

the decade has been economic development. When you're talking about doing economic development, in greater Nebraska obviously that is something awfully hard to vote against. But I think part of the problem that Senator Haberman is pointing out is what is it that these four people...who are they supposed to be helping? Because I think as a matter of fact, most of the larger towns, I know most towns over 7,000, 8,000 people probably have an economic development coordinator already. They probably already have an industry recruitment person already that's in charge of that. They are already doing those things. And as far as accessibility to the department, you know one of the things that the committee did fund this year in the One-Stop Business Assistance Center is a toll-free number so people from all across the state can call up DED and find out the answers. I mean those people out in those communities that are already hired to do that can call up the department and find the information, but I guess the question that I, myself, had to make on this issue is, as we always do, what I firstly said, how can I best spend dollars for economic development of rural Nebraska? You know this sounds good and sounds great, there is probably some better ways you can spend your money. And for instance, I remember we actually talked about it in committee, I remember I said something to Senator Scofield, I'd rather spend some more money out at the Food Processing Center where you're doing some tangible things that really will, in my opinion, help the farmer in outstate Nebraska, greater Nebraska. And there's some other things in the budget that we have funded that probably more directly or indirectly have benefits, benefits to farmers and the small communities. Now these things, these four field officers, I mean they sound good and I'm not saying they won't do a good job, but the fact of the matter is that historically these positions have been filled by younger recruitment offices, younger, at least, younger than some, older than others I guess, but basically some beginning greenhorn type people that go out and use that position as a stepping stone. They're only there maybe a year, year and a half, and move on to bigger and brighter pastures and a lot of them get stuck out in the field offices for a few years and in their opinion they get back to the big town eventually. And so the great benefits of having people located in the community historically has been such a revolving door, that has never really held true. And I thing Senator Haberman at least brings a good point that I think we need to look at who are we trying to help? Are we helping, you know, cities that already have people on staff to do this or is it our intent to help smaller communities, 5,000 or less?