secretary of State John Gale and Nebraska.gov, the state's Web site, sponsored the contest for students in kindergarten through fifth grade to showcase their knowledge of Nebraska and its history.

The contest winners were Carissa Hill of Imperial, kindergarten; Bradi Larabee of Valentine, first grade; Bailey Honn of McCook, second grade; Elisha Sheffy-Harris of Geneva, third grade; Madi Gilg of Cozad, fourth grade; and Benjamin Kiolbasa of Juniata, fifth grade.

The winners will have their artwork available to the world on a downloadable computer screen saver that can be found at www.nebraska.gov/contest.

"It's fun to see the creativity generated by the kids with their artwork," Gale said. "We're delighted that the contest provides such a great opportunity to involve young students and promote our state."



The contest winners gathered at the State Capitol. Front row (from left): Bradi Larabee of Valentine, Madi Gilg of Cozad, Carissa Hill of Imperial, Elisha Sheffy-Harris of Geneva and Bailey Honn of McCook. Back row (from left): Governor Dave Heineman, Benjamin Kiolbasa of Juniata and Secretary of State John Gale.

The contest attracted about 2,300 entries. The winners were determined through online voting from May 12-23 that involved five finalists from each grade.

On June 6, the winners and their families were hosted to a day of activities in Lincoln, including a ceremony with Governor Dave Heineman and Gale, a tour of the State Capitol, a luncheon at the Governor's Mansion and a visit to the Lincoln Children's Zoo.

Secretary Gale touts new state Web site for its accessibility

The state of Nebraska has a newly redesigned Web site that is designed to make state government more accessible.

The streamlined design of Nebraska.gov was launched June 2.

"The site builds on our previous success by making it easier to find information and interact with state government," said Secretary of State John Gale, chairman of the state Records Board.

The Records Board is charged with oversight of the Web site, which serves as the centerpiece of the state's electronic government initiative.

The site provides enhanced navigation, connecting users with more than 300 online services in two clicks. The site helps users by using a collection of links targeted to Nebraska residents, those moving to the state, out-of-state visitors and those starting a business in the state.

There is a mobile version of Nebraska.gov that users can access from personal digital assistants and smart phones. The site can translate information into 12 languages.

College committee to advise on voting issues

Secretary of State John Gale hopes to expand the civic engagement of Nebraska college students.

Gale has formed the College Student Advisory Committee to involve and educate students regarding voting issues in a nonpartisan manner. The committee includes six representatives from three University of Nebraska campuses – Lincoln, Omaha and Kearney.

"My office and college students can collaborate on a whole range of matters," Gale said.

He said there are a number of voting issues that impact college students: some are new voters and uncertain about the process, some don't know where to turn to for information, and some are from out of town and need to reregister to vote or learn to vote absentee.

"The committee gives students a voice in our democracy, and a voice that is being heard," Gale said.

Training for election officials



County Clerks (from left) Janene Bennett of Otoe County, Carol Young of Pawnee County and Patti Lindgren of Saunders County look over display materials at a Jan. 23 workshop for election officials in Lincoln. The Secretary of State's Office sponsored the Lincoln workshop and a similar one in North Platte on Jan. 31.

Students win recognition for primary election work

Secretary of State John Gale and the Nebraska Bankers Association honored 207 youths statewide who served as election workers during the May 13 primary election.

The youths participated in the Youth Election Service (YES), which is designed to increase interest and involvement in the election system among youths ages 14-18. Each participant received a recognition certificate from Gale.

YES participants served in 35 counties and worked about 990 hours.

As part of the program, the Nebraska Bankers Association awarded \$50 savings bonds to 10 participants. The winners were picked in geographic drawings.

The winners of the savings bonds were Nate West of Omaha, Stephanie W. Remmenga of Lincoln, Jordon Martin of Orchard, Nicholas Humrich of O'Neill, Jordan Walther of Stockville, Ryan Hardin of McCook, Ashley R. Landwehr of Hastings, Krystal Ericson of Funk, Chelsea Jessen of Lisco and Cynthia L. Rahmig of Kimball.

Gale encouraged high school students to participate in YES for the Nov. 4 general election.

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