

individuals across the state, representing both the rural and urban areas and both the major industries and the public and private sectors, would establish the policies and practices that would guide the use of the funds. The bill would enable Nebraska to remain competitive with its neighboring states in their business recruitment efforts because the Governor and state agencies do not have the incentives available to assist Nebraska communities that are available to communities in other states. Now the Legislature, the last time this was discussed, adopted several committee amendments which clarified the sunset clause, required an annual report issued by DED regarding the projects and activities of the fund, provisions for repayment of a loan, and the sole authority by the Governor for final approval for all projects and activities which are established under the fund. During the floor debate on the bill, several concerns were voiced regarding various sections of the bill. I have met with many of you to try to resolve or clarify the language of the bill, and I'd like to take a few additional minutes to address those concerns and, hopefully, some of the new provisions of the amendment to the bill, which will clarify the issues raised. Senator Beutler asked for the definition of economic development and the specifics of the fund, and who determines the use of the fund. The definition section of DED's statutes and operations is within Statute 81-1201.01 to 81-1201.22, and Section 4 of this act. It is on page 86 of the statutes. On page 3 of the amendment, on line 26 and 27, number (8) of the amendment provides additional language for clarifying qualified business, which is defined in LB 829, the Quality Job Act, which was adopted earlier this session, and that's on page 4 of the final copy of LB 829. Following the definition of qualified business, we have included the strategies of the Department of Economic Development program and activities as found in LB 829, and include some of the current practices of the DED loan programs. Senator Chambers asked what's some of the programs and what are the activities of those programs? Section 4 defines the economic development programs and activities as defined in Section 81-1201.09, and that's also on page 89 of the statutes. Senators Chambers, Wehrbein and Beutler asked for the small business, said that small business was not defined and what area of the state. Language has been added in the amendment, and everyone has this amendment on their desk, defining the loans are primarily targeted to small businesses employing less than 100 people and will be distributed to a range of communities across the state. Senator Chambers and Wehrbein also asked about what guidelines are