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FLOOR DEBATE

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in a bigger share of the tax burden for the whole state. So I think that I would caution our friends in the metropolitan area to not be so concerned just with themselves, but let's look at the whole state as well. Now I'm not very optimistic about the success of trying to do this. I don't think that we've convinced enough people at this point in time that we've got the votes in this body to succeed. But we're going to tell you about what can be done in outstate Nebraska, and I think that you're going to be shocked at what can be done. We have a lot going for us, and we need to take advantage of it. I see Senator Loudon walking in. He has ideas as to where expressway systems might be put in that are different than mine. They have some merit. And I would invite people from around the state to stand up and talk about what...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR JOHNSON: ...might be done in their area. One of the things that I will get into in just a minute is this: 75 percent of our counties lost population in the last five years; 73 of 93 counties lost...or had their peak population in 1930 or before. I want to take a minute the next time I speak to come back to why this occurred and what we can do about it. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Johnson. (Microphone malfunction)...opening on the Johnson amendment. Open for discussion. Senator Flood.

SENATOR FLOOD: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I want to take a second and just thank Senator Joel Johnson for his support of what I think, say, plan that thinks outside of the box. Last year during the debate on several bills that would address rural economic development issues, Senator Johnson started talking about what he felt was true change in the way we perceive, in the way we pay for rural economic development in rural Nebraska. And what has been so energizing and appreciated from the folks in northeast Nebraska is that here we have a senator who resides in Buffalo County, represents Buffalo and Kearney County, and he sees the good things that can come from an expressway system that links I-29 with rural Nebraska;