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FLOOR DEBATE

March 22, 2004 LB 1093

averages. Do you all know that the average temperature in Nebraska is 50? It's zero in the winter and 100 in the summer. So unfortunately, sometimes averages don't tell you a whole lot. Yes, the value of land is increasing in Nebraska. At the current levies, it's bringing in more and more money every year in taxes. On a personal note, our farm was valued at a 30 percent increase so you know what our taxes are going to do. Not too long there was a piece of ground sold north of Lincoln. It was creeks and grass, rocks and trees and it brought about \$6,200 an acre. Now the land across the road or across the fence is, according to the Property Tax Administrator, worth that much as well. And probably some of the best farm ground in Lancaster County sold near Waverly at a public auction and it was less than \$3,000, I don't remember exactly what, between \$2,500 and \$2,800 I think. Well, some people know that over \$6,000 an acre ground won't cash flow for crop farming. Indeed, this particular purchase was made by someone who wanted a private getaway. But since he put a few cows on it, it was considered an agricultural sale. But the adjoining landowners are going to pay the price or at least they're going to pay the increased taxes because now their ground is assumed to be worth that much. I can appreciate the fact that schools and other governmental entities like property tax because of the ease of collection. You just send out the tax notices and money comes rolling in. And you also know how much is going to come in. You don't depend on how much sales tax, how much people buy, or how much they made for the sales and income tax. But the property tax, and you've all heard this before, is not an indicator of wealth. A few years back when we had the discussion on reducing the property taxes and raising the sales and income taxes, then Governor Nelson said that it was not a decrease in taxes, but a shift. Well, fast forward a few years. When state aid was decreased last year, that solved part of the schools' problems, I'm sorry, of the state's school problems, but it certainly increased problems for the schools, the cities, and the counties. But it was a shift in taxes back to the property owners. We've heard that schools won't necessarily raise their levies. I don't believe that for a minute. Now perhaps there will be some that won't because they're already below the \$1.05 and they won't need to, but there are others that will. The schools and other governmental entities have