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average age of our citizenry increases. As we care for our aging population, we must contemplate the future implications of this equation. It is critically important that we grow our economy. Doing so requires an examination of the many factors that influence our state's financial status. We must support the industry that drives our state's economy. That means being very attentive to the needs of our farmers and ranchers. It means aggressively exploring opportunities in the areas of biotechnology, value-added agriculture, and foreign markets. Inspiring growth also requires that special attention be paid to small business development, entrepreneurial support, business attraction, and worker recruitment and training. My budget sends a message to small businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly in rural Nebraska, that we are eager, we are eager to support them in an effort to expand the economy of this state. My third priority is efficiency in government. It is important that we continually seek new pathways to efficiency. I believe technology is one key to achieving this goal. Technology can provide a link that further unites our state, a link that bridges our vast prairies and Sandhills. Technology has revolutionized farming. It is helping to bring healthcare services to the smallest of our communities, and it has opened new doors of learning in our schools. We must build on the superb progress that has been made. That means striving to be a customer-friendly, customer-responsive government in everything we do, from issuing permits to answering telephones. The previously mentioned priorities matter little, however, if we fail to protect our families and provide for safe communities--my fourth priority. We are fortunate to live in Nebraska where the crime rate is low and the level of neighborly concern is very high. Yet, we do not take the good life for granted. We know that methamphetamine continues to destroy lives all across our state. We are fighting back on several fronts. The Attorney General and I propose to dramatically reduce the supply of a key meth-making ingredient, pseudoephedrine, through legislation that has been introduced by Senator Bourne and several others. That legislation also stiffens the penalties for meth dealers and manufacturers. On another front, I propose adding 21 troopers to ensure that we have a strong State Patrol to continue fulfilling their broad responsibilities, from the war on drugs to patrolling our