

January 10, 1989

positive attitude. Leone Green in Albion reported five new or expanded business openings in recent months, with more planned. She said they held a Celebrate Nebraska event in June that will become an annual festival, and she concluded by saying, "We're proud of Albion, and feel for a town of two thousand we're certainly holding our own." And incidentally, Boone County's sales tax receipts are up 27 percent over last year. Cathy Healey of Gothenburg writes about a youth community improvement program which has brought together 198 young volunteers who have been involved in civic and personal service projects that have recharged the spirits and revitalized much of the town. Keith Ellis in McCook writes "Exciting things are happening in McCook. Retail sales are up 18 percent. The people of McCook and Southwest Nebraska are controlling their own destiny. This is just the start of many success stories we know are going to happen." Finally, an inspiring letter came from Liz Gerberding of Geneva. She started her letter by taking me back to July of 1986, when the local bank closed. She said, "When a bank in a small town closes, it's like someone dying. Fortunately a new bank is open now, but what has taken place this past year is simply marvelous." Liz took me on an imaginary walking tour of Geneva's business district, describing 30 improvements that have taken place. And she closed by saying, "People in the community are working together, young people are starting new businesses...it's looking good." Those accounts are both gratifying and encouraging. But it would be a mistake for us to suppose that our task is finished. Improving our economy, strengthening our educational system, protecting our natural resources, bolstering Nebraska's agriculture, revitalizing our towns and villages--all these require constant attention and continuous energy and imagination. Nebraskans have every reason to be proud of our schools and our teachers who do more than almost any other profession in building the future of our state. For years we've boasted about our graduation rates and outstanding student performances on college entrance exams. It is imperative that we build on all the progress we have in education. Now we need to insure that our educational system is keeping pace with an almost bewildering progress in technology. We must continue to strive to make sure our graduates are trained to compete in a rapidly changing society. We cannot fail to recognize that the jobs of tomorrow are not the jobs of yesterday, or of even today. Nor can we afford to relax our efforts to strengthen our economy. It would be easy to point to the spectacular success of our economic development incentive programs, dust off our hands and say, "Well, we've taken care of