

May 4, 1989

LB 639, 813

we open it wide open and create a few more offices. I certainly can tell you that I don't think anyone from Butler County is going to drive to Beatrice. They would be much better served...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...just stopping in Lincoln and be served by the office in Lincoln than to drive another 50 miles down to the City of Beatrice, although Senator Byars would probably welcome the traffic in that town. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Baack, please.

SENATOR BAACK: Yes, Mr. President and members, I...on this specific amendment to the amendment I'm not sure what I'm going to do yet. I think it's a step in the right direction. I think it just doesn't go far enough. I think all four of the offices ought to have to be in towns of 5,000 or less. From what I've seen the Department of Economic Development doing in the past, I don't think they understand what goes on in small towns and the activity that I've seen from the Department of Economic Development out of their regional offices I think has been totally ineffective in the small town areas. I think that...I know, and hopefully we will get to this, hopefully we'll get to LB 639 which is a bill dealing with the...with some changes within the Department of Economic Development. I have an amendment to that bill. It's on page 2055 of the Journal if you want to look at it. What this amendment does is it would take these same dollars that we're talking about and establishing four offices. It would take those same dollars and it would take those dollars and say we're going to establish a grant fund and what we're going to do is we're going to support local entities that are already out there or support groups of 10 or more governmental entities that want to get together and do some regional strategic planning and some economic development in their area. I think this would be a much, much better use of the money than adding these people to the Department of Economic Development. I don't think we get at the crux of the matter by just simply putting another bureaucrat out in a larger metropolitan...larger city and put them out there and say, okay, you go to work and you tell these people what they need to do for economic development. I think we get to the crux of the matter when we're able to put those dollars into the local communities where the people understand what needs to be done there, understand the people that exist there and understand