tempered with a realistic concern about tax burden, threatens...threats to our ag economy, the future of our schools, violence in our communities, and serious work force shortages that we face. Finally, Nebraskans have a desire for political leadership. Nebraskans want leadership that will bring our state together, not separate it. Nebraskans appreciate leadership that works to constructively build our future with common sense, practical solutions. A noted Nebraska author, Willa Cather, states in her novel, O Pioneers, and I quote, "the history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman." As a candidate for Governor, I've had an opportunity over the past three years to try to understand what's in the hearts and minds of Nebraska men and women. I stand before you today eager to address the many issues and to lead "Nebraska United" into the twenty-first century. As I look ahead to the next millennium and reflect on the input from Nebraskans, I see four objectives that I'd just like to touch on briefly today: smaller government, lower taxes, safe communities, and a growing economy. And to all of you these objectives are no surprise whatsoever. Simply put, this is what I believe Nebraskans want and, of course, it's our challenge, as elected officials, and it's our obligation, I believe, to work to achieve these goals together. I do suggest it starts with smaller government. From coffee shops to letters to the editors, from voting booths we were sent a message--do everything you can to reduce tax burden; recognize that there are priorities to be funded. That's a challenge that faces us as we look forward to this next legislative session. We must review and analyze, reconfigure, prioritize, right size, downsize, do all of those things together in our state government. Nebraska taxpayers want a government that's lean and focused and accountable, and provides that kind of government that achieves goals for citizens. I recognize that this goal will not be easily achieved or accomplished in the first days or maybe even the first years of my administration, but it's an effort that I begin today. If we do our job right and we control the size and growth of government then we can look to reducing our tax burden. I recognize we had a ballot initiative that was enormously divisive, but I tried to listen to a message in November and I think that message was work on the tax burden; that it's too high in our state. Whether it's the rancher in O'Neill, the elderly homeowner in Beatrice, the