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economic opportunities and the outcomes will outweigh the costs. The vitality of rural Nebraska is of great importance to our way of life. Thank you, Senator Cudaback.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Cunningham. You've heard the opening. As stated by the Clerk, there are committee amendments. Chairperson Schimek of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, you're recognized to open on those amendments.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members of the Legislature. The amendment is pretty simple, and Senator Cunningham already mentioned to you, the amount mentioned to be appropriated in fiscal years 2005-06 and 2006-07 are reduced from \$1 million to \$200,000. I have to tell you that the committee did struggle with this bill, and one of the things that we struggled with, of course, was the cost of it, recognizing that the \$1 million probably wouldn't fly this year in this body. But we also struggled with some other aspects of it, and I hope that some of the other committee members will talk about it because I think it's something we need to talk about as a body. This is a good bill. I mean, it is a good bill, if you stand it alone on its own. But when you look at the fact that we have a lot of other programs out there to help local communities, then you have to start asking yourself if there's some better way that we could and should organize all of these different programs to provide these kinds of grants and assistance to local communities. I personally think that we need to encourage our local communities, and we have many of them that are really hurting right now. We do an awful lot in this state to help businesses, big businesses, and we've spent a lot of money doing that. It seems to me that we should have a good development act for rural communities. But I hope that we have a chance to discuss the...perhaps the way we do things on all of these variety of acts that we have out there. So anyway, back to the amendment. The amendment just simply lowers the total from \$1 million to \$200,000. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Schimek. (Visitors introduced.) Mr. Clerk, a motion.