

# LOCAL

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# Some fear Capitol gridlock

Ricketts-backed conservatives upend 3 moderate Republicans

**ZACH PLUHACEK**  
Lincoln Journal Star

Come January, the state Capitol will be filled with question marks. Close observers from all political stripes were cautiously optimistic about their chances in the Legislature going forward after Tuesday's election. Democrats appeared to gain three seats in the officially non-partisan body, while conservative challengers backed by Gov. Pete Ricketts upended three moderate Republican incumbents. To outgoing Speaker of the

Legislature Galen Hadley, one probable outcome is more of the gridlock that frequently left lawmakers' wheels spinning the past two years. "I think this could very well increase the number of filibusters," Hadley said Wednesday. Much of that depends on "how hard the conservative Republicans want to force their agenda on the body." It takes 17 senators to filibuster. A united, 15-person Democratic minority could reach that number with help from independent Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers and just one other lawmaker. Ricketts might not be capable of forcing through any bill he wants, but with seemingly fewer moderate Republicans, the governor ap-

peared to hedge against surprise challenges like last year's repeal of the death penalty. "It looks like probably a little more conservative Legislature rather than a Legislature with more (Republicans)," said J.L. Spray, Nebraska's Republican national committeeman. Said Jane Kleeb, incoming Democratic state chairwoman: "We had some good legislative wins and we'll build on it. We'll be reaching out to rural areas and make sure farmers and ranchers are not sharing the brunt of property taxes." Here's a look at some other storylines from Tuesday's results: **Ricketts sees some success:** Eight of the 14 candidates Rick-

etts backed in the general election were successful. Those included three newcomers who toppled moderate Republican incumbents: Bruce Bostelman of Brainard, Steve Halloran of Hastings and Tom Brewer of Gordon. Incumbent Sen. David Schnoor of Scribner, who was appointed by former Gov. Dave Heineman at Ricketts' request, received financial backing from the governor but lost. And Ricketts appointee Nicole Fox lost in the primary. **Women gain two seats:** Hillary Clinton didn't become the first female president-elect, but five women claimed Nebraska legislative seats that were previously held by men. Another three dis-

tricts flipped from female to male, for a net gain of two female state senators. When they're sworn in next year, 13 of the 49 state senators will be women. **Recount possible:** The margin in one legislative race — pitting Dan Quick and Gregg Neuhaus in Grand Island's District 35 — was down to 61 votes in unofficial final results. If Quick's margin of victory holds once provisional and late-returned early voting ballots are counted, it would be just enough to prevent an automatic recount under state law. Reach the write at 402-473-7234 or [zpluhacek@journalstar.com](mailto:zpluhacek@journalstar.com). On Twitter @zachami.

# Theater expansion proposal questioned

Planning Commission will vote next week

**NANCY HICKS**  
Lincoln Journal Star

The local planning commission failed to take any action on proposed changes to the city's protective theater policy because there were not enough commissioners at Wednesday's meeting. Any recommendations to change the policy require approval by five of the nine commissioners. The five commissioners at the meeting could not agree, so the commission will consider it again at its next meeting, Nov. 16. City Councilman Roy Christensen has proposed ending the city's protective theater policy, which allows large theater complexes only in Lincoln's downtown. The theater policy began in 1984 to help promote downtown Lincoln as an entertainment center and to get more people downtown after business hours. Christensen recommended ending the six-screen limit for theater complexes in major shopping centers and allowing one-screen theaters in small shopping centers. But the city's Planning Department staff is recommending maintaining the protective policy.

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# David City man killed in Kansas

**RILEY JOHNSON and NICOLE MANNA**  
Lincoln Journal Star

A Fort Hays State University student from David City was killed by a sheriff's deputy in central Kansas Tuesday morning after a high-speed chase, the Aquinas High School superintendent said. The Rev. Sean Timmerman said Kenton Kobza's family confirmed he was shot outside of Hays. Authorities there wouldn't confirm the identity of the man killed by the Ellis County sheriff's deputy, but gave an account of what happened. The driver complied with the traffic stop sometime before 3:40 Tuesday morning, then unexpectedly fled north, hitting speeds of more than 70 mph in town and then more than 100 mph on U.S. 183 outside of Hays, the Ellis County attorney said in a statement. The deputy and Hays police continued to pursue the vehicle, which went into the



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JAKE CRANDALL, JOURNAL STAR

The line of voters reaches the door at Southview Baptist Church on Tuesday.

# A record wave of voters

Despite record turnout, state officials hoped for more

**ZACH PLUHACEK and NICHOLAS BERGIN**  
Lincoln Journal Star

A record number of Nebraska voters took part in Tuesday's election. More than 831,000 people cast ballots, the most in the state's history, said Secretary of State John Gale. That's up from about 812,000 in 2008. Still, Gale said Wednesday, "It wasn't as many as we were anticipating." His office expected up to 850,000 voters this year, based on the state's massive increase in registered voters. As a result, turnout as a percentage of registered voters was

actually lower than eight years ago, when President Barack Obama won his first term. State-wide turnout was 68.64 percent this year, compared with 70.15 percent in 2008. Lancaster County also set a record for total voters completing ballots, with 135,327, exceeding local projections by a couple thousand, said Lancaster County Election Commissioner Dave Shively. Turnout here was 71 percent. Shively cited a galvanizing presidential race and some hot-button local issues, including a referendum on the death penalty, the \$369 million Southeast Community College bond request, and open races for three legislative seats, a spot on the State Board of Education and County Commissioner District 2. State and local officials said problems on Election Day were

limited. Only two Lancaster County precincts still had lines of people waiting to vote Tuesday when polls were scheduled to close at 8 p.m. In Omaha, problems with a ballot-counting machine at the Douglas County Election Commission kept those races undecided until early Wednesday, Gale said. Some possible areas of concern on Gale's checklist never materialized. Those included widespread issues related to computer hacking of election systems, confrontations over voter challenges or observers at the polls, and confusion about a new state law allowing voters to take "ballot selfies," or photographs with their completed ballots. The biggest surprise at the Lancaster County Election Commis-

sioner's office was how quickly the record number of ballots cast in the county got counted. "If I was surprised at anything, I was surprised we were done and had our final report at 11 o'clock. Because I thought we would be here until midnight or 1," Shively said. Shively, who had about 1,400 volunteers and staff helping out Tuesday, said poll workers delivered ballots quickly after polls closed and the county's five ballot-scanning machines hummed without interruption all night. "I have a good team here. I have a good team of people that come in and help us on election night, that run the scanners, help us get everything processed after the polls closed," he said.

■ See other election stories on Pages A5 and A6.

# We decided anyone was better than Hillary

We decided it didn't matter. It didn't matter if Donald Trump bragged about sexually assaulting women or dishonored a Gold Star family or smeared a judge of Mexican descent or refused to release his tax returns or didn't pay his contractors or his pollster. We decided it didn't matter if he stereotyped Muslims or Hispanics or blacks or poked fun at a disabled reporter, declared cli-



CINDY LANGE-KUBICK

mate change a Chinese hoax or called for jailing his Democratic opponent. We decided it didn't matter he filed for business bankruptcies six times, married three times, inherited his wealth from his father, never held a public office, couldn't seem to put a cogent sentence together without a teleprompter. We decided it didn't matter if he had the temperament of a 2-year-old, the attention span of a house fly, the world view of a cave dweller. We decided we were sick of politics as usual, and the rich candidate with the populist slogan was going to save us.

We decided anyone was better than Hillary Clinton. So Tuesday night, we elected a gossamer-haired narcissist who admires Vladimir Putin, builds gold-gilded towers and spent 14 years firing contestants on a game show to be the next president of the United States. And the sun came up Wednesday morning. No one claimed a rigged election, and the 59,450,907 Americans who voted Donald Trump into our highest office are giddy, seeing hope on the horizon and a wall on our southern border. Those of us who voted with our daughters — and for our daughters — woke up to realize

our sisters (not our black sisters but our white sisters) voted for Trump in large numbers. We realized the pundits were wrong and the polls were wrong and some of us were wrong about what we thought we were — a great land of opportunity for all. That lie has been hung out to dry, but there was more to the rise of Trump than simple economics and simmering political frustration. "This was a white-lash," Van Jones said on CNN as Trump closed in on victory. "This was a white-lash against a changing country."

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