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FLOOR DEBATE

March 13, 2003      LB 726

itself, LB 726. Senator Hartnett.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Mr. President, members of the body, I simply rise to support LB 726. I think, as Senator Louden said in his opening, is it is permissive. No county has to do this at all. It simply allows them; it allows the counties to do it. And it just allows them to do what Sarpy County can do. It is...the funds are put into a County Visitor Improvement Fund, and it is used to improve their visitor attraction facilities in the county. It simply allows them to...it simply allows counties some flexibility. Everything that is spent by this fund, through this Visitor Improvement Fund, County, has to be approved eventually by the county board. And it's...as Senator Schimek, I think...the amendment that was adopted, it simply allows more of the hotel people to be part of it. So the big...to me, the big thing is that it's approved by the county board. They have to have a budget. It allows other counties to do the same thing as Sarpy County. And simply rise to support LB 726.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Hartnett. Senator Janssen, on the advancement of LB 726.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature. Senator Louden, I appreciate you bringing this bill, because I can see the good that it is going to do in some of the counties, not only Douglas County or your county or my county. The people who are going to...the ones that are going to benefit from this tourism in different parts of the state are actually going to be the hotel and motel people. This is something that they will be able to levy onto their tax, on their lodging tax, and the consumer is going to be paying that. So...and how many of you, when you go to a motel and check, see what the lodging tax is in your area? You know, if I find a motel that I'm comfortable in, and the marquee up there says, stay in my motel for 50 bucks a night, how many of you really check to see what the lodging tax is? I don't. You know, it's part of the bill. I know you pay a lodging tax. And the people that are going to benefit from increased tourism are going to be the hotel and the motel operators. They are going to fill up their motels. The more attractions you have in a community, the