

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

March 5, 2004

LR 209

Chimney Rock, Farm and Ranch Museum. And you can also see Laramie Peak from Scottsbluff. That's 120 miles away. That's farther than from Lincoln to Grand Island. In fact, it's pretty near as far as from here to Kearney. And that's what some of the things that can be done out there in western Nebraska. We must look at the complete picture of the health and direction of the Nebraska State Fair. What direction should the fair be taking? Do we have a State Fair to promote and show agriculture products and showcase Nebraska-made goods? Or do we have a State Fair that concentrates on selling entertainment? The projections for this year's revenue, according to Pat Lloyd, will be about \$8.5 million, and expenses at nearly \$8.8 million. That's a \$300,000 shortfall. The lottery is supposed to generate an estimated \$2 million a year for the fair. And the State Fair grounds are said to need \$33 million improvements. And I'm told that part of the land is in a flood plain there. So I question, with money like that kind of money, why spend \$33 million for improvements in a flood plain area? We need to think what the Nebraska State Fair is about. Are we going to invest in an expedition to improve our future? Or do we keep pumping money into a good idea that is outdated, in an outdated location? With the amount of money that you're considering to infuse into the State Fair, the Mitchell-Morrill-Scottsbluff area would have a major State Fair in an agricultural part of the state that includes livestock, diversified farming, and tourism. Not only would Nebraskans get their money's worth, but also, the money of this magnitude would contribute to the local economy a great deal more in the western end of the state. Nebraska needs to look to the future with new eyes to reinvent itself for growth. The goal is to build new interest in markets in Nebraska, in and out of state. A success story for Nebraska's economy is attracting new money and not just moving the same money around in Nebraska. With a State Fair in western, Nebraska, new financial players and vendors are attracted, and economic development is encouraged. Nebraska will grow and develop with new thinking that brings new money from out of state. Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, and even Utah will take a new approach for a market share if you offer them an untapped region to present their products, especially since these people all have the same business interest. The time has come to look to the future. And if