

The South Rose Again for Democrat

BY PAUL GOODSSELL
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

South Omaha changed its mind.

The traditionally Democratic area, which Republican Hal Daub carried four years ago, was key to handing Democrat Mike Fahey his narrow victory in Tuesday's mayoral election.

In 1997, voters who lived south of Leavenworth and east of 72nd Street gave Daub a 1,200-vote advantage over Democrat Brenda Council — more than his overall victory margin.

On Tuesday, the same area went for Fahey by nearly 2,500 votes — this time, more than enough to unseat Daub.

"That was a big turnaround," said Paul Johnson, Fahey's campaign manager.

Fahey didn't target south Omaha more than the rest of the city, Johnson said. But as "a pro-life, Irish Catholic Democrat," he said, Fahey was positioned to do well in the area's Catholic neighborhoods.

Aside from the shift in southeast Omaha, the results were largely similar to the voting patterns that have characterized Omaha city politics since the 1987 recall of Mayor Mike Boyle. Republicans such as Daub dominate west of 72nd Street, while Democrats have a substantial edge in the eastern part of the city.

Daub failed to win a single precinct in northeast Omaha's District 2, for example, while Fahey took just two precincts in west-central Omaha's District 6.

Other election facts:

■ About 45 percent of registered voters went to the polls or mailed absentee ballots. That's less than the 52 percent turnout in the 1997 race.

■ If turnout in north Omaha had been higher, Fahey's margin might

have been much higher.

When Council ran against Daub in 1997, she racked up a 9,800-vote edge in her home district. Fahey ran about as well, on a percentage basis. But with fewer voters at the polls, his margin in

the same area was 5,490 votes.

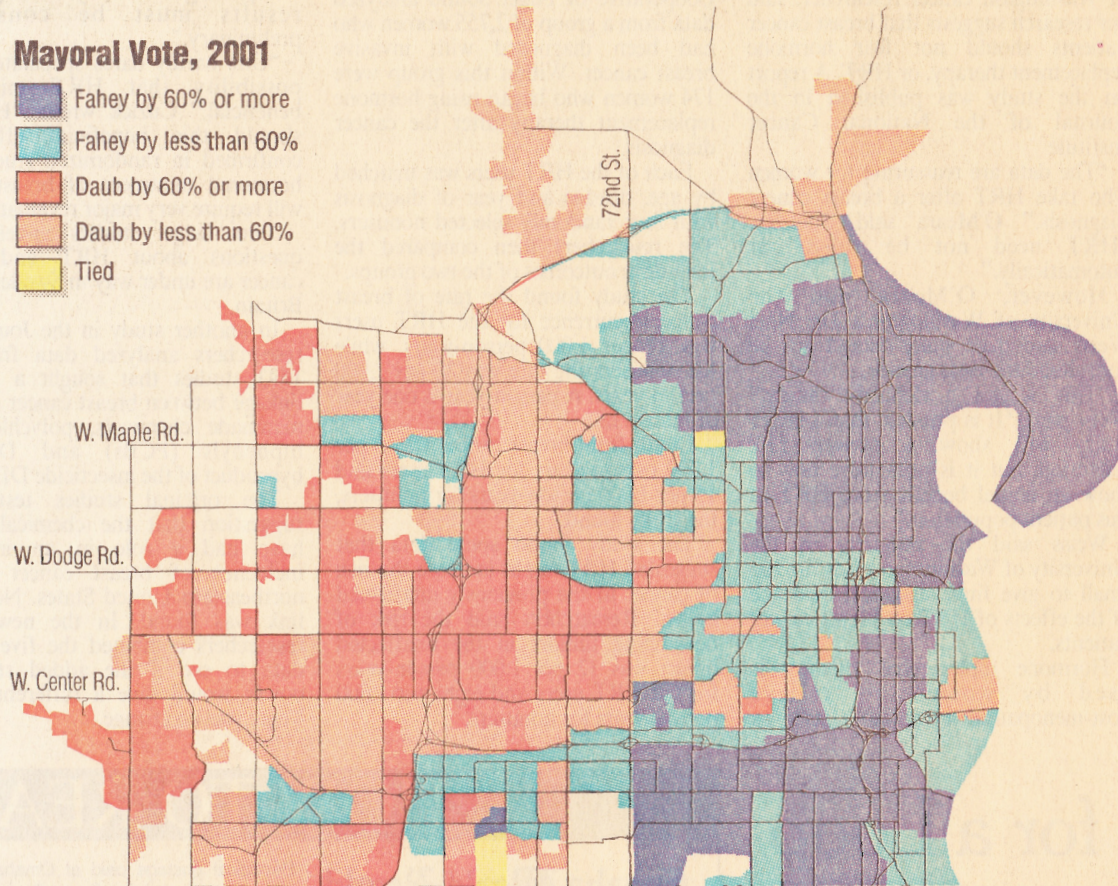
■ Fahey made inroads in west Omaha with his criticism of annexation policy and call for improved city services. But Daub still crushed Fahey by 3-to-1 in some areas west of 72nd

Street.

■ Daub did better in swing precincts of the Dundee and Memorial Park neighborhoods than he did four years earlier.

Mayoral Vote, 2001

- Fahey by 60% or more
- Fahey by less than 60%
- Daub by 60% or more
- Daub by less than 60%
- Tied



Source: Douglas County Election Commission

*Afternoon
May 16, 2001*

Sunrise Edition

50¢

Omaha World-Herald

OMAHA, NEBRASKA, THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2001

VOL. 136, NO. 156
6 SECTIONS, 56 PAGES

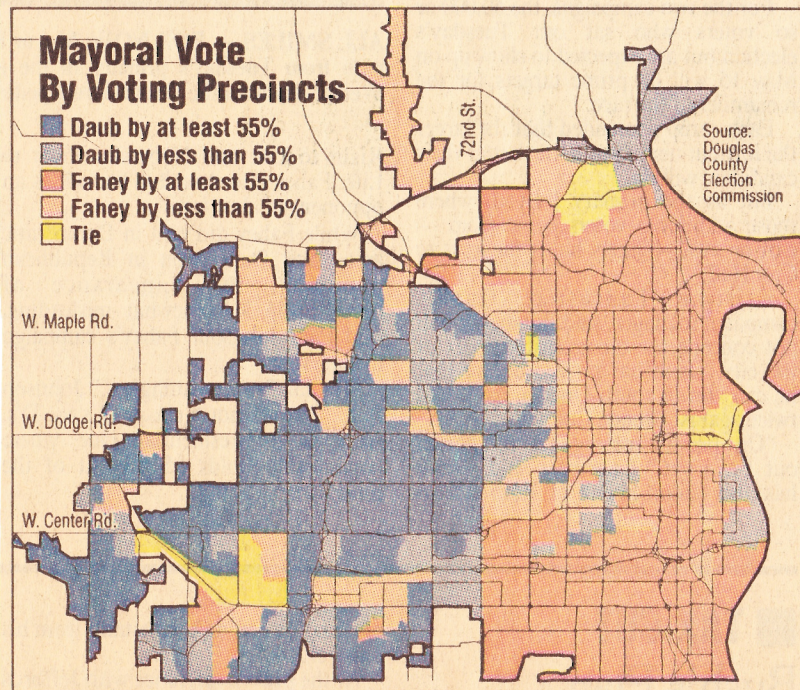
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East-West Mayoral Divide

Mayoral Vote By Voting Precincts

- Daub by at least 55%
- Daub by less than 55%
- Fahey by at least 55%
- Fahey by less than 55%
- Tie

Source:
Douglas
County
Election
Commission



THE WORLD-HERALD

Voting patterns show a distinct geographical split of support for Daub and Fahey

BY PAUL GOODSSELL
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Challenger Mike Fahey and Mayor Hal Daub ended up nearly tied in Tuesday's primary, but in most Omaha neighborhoods the contest was anything but a dead heat.

Fahey beat Daub by 10 percentage points in more than one-third of the city's voting precincts. Daub won by that much in nearly as many areas.

And a look at the electoral map shows a striking geographic pattern, with Fahey dominating east of 72nd Street and Daub taking much of the west.

Overall, Fahey edged Daub in the primary.

"It's an east-west divide that is basically the older city vs. the newer

city," said Michael Peterson, a geographer at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. "They have different concerns."

Certainly there are exceptions to that generalization. But Peterson and others said there is no mistaking an east-west divide that goes back at least to the 1987 recall of then-Mayor Mike Boyle.

The split, which mirrors party registrations, is likely to reappear in the May 15 general election in the officially nonpartisan contest.

"I don't see how Hal (Daub) will crack anything east of 60th Street," said Chuck Powell, a UNO professor who has studied Omaha and national election results for four decades.

A World-Herald examination of precinct results shows:

■ East of 72nd Street, voters favored Fahey by a 3-to-1 ratio. West of 72nd Street, Daub won by the same majority.

■ Fahey, a Democrat, received three-fifths of his election day votes from areas east of 72nd Street, where a majority of the city's Democrats live. Of the 168 precincts Fahey won, 83

percent were in the east.

■ West of 72nd Street, the pattern was reversed. Daub, a Republican, collected three-fifths of his votes in the west, accounting for 82 percent of his winning precincts. About 65 percent of Omaha's Republicans live in the western half of the city.

■ Fahey didn't lose a precinct in north Omaha's District 2, took all but three in south Omaha's District 4 and won a majority of precincts in downtown and central Omaha's District 3. But he split District 1 with Daub, losing Memorial Park and much of Benson while winning Dundee.

■ In west Omaha, Daub won all but a few precincts in Districts 5 and 6. He also took a majority of areas in District 7. Daub ran well in established suburban neighborhoods, particularly those in District 66, where turnout was highest.

■ Fahey's best areas in the west included old Millard, northwest Omaha and Old Mill. Some of the areas he won in the west tended to contain apartment complexes. Turnout

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