

Hassebrook Brings Campaign for Governor to Southeast Nebraska

(KTNC) - One of two Democrats seeking their party's nomination for governor in 2014 brought his campaign to southeast Nebraska last week.

Chuck Hassebrook visited Tecumseh, Pawnee City, Beatrice, Auburn, and Nebraska City as part of a weeklong campaign trip that started in Valentine. Hassebrook is a native of Platte Center, Nebraska, and now lives in Lyons.

During a stop in Auburn Saturday afternoon, Hassebrook cited his 17 years as the Director of the Lyons, Nebraska-based Center for Rural Affairs and 18 years on the University of Nebraska Board of Regents as giving him the experience necessary to lead the state of Nebraska. He says his vision is for "One Nebraska" for all the state's residents.

Hassebrook said his top budget priority would be expanding early childhood education in the state. He said he'd like to work with the state's community colleges to expand job training opportunities in the state.

Other priorities Hassebrook cited were improved roads and infrastructure, and expanding wind energy in the state. He called Nebraska the "Saudi Arabia of Wind," but said the state hasn't done enough to develop the resource – especially compared to neighboring states like Iowa and Colorado.

The Legislature's Tax Modernization Committee has been meeting around the state, and Hassebrook says he's glad they appear to have shifted their focus away from eliminating the income tax. He says the focus should be on providing property tax relief to family farmers and low to middle income homeowners. Eliminating the income tax, he says, would increase the burden on local property taxpayers.

Hassebrook also criticized Governor Dave Heineman for not expanding Medicaid or setting up a state-run insurance exchange under the Affordable Care Act.

Hassebrook said he has visited 50 counties in the state so far, and will visit 75 counties by Thanksgiving. He is seeking the Democratic Party's nomination for governor along with State Senator Annette Dubas of Fullerton.