

statewide. Now as this process went along this summer and we held a number of meetings to develop this program, it isn't something, this project, it isn't something that we just took out of the air, but we spent a lot of time on this this summer and so I'd like to at this time address some of the questions that have been asked of me as to what about this partnership. First out is collaboration tie-in with who can apply for partnership grants. One of the things we're looking for to accomplish with partnerships is to get communities and counties and agency and providers in an area to sit down and look at how they might be able to solve their common development needs and this we thought was an important issue because we're, again, and the name partnership means that we're going to work together in the communities and the other agencies before they would be eligible to receive the funds. The way partnership will work is that these parties can come together, identify a common priority, file one application for a grant to help them work through that area. And there may well be one community or one agency who would be the primary applicant. However, all of the partners would have to roll in putting together the application and seeing that their common projects, see the projects through should they be funded. Secondly, the most often asked question is what are some of the concrete examples of what partnerships could do and let me give you some of those examples. One of the most innovative concepts we heard about in developing this bill came from Sarpy County where there is a program called a business incubator without walls. The idea is that the business people come together to help evaluate the business plan of the budding entrepreneur. If they feel that their plan has a chance then they offer them technical assistance and perhaps even funding to help them get going. If they don't, they offer constructive criticism to help the (inaudible) go back to the drawing board and try again. We've been told that for an investment of about \$50,000 the program has yielded 14 new businesses and 50 jobs. That's an investment return of about \$1,000 per job and that's...this is exactly what we're talking about. They have considered expanding that concept to other areas of the state but that would require start-up funds, funds that now could be provided through this program of partnerships. Other examples that I have been given include technical support for communities, consolidation and streamlining of existing development programs, education and training programs for workers and micro lending programs to name a few. All of these programs are laudable and many of them would need a small amount of start-up funding to get going. The bottom line is that the