



SECRETARY OF STATE UPDATE

The Honorable John A. Gale of Nebraska

Summer 2010

Gale provides observations from China trip

BY JOHN GALE

During a two-week trip in China, I got a firsthand look at this fascinating nation and why it is likely to have such a significant impact on world affairs in the 21st century.

Although China got a late start in terms of developing its economy, one should not underestimate the potential of

the country or its 1.4 billion people. This is a dynamic nation that is on the move.

As Nebraska's chief protocol officer for international relations, I was part of a Nebraska delegation that visited China in June 2010. The trip was organized by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Confucius Institute, which is a partnership between UNL and Jiaotong University of Xi'an, one of the top ten universities in China.

The Office of Chinese Language Council International funds some 300 Confucius Institutes throughout the world. It is a reflection of China's deep commitment to promote an understanding of its history, culture and language.

We spent one week in Beijing, China's national capital of 16 million, which has considerable manufacturing, financial, engineering and energy businesses. The other week was spent in Xi'an, a city of 8 million that is a major center of

higher education and served as the country's ancient capital.

The Chinese are still very influenced by Confucian doctrines of reverence for authority, family and elders, and the importance of the group over the desires of the individual. The Chinese honor harmony, loyalty, respect, obedience and a peaceful society.

Although all levels of Chinese government are controlled by the Communist Party, the country has opened itself up in recent decades. As a result, the country has become more capitalistic with less central planning, more engaged in world affairs and more urban.

The economic results have been spectacular. China has gone through its own industrial revolution in two decades, as opposed to the century taken by European nations for their industrial revolutions. China's economy has enjoyed amazing annual growth rates of about 10 percent for two decades.

Everywhere you look in the major

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Secretary of State John Gale and his wife, Carol, visit the Forbidden City, the former Chinese imperial palace, in Beijing.

Painting of Nebraska capital relocation finds a new home

A painting depicting the controversial move of the state capital from Omaha to Lincoln has found a new home in the Secretary of State's Office.

The painting deals with the historical role that the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska played in the relocation of the capital in 1868. The painting shows the original seal press, the instrument used to stamp the Great Seal, being taken from Omaha in a horse-drawn wagon.

The seal press was clandestinely moved from Omaha to Lincoln to help make the relocation of the capital official, according to historical accounts.

Secretary of State John Gale said the painting has found a fitting home, since his office is the official keeper of the state seal.

The artwork was painted by the late

Harold R. Wilkins of Bellevue and gifted to the office by his widow, Venita Wilkins.

"We greatly appreciate Mrs. Wilkins' generous gift of this wonderful painting," Gale said. "The painting captures the drama of this important period of Nebraska history."

The painting, which measures 4 feet by 8 feet, was re-framed and installed in the office's reception area in February 2010.

On display below the painting is the original seal press, which is depicted in the

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Secretary of State John Gale is shown with the painting illustrating the historical role that the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska played in the move of the state capital from Omaha to Lincoln.

Gale honors Finn with election award

Wayne County Clerk Debra Finn is the 2010 recipient of the Meritorious Service Award presented by Secretary of State John Gale for exemplary service in election administration.

Finn, a Wayne resident, serves as county clerk, election commissioner and register of deeds for the county. She has been the county's election administrator for more than 19 years.

"Deb Finn has performed admirably on the county and state level in improving our election system," Gale said.

She is a past president of the Nebraska Association of County Clerks, Register of Deeds and Election Commissioners.

Longtime poll workers cited for public service

Secretary of State John Gale honored 233 individuals statewide in June 2010 for inclusion in the Nebraska Poll Worker Hall of Fame.

The program, which was started in 2006, honors election workers who have served a minimum of 20 years.

"These honorees are unsung heroes who perform the hard work of elections," Gale said. "These people deserve our gratitude for making it possible for our democracy to operate."

Of those honored, the longest tenured workers were Arleen Kunnemann of Imperial, 60 years; Margaret Trojan of Beaver Crossing, 55 years; Willie Stigger of Omaha, 48 years; William J. Holling of Elkhorn, 47 years; and Robert J. Broghammer of Omaha, 46 years.

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School children display creativity in art contest

Elementary school students demonstrated their talent with their entries in the 2010 Nebraska Spirit Art Contest.

The contest winners were Tyson Warrick of Norfolk, kindergarten; Rylee Olson of Leigh, first grade; Blake McDowall of Omaha, second grade; Justin Kaczmarek of Omaha, third grade; Tessa Welty of Kearney, fourth grade; and Collin Brown of Bladen, fifth grade.

The contest, which was designed to promote Nebraska, was sponsored by

Secretary of State John Gale and Nebraska.gov, the state's website.

The winners will have their artwork featured on a downloadable screen saver, which is available at www.nebraska.gov/contest.

The contest winners were determined through online voting.

"We're delighted that the art contest provides such a great opportunity for students to engage in art and promote our state," Gale said.

China Trip

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cities, there are huge construction cranes in the horizon. The Chinese like to say that the "crane" is their national bird!

The country's infrastructure develop-

ment is very impressive on a number of fronts: commercial buildings, hotels, convention centers, highways (many are toll roads), parks, apartment complexes (where almost all the people live), museums and antiquity displays.

China has moved 300 million citizens from poor, rural areas to cities with jobs, adequate housing and health care. It intends to shift its population from 60 percent rural to 60 percent urban within 15 years, moving another 300 million citizens into cities.

China now has over 120 cities with at least one million citizens and is expected to have over 220 cities of that size within 15 years.

The gap between urban China and urban America is very small, although the gap between urban China and rural China is very large and growing. If you leave a major city in China and drive 60 miles away into the rural areas, you suddenly feel transported back in time some 60 to 70 years.

While the United States may be the only superpower today, we will need to share world leadership with newly emerging world powers such as China, India and Brazil. Diplomacy, trade, tourism and mutual study of each other's cultures can help foster international cooperation and understanding.



While visiting the Office of Chinese Language Council International, Secretary of State John Gale is greeted by Xu Lin, the organization's director-general, and an electronic message of welcome.

Painting

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painting. The seal press, which is in the shape of a lion's head, dates to 1867 when Nebraska became a state.

The lion's head press was used for official business for a remarkable 138 years until it was retired in 2005.

The painting previously was displayed at Scout's Rest Ranch, the former home of Buffalo Bill Cody, and now a state park in North Platte. The park superintendent, Steve Kemper, is a son-in-law of Venita Wilkins.

Harold Wilkins illustrated many books and magazines, and his artwork hangs in many public buildings and private collections in the United States.

Gale outlines positives from election

Bright spots emerge despite low statewide voter turnout

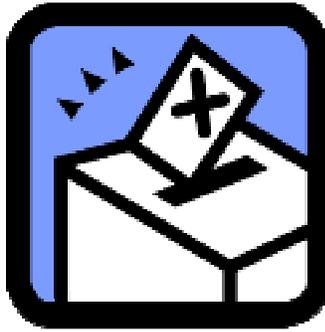
Although statewide voter turnout for the May 11, 2010, primary election was low, the election produced some positive aspects, according to Secretary of State John Gale.

Among the bright spots were good turnout in a large number of counties, an increase in voter registration numbers and the state's first use of a satellite site for early voting, he said.

The state turnout for the 2010 primary election was 24.5 percent of registered voters, slightly higher than the turnout of 23.3 percent for the 2008 primary election.

The 2010 state participation was hurt by poor turnout in the Omaha area — Douglas County had 12 percent and Sarpy County had 14.1 percent.

In contrast, Lancaster County had a good turnout of 40.3 percent, as a bond issue for an arena attracted the interest of Lincoln voters.



On the positive side, 46 out of the 93 counties had turnout of 33 percent or more. The highest figure was McPherson County's 64.2 percent.

Most of the counties with higher turnout were rural counties.

"The civic duty to vote seems to be stronger in the rural counties," Gale

noted.

Voter registration for the 2010 primary election increased by 18,677, or 1.7 percent, over the 2008 primary election. Gale views the increase as an encouraging sign of interest in the election process.

Otoe County established a satellite site for early voting in Syracuse for the 2010 primary election. It was the first use of a satellite site in Nebraska outside a county election office since the Legislature authorized the concept in 2005.

Otoe County Clerk Janene Bennett said she was very pleased with the trial of the Syracuse site.

Gale hosts 10 statehood birthday celebrations

Elementary school students got to celebrate Nebraska's 143rd birthday in grand fashion.

Secretary of State John Gale hosted 10 statehood birthday parties throughout the state from Feb. 22-26, 2010. The parties attracted about 3,300 students and 500 adults.

Participating students enjoyed musical entertainment, sing-alongs, people in historical costumes and a birthday treat.

For the parties, Gale appeared in costume as the frontier character Cactus Jack.

"The idea behind the parties is to promote education, state pride and good citizenship," Gale said. "Our philosophy is that learning can be fun."

The parties were sponsored by Gale, the NEBRASKAland Foundation, the



Secretary of State John Gale, portraying Cactus Jack, leads a group of enthusiastic students at the Fremont party.

Nebraska Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The parties were held in Omaha, Boys Town, Sidney, Scottsbluff, McCook, Kearney, Fremont, Seward, Columbus and Norfolk.

Legislature gives OK to electronic filings

Businesses will have a new tool in filing corporate documents with the Secretary of State's Office.

The 2010 Legislature passed LB 791, which authorizes the electronic transmission and electronic filing of corporate documents on a large scale with the office.

The office has been operating under a system in which corporate documents had to be mailed or hand-delivered. An exception was the ability to file certain annual or biennial corporate reports online.

Secretary of State John Gale said his office is looking at implementing the new arrangement in phases, perhaps starting in early 2011.

"Businesses will find the electronic filing to be user-friendly and convenient," he said. "This is part of my continuing push to make it easier to do business with the state through electronic government."

In addition, the new arrangement should save his office time in processing documents, he added.

Initially, users who want to file electronically will have to use the subscriber service operated by Nebraska.gov.

Nebraska observes ties to Canada with special day

Nebraska recognized the state's friendship and close ties to Canada by observing "Canada Day at the Nebraska State Capitol" on March 15, 2010.

Consul General Martin Loken, Canada's top diplomat in the U.S. Upper Midwest, was in Lincoln for the observance, which was hosted by Secretary of State John Gale and the Legislature.

The day's activities included a session with state senators and an evening reception.

"Canada and the United States share a strong and durable relationship based on history, a tradition of democratic government, military and security alliances, significant cultural connections and close economic ties," Gale said.

Bilateral trade between Canada and Nebraska totaled \$2.6 billion in 2008. Canada is Nebraska's top export market.

Gale hosts Kenyan election delegation

The Secretary of State's Office got the unique opportunity to assist a nation that is revamping its electoral system.

Secretary of State John Gale and his Elections Division hosted an 11-member Kenyan delegation on Feb. 17, 2010, in Lincoln. The Kenyans' visit was part of a fact-finding mission regarding best practices in election administration.

Gale's office held a luncheon for the Kenyans and then briefed them on how Nebraska conducts elections at the state and local level.

"It was an honor and a privilege for me and my staff to meet the Kenyan delegation, exchange information and give them background on the Nebraska election system," Gale said. "It was a great opportunity for international cooperation."

Heading the delegation was Peter N.R.O. Ogego, Kenya's ambassador to the United States, and Ahmed Issack Hassan, chairman of Kenya's Interim Independent Electoral Commission.

The commission, which is charged



Secretary of State John Gale presents a Nebraska flag to Peter N.R.O. Ogego, Kenya's ambassador to the United States.

with reforming the electoral system, was formed in response to problems stemming from the 2007 national election.

"We truly embrace what the Kenyans are doing to change and strengthen the electoral system in their country," Gale added.

Nebraska youths honored for primary election work

Secretary of State John Gale and the Nebraska Bankers Association honored 145 youths statewide who served as election workers during the May 11, 2010, 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.

YES participants served in 27 counties and worked over 756 hours.

As part of the program, the Nebraska Bankers Association awarded \$50 savings bonds to 10 participants through drawings.

The winners of the savings bonds were Bradley Hohwieler of Aurora, Tasha Foulk of Giltner, Sarah Spencer of O'Neill, Paige Werner of Chambers, Jay Linton of Dalton, Nicole Hass of Bridgeport, Charlsie Morris of Beatrice, Deidre Ehrlich of Lincoln, and Dru Sauer and Katherine Armstrong of Ogallala.