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Huskers ready to see Wildcats again

PAGE B1



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PAGE B4



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2 VIEWS

Schuyler Schools publish annual report in new bilingual booklet

JARED BARTON
Columbus Telegram

While reading an instruction manual, Schuyler Community Schools Superintendent Bret Schroder had a revelation about how to format the 2024-2025 annual report in a bilingual format.

They could simply print half in one language, then half in the other language, upside down from the back cover.

"This is the first time (the printers) have ever done one in both English and Spanish, which for us, just seems like normal operating procedure, right? But they do these books for other school districts that look very much like us, and yet, for some reason, we're the first ones to do it, which I think is a feather in our cap," Schroder said.

VIEW: For video, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link.



In previous years, the report hasn't been as widely published, Schroder said, but they wanted to change that for 2024-2025 and show off what the students have been working on, as well as where the district has room to improve.

"Once the year wraps up, we start looking at 'What are the stories we want to tell? What are the successes? What are the celebrations with our kids?' That's, probably the biggest thing is how do we celebrate

Please see **REPORT**, Page A6



JARED BARTON, COLUMBUS TELEGRAM

Bret Schroder, superintendent of Schuyler Community Schools, reads through the new annual report that was sent to all the taxpayers in the school district. The report is printed in a bound booklet format this year, with bilingual sections meeting in the middle, similar to an instruction manual.

LEGISLATURE ADJOURNS

Legislature fails to override Pillen's vetoes

ANNA KLEIBER
Lincoln Journal Star

The Nebraska Legislature considered four motions to override Gov. Jim Pillen's vetoes Friday, but none were successful.

On Thursday, Pillen vetoed five bills and allowed a bill increasing security measures at the Capitol to sail through without his signature.

Under the state constitution, the governor must sign or veto a bill within five days of receiving it. If a governor chooses not to take action on a bill while the Legislature is in session, it automatically becomes law without a signature.

Overriding a governor's veto in the Nebraska Legislature requires a three-fifths majority, or 30 out of 49 senators — three votes less than the 33-vote threshold needed to overcome a filibuster to invoke cloture and cease debate.

In a 23-22 vote, the Legislature failed to override Pillen's veto of a bill reclassifying snow and ice removal and flood management as emergency services under the Emergency Management Act.

The bill (LB1256), introduced by Omaha Sen. John Cavanaugh, allows counties, cities and villages to exceed property tax caps by adding those services to the list of exempted emergency spending.

Cavanaugh said the bill was a clean-up bill to clarify existing law. He said the governor's argument that the change would increase property taxes is "simply wrong."

"Property taxes being able to be increased as a result of snow and flooding is a law the governor passed, advocated for, signed and has celebrated. That is the governor's doing to allow for those things," Cavanaugh said. "If anything, vetoing this bill and sustaining the veto would potentially increase property taxes as a result of cutting off a funding source."

While the bill had passed unanimously in a 49-0 vote on final reading, 27 senators voted to sustain Pillen's veto.

In a 19-28 vote, the Legislature fell short by 11 votes to override Pillen's veto of a bill requiring developers that use financing from Nebraska's Affordable Housing Trust Fund to build a percentage of units accessible to people with disabilities.

Introduced and prioritized by Bellevue Sen. Victor Rountree, the bill (LB839) aims to increase affordable housing that is accessible to disabled Nebraskans. It would also increase reporting requirements on accessible housing.

"We are in an affordability crisis, and

Please see **VETOES**, Page A6



KENNETH FERRIERA, JOURNAL STAR

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen said 2027 is the year to solve property tax issues in Nebraska.

Pillen: 2027 is year to solve Nebraska's property tax problems

JOSH REYES
World-Herald Bureau

LINCOLN — Gov. Jim Pillen in his address marking the close of the legislative session looked ahead to 2027 and said it's time to solve Nebraska's property tax issues.

"My team has taken executive action to ensure Nebraskans are seeing property tax relief. But the people of our state deserve more. We need to get practical, set aside ideology, and solve this decades-old problem," the governor said Friday as lawmakers prepared to adjourn Sine Die for the 109th legislative session.

Pillen, who is seeking reelection this year, has promoted property tax reform as his leading cause since he first ran in 2022. He has

touted reforms to lift sales tax exemptions and put funds toward property tax relief, but he has not reached major systemic changes to the state's tax structure. He has supported ideas like a state takeover of public schools, which are largely funded by property taxes.

He said solving property taxes is vital to Nebraska's future: "As we turn toward January, we need to focus on what matters most, on what makes the biggest difference for future generations, on what allows us to compete with — and beat — every other state in the country."

Pillen implored lawmakers to "partner with me to make this body more efficient and effective." He said the easiest way to do that was

to introduce fewer bills and focus on quality over quantity.

Conflict over the budget and the need to close a deficit of more than \$650 million slowed much of the legislative session. And lawmakers are staring down another deficit that they'll have to deal with next year.

Several lawmakers' priority bills never reached the floor for debate because of time constraints this session. Key legislation only got debate through floor amendments and big bill packages that can be difficult to pass because of all the provisions involved.

Pillen recently has also criticized the filibuster, calling it antiquated.

Please see **LEGISLATURE**, Page A6

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Inside

Obituaries	A2	Sports	B1-3
Nation&World	A3	Classifieds	B5
Comics	A5	TV	B6

