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

March 28, 2006 LB 904

year or so, somebody will bring up in the Legislature that we rename North Platte Wal-Mart,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR LOUDEN:...because of the big depot that they have in North Platte, very significant piece of industry for that town. As you go on west down Interstate 80, there's...as you go just over the border into Cheyenne, there's a huge Lowe's Hardware lumber depot there in Cheyenne, and this is what brings people out there, is your...have your transportation and then you will bring business and industry to the areas. But if you don't have the transportation, they'll never come in there. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Louden. Senator Wehrbein, there are no further lights on. You're recognized.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I will close on my amendment before I will pull it. I simply want to say I had some information on the amount of gas tax. I'm going to read the top ten. I see Senator Chambers isn't here. I hope you're listening, Senator Chambers. New York has the highest gas tax of 45 cents; Pennsylvania, 32; Rhode Island, 30; North Carolina, 29; Wisconsin, 29; Ohio, 28; Washington State, 28; Montana, 27 cents; West Virginia, 27 cents, and Nebraska is tenth at 26 cents. And I...there's some other figures here that would be misleading, because most states do also put in general fund, which Nebraska does not do. I'm going to pull this, because simply, I wanted to make a point, and I did stand corrected. I said 360 on our point, construction program; it's \$390 million. When I first came in. as I recall it was in the low 300s. So we have generally increased our road budget every year, probably not much beyond the cost of inflation, because road budgets tend to...road construction costs tend to go up more than ordinary inflation. In fact, years ago it was as much as 5, 6 percent. I'm not surprised if that's that way today. The point is that we're not keeping up with our original plan in 1988, and we are almost 20 years later, and we are grousing about our road-building program. But road building takes money, and it's simply... I