

are able to effectively work with DED under the current system and access resources. And when you really start looking at the state which doesn't have any kind of active development district, doesn't have close access to higher education institutions, doesn't have...wouldn't have any better access, particularly, by virtue of the new field offices, you find that big white band, right down through the center of the state that was on that map that I handed out yesterday. So, if you are really committed to putting field offices where there simply aren't any services, where you can gain an understanding of rural communities, and where you can in fact open up some access, it seems to me that the under served areas would be best served by putting offices in Ainsworth, Ord and Red Cloud. That, to me, makes a lot more sense than putting offices in Beatrice, which is reasonably close to Lincoln and has a fine technical community college, makes a lot more sense than putting yet another office in North Platte. North Platte, by our standards in western Nebraska, isn't all that far from Kearney and an outstanding Nebraska Business Development Center. You will recall we also added a procurement office the other day on the amendments. Norfolk, likewise, has, I think, adequate...a very active chamber of commerce and again a good technical community college, adequate access to services. Kearney, I already mentioned what kind of a good NBDC center they have. My area, we've got a state college, we've got a technical college, I'm not fighting this because there wasn't an office in the Panhandle, even though I probably could just based on mileages, but I'm not going to because I'm looking at areas that don't really have any service, and that is that big white band in the middle of the state. That is the rationale for putting those offices out there, and I think it makes sense, if you want to address rural needs. In fact I would suggest, Senator Bernard-Stevens, that my process was, in fact, more sensitive to rural areas and more geared to trying to meet rural needs than, in fact, whatever process it was that led DED to decide to pick the towns that they picked. So I think the proposal that you adopted is a sensible proposal, it eliminates duplication, it opens up services in areas that currently don't have any service, and recognizes the huge miles out there that are going to have to be covered if, in fact, you're going to send this person out there to have coffee with everybody. If Senator Smith happens to apply for one of these jobs, like she said she might, and she happens to end up in North Platte, they're going to give her everything to Wyoming. You're going to be a busy woman, Senator Smith, you're going to be on the road all the