



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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What's Up

Lottery Revenue Up, Good News for Education: The N.C. Education Lottery says it raised \$634 million in fiscal year 2015-16 to help support education programs in North Carolina. Unaudited results show overall lottery revenues of \$2.39 billion and earnings of \$634 million.

Lottery revenues grew 21 percent higher than the previous year. Earnings increased 22 percent. Executive Director Alice Garland attributed the record sales to increasing popularity of the lottery's instant games and the world-record \$1.5 billion Powerball jackpot in January.

State Community Colleges Update: The State Board of Community Colleges has approved the hiring of David Heatherly as Coastal Carolina Community College president. The move will officially take place on Jan. 1. Heatherly will succeed Dr. Ronald Lingle, who is retiring after leading Coastal for the last 28 years.

Heatherly has served as Coastal's executive vice president since 2000. Taking over as president reportedly wasn't what Heatherly had anticipated. "In a perfect world we would continue what we've been doing, but we have to respect what is best for Dr. Lingle and his family," said Heatherly, who will be the college's third president, according to the Jacksonville Daily News. "I respect his decision and wish him well."

Other News

State Legislative Power Balance: While the presidential and gubernatorial races get lots of ink and airtime, state lawmakers may have the most direct impact on life and law in North Carolina. High on the list of questions to be answered in the Nov. 8 election is whether voters take out

their frustrations on incumbents or return the Republicans to their supermajority, WRAL News report.

The 120-member state House currently has 74 Republicans, 45 Democrats and one unaffiliated lawmaker, Rep. Paul Tine of Dare County, who caucuses with Republicans. In the 50-member Senate, the Republicans hold more than double the number of seats than do Democrats.

Most experts aren't forecasting a change in the balance of power, but a slight shift in the House and a Roy Cooper gubernatorial win would be enough to change the power dynamic in Raleigh. A loss of just four seats in the House could pull Republicans below the three-fifths majority needed to override a gubernatorial veto. That possibility is real, according to Tom Jensen, director of Public Policy Polling. "You'll have a situation where Republicans pass something, Cooper vetoes it, Democrats sustain the veto. It keeps a lot of things from going into law," Jensen said.

WRAL News also reports that Republican strategist Carter Wrenn said Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's unfavorable numbers among suburban independents could cost Republican legislators their seats. "In urban and suburban areas, Hillary (Clinton) is running stronger than Trump, unusually strong for a Democrat," Wrenn said, noting that independent voters who supported Mitt Romney in 2012 may shift away from Trump.

Another View by the Speaker: At the same time, N.C. House Speaker Tim Moore of Kings Mountain said recently he thought Republicans could increase their majority by two members in the November election. Moore cited early polls done by his caucus in competitive House districts, while acknowledging that his outlook could change as the election nears. "Our realistic projections are we're hoping to come in with two more Republicans than we have right now, and our caucus will run campaigns with that eye," the first-term speaker said.

Bottom Line: Regardless, the NC Insider reports that Republicans are expected to keep majorities in the House and Senate. Moore likely will continue to lead the House through the next two-year legislative session. Senate leader Phil Berger, an Eden Republican, is expected to continue to lead the Senate.

Still, some political observers consider as many as 20 House races – give or take a few – to be competitive this election cycle. The Raleigh and Charlotte areas, because of demographic and voter registration shifts in the suburbs, are once again top battlegrounds for the fight for the Legislature. At least nine House seats in and around North Carolina's two largest cities are considered in play this cycle.

And while Senate Republicans could lose a couple of net seats, the GOP super-majority in that chamber doesn't appear to be in trouble in 2016. Republicans hold 34 of the chamber's 50 seats, meaning Democrats would need to net five seats to eliminate the super-majority there. The Insider says that many experts believe seven to nine Senate seats are in play this year,

including a few in the Wake County area. Wilmington, Fayetteville, Greensboro and the Outer Banks also have compelling Senate races to keep an eye on this time around.

Quote of the Week

"A governor who can sustain a veto? That changes everything."

- Republican strategist Carter Wrenn, on how the election of a Democratic governor paired with a loss of the Republican supermajority in the House would change the balance of legislative power in Raleigh (WRAL News, 9/12/16)

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