

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

January 12, 2006

Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Don Pederson. Senator Pederson has been a trusted friend for many years. Last year we forged a budget that made significant investments in the education and economic vitality of Nebraska. Those investments targeted K-12 education, the University of Nebraska, and higher education, recognizing each as essential to the future success of our state. While we might not agree on every issue, the Senator has set this body's impeccable tone of cooperation and of professional and courteous disagreements when necessary. I am personally grateful for the leadership of Senator Dave Landis. Together we built a coalition for our state's most comprehensive jobs-creation economic incentive package since the 1980s. The Nebraska Advantage launched a new era of growth on January 1, and I can tell you that economic progress is already being made. In little more than a week, we have received 11 applications for incentives to create more than 3,000 good jobs in our great state. Because we expanded our jobs-creation package to include smaller businesses, the number of employers seeking information on how to grow jobs in Nebraska has skyrocketed. I want to thank all of you who helped Senator Landis pass the Nebraska Advantage in overwhelming fashion, especially Senator Roger Wehrbein, who, as much as anyone, fought to ensure our landmark jobs-creation package addresses the needs of rural Nebraska as much as it does for cities. Two more senators are leaving us this year, after having guided the state through the first steps of overcoming our water challenges. While tax relief may be the dominant issue of this session, water is the most pressing and complicated issue we've approached. Few understand that reality better than Senator Ed Schrock and Senator Elaine Stuhr. The wealth of experience this body is losing doesn't stop there, so I want to extend a brief word to all the senators serving their final terms in the most unique of legislative sessions. Nebraska and I are grateful for your years of dedicated service and we appreciate the contributions that each and every one of you has made. We should not, however, rest on the successes of our past. Future opportunities for our citizens depend in large part on the work we can accomplish together in this short session. Despite the obstacles we face, I am optimistic that Nebraska has a bright future ahead. Our state is on the move. By working together, we have already set the state on a vibrant path towards