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★ AMERICA VOTES 2004 ★



Vice presidential candidate John Edwards spoke to an enthusiastic crowd on the East Lawn of the EMU on Wednesday. Tight security was present to supervise the large number of people in attendance.

DANIELLE HICKEY
PHOTO EDITOR

Edwards: 'Hope is on the way'

An estimated 5,700 gathered Wednesday to hear official Democratic views on education, the economy and health care

BY PARKER HOWELL
MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
NEWS REPORTERS

Vice presidential candidate Sen. John Edwards depicted President Bush as out-of-touch with the average citizen before a crowd of thousands on Wednesday afternoon, offering assurance that the Kerry ticket will help an ailing America.

"Hope is on the way," he told the crowd repeatedly.

A smiling, casually dressed Edwards gave the boisterous crowd a confident thumbs-up as he took the stage and dove into a 20-minute speech on how Kerry's ideas on education, the economy and health care will get the nation back on the right track after four years of mismanagement by the Bush administration.

An estimated 5,700 people packed into the EMU's East Lawn for the rally amid tight security that included police dogs and barricades. Before the event, many people waited for hours in a line

that stretched around the south and west sides of the EMU and spilled down 13th Avenue.

Edwards rolled up his sleeves, strategically displaying a modest watch and a yellow "Live Strong" bracelet on his left hand as he praised voter registration efforts at the University.

He criticized Bush for failing to acknowledge any mistakes he has made while in office when he was asked to do so at a press conference and later during Friday's presidential debate.

"You can't fix a problem 'til you see a problem and George Bush can't see what's happening," he said. "After Nov. 2, we're going to give him all the time in the world to think about the mistakes he's made."

Edwards stressed the Kerry campaign's plan to allow young people to exchange two years of civic service for four years of public higher education, saying thousands of students can't afford higher education.

He also criticized Bush for cutting the number

of Federal Pell Grant recipients and for being the first president in 70 years to not create jobs. The economy has also suffered because the Bush administration has been soft on job outsourcing, he said.

"What would be good for our economy would be to outsource George Bush," Edwards said.

Edwards said he and Kerry will help the economy by giving tax cuts to businesses that keep jobs at home and by enforcing trade agreements, calling outsourcing to child labor a "moral issue."

He also emphasized the need to reduce U.S. dependence on oil and increase investment in renewable sources of energy.

Edwards said his ticket will also make the health care plan offered to senators available to all Americans and will use the bargaining power of the government to pressure drug companies into reducing prescription drug prices. He said he and Kerry will target exorbitant spending on prescription drug ads as well, criticizing Bush for siding with drug companies and other corporations.

"Over and over and over, this president has made it clear who he stands with," Edwards said.

Edwards said he and Kerry will "immediately" put into place recommendations from the 9/11

committee and will win the war on terror without using scare tactics.

"We're going to end the politics of fear we've seen under this administration," he said.

He also charged the crowd to watch the last debate and carry the country for Kerry.

"There is so much at stake in this election and the choices are absolutely clear," he said.

People at the rally drew different conclusions from Edwards' speech.

Many students noted Edwards' energetic style, including senior Gregory Heaton, who said the vice presidential candidate seemed practical and less reactionary than most politicians.

"He wasn't filled with anger like so many of the Republicans I've seen," Heaton said.

Although most of what Edwards discussed is "the same stuff they've been saying the whole time," Heaton said Edwards "said it more cohesively."

Eugene resident Jeff DeFranco, a recent University graduate, said his favorite part of Edwards' speech was the talk of Bush's refusal at last Friday's debate to admit any mistakes.

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Candidates lock horns on economy, health care

Kerry places nation's ills on president's head; Bush accuses senator of sitting on the 'far left bank' of mainstream

BY MARY DALRYMPLE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEMPE, Ariz. — Sen. John Kerry said Wednesday night that President Bush bears responsibility for a misguided war in Iraq, lost jobs at home and mounting millions without health care. The Republican incumbent tagged his rival as a lifelong liberal bent on raising taxes and government spending.

"There's a mainstream in American politics and you sit right on the far left bank," Bush said in the final debate of a close and contentious campaign for the White House. "Your record is such that Ted Kennedy, your colleague, is the conservative senator from Massachusetts."

Undeterred, the Democratic challenger said many of the nation's ills can be laid at Bush's feet.

He "regrettably rushed us into war" in Iraq, Kerry said, and the country is less safe as a result. He said 11 consecutive presidents, Republicans and Democrats alike, have been hit with recession and war, yet "none of them lost jobs the way this president has."

As for health care, the Democratic senator said, 5 million Americans have lost coverage under Bush's watch. "The president has turned his back on the wellness of America, and there is no system and it's starting to fall apart," Kerry said.

Kerry and the president also debated abortion, gay rights, immigration and more in a 90-minute debate that underscored deep differences only 19 campaign days before Election Day.

This debate was similar in format to the first

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Students say presidential debates have become repetitive mudslinging sessions that don't affect their votes

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

The final presidential debate between candidates George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry drew a modestly sized crowd to a viewing event at Columbia 150 Wednesday night. About 70 people, most of them students, attended to watch the candidates spar over domestic issues.

The fourth in a series of televised contests that began Sept. 30, the debate was the latest in a flurry of chances for students to see candidates on the major presidential tickets present and defend their platforms.

However, many students said the debates were repetitive.

Junior Steven Steinfeld, who stopped watching the debate early, said he didn't see a change in the candidates' talking points.

"I haven't heard anything new," he said.

"A lot of the things Bush was saying weren't true," Steinfeld said. "He says he's helping education, but it's very obvious that's not going on."

He said that watching the debates hasn't changed his stance in support of Kerry.

"I just think Kerry is the lesser of two evils, but he's not my ideal candidate," he said.

Senior Garren LaRue agreed, saying the debate was "more of the same." He said he was frustrated by the candidates' personal attacks.

"There's too much mudslinging," he said.

LaRue said job outsourcing was a key issue in the debate, but added that the candidates have neglected the environment during the series of debates.

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