

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

February 9, 2006 LB 996

General File.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Louden, you're recognized to open on LB 996.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. LB 996 will allow the state to apply for federal grant funds to build a High Plains Veterans Cemetery in Box Butte County. The local fund-raising efforts for this cemetery have yielded more than \$75,000 toward the 10 percent of construction costs that are required before an application is submitted. Ten percent of the construction cost is \$150,000. Governor Heineman has included in his budget request an appropriation of \$75,000 from the State Building Fund, and that money, along with the privately raised money, will equal \$150,000 needed to apply. Federal funds will be given for the construction of the cemetery upon approval of our grant application. LB 996 has an accompanying A bill which spells out in more detail the appropriation of funds. LB 996 is necessary because the current statute prohibits state funds from being placed in a cemetery construction fund. The bill removes that prohibition for cemeteries that will be built in counties with a population of fewer than \$100,000 (sic). Box Butte County meets that criterion. The bill was drafted at the request of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, with the consent of the Governor, to work in concert with the Governor's budget request. Cemetery supporters in Box Butte County have raised more than half the money required to apply for the federal construction funds. The Governor's offer for the remainder of the required application funds recognizes that Box Butte County supporters have performed admirably and demonstrated strong community commitment to the creation, maintenance, and operation of a veterans cemetery. The city has donated land, the county has pledged maintenance, and has directed its veterans service officer to perform administrative tasks. This is truly a public-private effort in western Nebraska, and I would ask for your support to advance LB 996. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Louden. You've heard the opening on LB 996. Open for discussion. Senator Smith, followed by Senators Schimek, Foley, and Thompson. Senator