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that." It's true that we enjoy one of the nation's lowest unemployment rates. But unemployment rates don't mean much to an unemployed or an underemployed worker. We must not only continue the efforts to attract new business and industry to Nebraska and to assist companies already here; we must place renewed emphasis on those efforts. We want to be able to keep our young people here and to bring home our daughters and sons who were forced to move away because we did not provide them opportunity here in Nebraska. The competition is increasing. Neighboring states are aware of the success we have achieved with our performance-based incentives. We can expect renewed efforts by our sister states to get back into the race. We will not only have to work harder; we must work smarter in this fiercely competitive environment. We must capitalize on our natural advantages like our central location and superior communications to build on our strengths. And, as a part of the overall development scheme, we must find ways to bring about a rural renaissance...a rebirth...to the smaller towns and villages of Nebraskaland. While a number of communities have made progress in bringing renewed vitality to main street, many localities have not fully shared in the recent economic upturn in Nebraska. One difficulty appears to be that the technical expertise and resources for planning an effective economic development program are neither available nor affordable in some towns. Nebraskans must assume responsibility for their own future--a future that belongs to those that are willing to invest the time and the leadership, and the resources needed to create a brighter tomorrow. It is in that spirit that I am proposing a comprehensive initiative to stimulate rural and community growth throughout Nebraska. The proposal involves several agencies of state government working together to focus resources and expertise that will help our communities to help themselves. Civic leaders and small business owners have spoken clearly. They have asked for our help in job training; and they need hands-on assistance in securing financial packaging, federal procurement contracts, and export assistance. That is why I am proposing the opening of four field offices of the Department of Economic Development in order to make the services of that department directly accessible to the communities. The economy of our main streets depends heavily on the economy of our agricultural sector. A prosperous and expanding farm economy is of key importance in our efforts to revitalize our rural communities. For those reasons the agricultural component of the proposal is aimed at efforts to expand the markets for the products from our farms and ranches. In order to sustain