

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

March 5, 2004

LR 209

local geographic celebrations in towns and communities across the state, but those are local in nature. This is the only event that we have that celebrates us as Nebraskans, that celebrates our society or our economic accomplishments of the past. It celebrates our arts. It celebrates...it can celebrate all different aspects of our life and it can celebrate the past, and it can confirm what we're doing in the present, and it can give us visions of the future as a people, as a state. And that's enormously important. In the late nineteenth century, it was all about agriculture and that was appropriate because we were mostly just about agriculture. As times change, I think the fair has to change to follow that vision of a celebration of a whole people. That doesn't mean we celebrate agriculture less. It just means that we become more encompassing. And as we become more encompassing, it becomes more relevant to everybody. And it becomes a vehicle by which we do, in fact, develop a unifying sense of being Nebraskans. We do these things at different levels. We have the Olympics to celebrate a kind of world unification on the idea of sport. We have the 4th of July celebration in Washington, which is kind of a national unifying event. And we need these, I think, at the state level. We have the State Capitol, which is a building, and we have some other things like the Unicameral, which is an institution. But those don't mean anything in terms of the emotional impact on people as coming together as people, mixing, celebrating the things that each of us do well and have contributed to the state. This is an enormously valuable thing. Have we done it well the last 10, 20 years? No, we have not. And to do it well, we need two things. We need leadership with a vision and we need facilities. The leadership with a vision I'm convinced is there today. I think Pat Lloyd is a great leader for this endeavor. And I think the State Fair Board, which has to deal with changing traditions and the changing mix in society, has had some problems doing that, but they are coming around. So you have the leadership, and if we can give them the facilities,...

SPEAKER BROMM: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...I think there's a reasonable chance that they could build this event into something that is important to