

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 28, 2003

LB 48, 92

Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I'd like to express my thanks to Senator Brashear and to Senator Chambers for their involvement in this issue. Senator Chambers has given you a very good background on what...and some information on what has taken place. I would like to just add some additional background. As you recall last year, in 2002, it was recommended that funding be removed from the Rural Development Commission. As a body, we approved this proposal as part of our budget cuts. The commission then decided to move forward as a nonprofit organization. And this year I introduced LB 92 to officially remove the Rural Development Commission from statute. All of you should have the blue sheet in front of you and I would just like to read, this is an excerpt from the Governor's budget recommendations: Commission to Pursue Nonprofit Structure -- In an effort to comply with the new State Rural Development Council requirements being implemented by the USDA, the Nebraska Rural Development Commission voted unanimously at its October 16, 2002, meeting to pursue a nonprofit 501(c)(3) structure, and to recommend the repeal of the state statutes relative to the Nebraska commission in the upcoming Ninety-Eighth Legislature, First Regular Session. And consequently then, the commission did not submit a budget request. The Governor recommends accepting the commission's decision. The idea behind this move was to make it easier for the commission to apply for a federal grant through USDA, National Rural Development Partnership, and be designated the State Rural Development Council. I have served as an ex officio member of the commission as one of two senators appointed by the Governor. The Rural Development Commission has worked diligently on their proposal for the last year. The application was due April 21. Since, I believe, it was several weeks before that application was due that they became aware that the Governor's Policy Research Office was also going to submit a proposal. The development commission's application is over 100 pages in length and they have many letters of support. It is my understanding that two applications were sent. Nebraska is only...the only state out of 39 states where more than one application was submitted. Upon being notified of this situation, I did meet with the Governor in an attempt to discuss