

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

March 30, 2005 LB 273

themselves, and that's what I would hope here. I would hope that we could all stick together and we could do that because I believe, with given the chance, we can grow rural Nebraska. Thank you, Senator Cudaback. I'll return my time.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Cunningham. Senator Redfield.

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. The bill as it was introduced and then amended by the committee amendment would allow \$200,000 a year. The grants may be for up to \$75,000 each, and the fiscal note tells us that it would take approximately \$67,000 the first year and \$69,000 the second year in order to provide for the staff and operating costs at the state level. That means that, out of that \$200,000, we can do two projects a year, two projects a year. The Revenue Committee has had a whole litany of bills that have been introduced. I actually had a stack on the desk here this morning with me, looking at some of the economic development packages for small businesses, rural areas, ag areas. And the one question that I have continually asked to the people as they come before the Revenue Committee is, how can we best utilize our money? What is the most important thing to do, and how can we consolidate these programs so that, in fact, we are not continually hiring one or two people to administrate each one of these programs and distribute very few dollars actually out into the rural areas and the small towns? I'm looking for something that we can consolidate, we can put together the minimal operating costs, and we can have the maximum amount of dollars to actually distribute. I don't believe it serves our people well, our businesses well or economic development goals well if, in fact, we keep scattering these dollars out in a parcel of \$100,000 here, \$200,000 there. I hope that we do a study. I hope that the Performance Audit Committee will examine all of these programs and come back with some recommendations for us that are coherent, so that we can put together a program and lump the dollars together in a very efficient manner so that, in fact, we can distribute the most bang for the buck to rural areas. I am not going to support the bill, not because I don't support its goals, but because I don't believe that \$200,000 or two projects a year is going to accomplish what we want to