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LB 748

on the agenda and tell them what's the matter with your service. Among 532 municipalities, cities and villages, that own their natural gas system in this state, among those municipalities there are 14 cities and villages that own their own gas companies. Nebraska City negotiated a purchase in 1941; Hastings in 1942 by eminent domain; Alma in 1946 negotiated the purchase; Ponca in 1951, eminent domain; Central City in 1956 negotiated the purchase; Stromsburg in 1956, eminent domain; Lyons in 1959 by eminent domain; Fremont, 1985 negotiated a purchase; Wisner, 1988, eminent domain; Superior, 1990 negotiated a purchase; Falls City, 1990 negotiated a purchase; Stuart in 1991, eminent domain; Wahoo, '99, eminent domain; and Scribner in 2000, eminent domain. These systems provide a very low rate and excellent customer service. In 2001, a study conducted by the Legislature's Urban Affairs Committee found that the average residential, small commercial, and large commercial customer bill in Nebraska is 8.3 percent to 11.5 percent less expensive in municipally owned and operated natural gas systems. If MUD is included in this comparison, the natural gas rate in publicly owned systems are...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR JANSSEN: ...13 percent to 19 percent less than their investor-owned counterparts. These systems provide local control, and how many times have we stood on this floor and argued about local control? Customers of these systems have direct access to utility management, and if they don't like the direction a utility is headed for they can make...take their concerns to the city government and express their problems. I'm going to listen to the discussion. I still think that LB 748 is the right way to go. I may be impartial because I can...I have seen and witnessed what these companies do that are locally owned. I don't want to see double piping. That's not the situation,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time, Senator Janssen.

SENATOR JANSSEN: ...not in my district anyway.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Janssen. On with