

Omaha and Douglas County. Now there are other areas of the state that would benefit as well. I know that you're familiar with the City of Lincoln, or most of us are at least for about five months out of the year. There are a number of attractions here that would benefit as well. Kearney, the Grand Island area, the I-80 area in particular would benefit, and I think there are a number of other counties, if you look at the second half of that handout, that would benefit and that currently levy the lodging tax to the maximum amount allowable, so that there is a need out there for this and there is a use. People have found that through a local option tax they have been able to promote themselves, promote their counties, promote their attractions and bring new dollars and new visitors into those areas. Like I said, as you all know, tourism is the number three industry in the State of Nebraska. Over a billion and a half dollars are spent annually here, and that generates a number of jobs, it is probably the best form of economic development that we have, and we haven't had to do a thing to get it. All we've had to do is let people know that we're there, let people know what Nebraska is all about and the number of varied kinds of attractions that it offers, many of them natural in their heritage. They are just things that people aren't aware of and that have been here and we've grown up around all our lives. So, with that, Mr. President, I would urge the body to advance the bill. Any questions that they might have, after looking at LB 262, the mechanism, how it might operate, I'd be happy to answer those questions, any questions about the current tax that is imposed or how it is expended, anything at all, I'd be happy to answer. I would urge the body to advance the bill when we come to that point, between now and then, as the Clerk has stated I understand there are a couple amendments to follow. With that, I would close on the opening with regard to my priority bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT PRESIDING

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, Senator Hall. Discussion on the bill? Senator Chambers, followed by Senators Schmit and Crosby.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I'd like to make just a few general comments then I'm going to ask Senator Hall a couple of questions, then the rest of my remarks, as I say, will be to any particular amendment I may decide that I have to address. Senator Hall has indicated that this bill would aid tourism and that tourism is the third