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FLOOR DEBATE

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high rates. Every time the gas company was sold to another company, the rates seemed to go up. While the rates went up, I'm sure the gas companies were making some pretty good money, but there was one thing that was lacking there, and that was, the infrastructure was not being taken care of. It had been neglected for several years. The city knew that there were problems, because they were called out on several occasions where there were...and the fire department, also, where there were tell-tale gas leaks. The company that owned the lines, the system, would come and fix them, but there was a large hotel at that time in the city of Fremont, and they had reported to the gas company several times that there was the odor of gas in that building. One Saturday morning they had called the gas company and told them that it was quite extensive in that building. There were either two or three people came to check this problem out, and I lived in Nickerson, which is about nine miles north of Fremont, and my building where my store was at actually shook on its foundation. There was a gigantic explosion. The Hotel Pathfinder was demolished. There were 20-some people that were killed in that explosion, and that came from neglect. I'm not saying that Aquila or Kinder Morgan or any of the companies are bad providers. But I'm talking about what happens when a city does not own that gas company, and when investors own it to make a profit for their shareholders. The city has owned that gas company now for 25 years. They enjoy some of the best rates in Nebraska. It took them years to get that infrastructure back into shape, but it's a good gas company. They are proud of it. Another small community within the 15th Legislative District was having the same situation. There were companies that were buying and selling, this franchise, and that small community said, this is enough. They have a very aggressive city council, and Scribner, Nebraska, is a proud community. They purchased their gas company. They also are enjoying some of the best rates around. Do they want to expand? No. They're happy where they're at. Another town is only...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR JANSSEN: ...seven miles to the east of Scribner, and I think maybe they should join up with Scribner. It would be great to have that. They also enjoy some of the best rates in