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Hearing is scheduled on MX missile-basing plan

By Chris Welsch

People in western Nebraska will have a chance today to voice their opinion of the possible dense-pack scheme for placing MX missiles in the area, state Sen. Robert Clark of Sidney said.

The Executive Board of the Nebraska Legislature is holding a public hearing in Sidney to discuss the feasibility of the plan.

Clark said representatives from the Strategic Air Command near Omaha, Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming and

Washington, D.C., will attend the hearing and answer questions about the missile plan.

"We are hoping to find out all the facts about what the Air Force is planning to do with the MX," he said. "However, I don't think they know."

The hearing is the first step toward fulfilling the requirements of Resolution 326, stipulating that the Legislature should demand disclosure to Nebraskans of the Air Force plans for MX deployment in Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. Clark introduced the resolu-

tion, which the Legislature approved April 6.

Investigation wanted

The resolution calls for an investigation of Air Force plans for health and safety around the project, along with studies of the economic, sociological and environmental impact of the MX on the land-owners and Panhandle residents if it is placed in the area.

The resolution also requires public hearings throughout the state with cooperation of Air Force personnel.

The Tri-State MX Coalition, a concerned citizens' group opposed to land basing the MX, wrote the resolution.

Mark Bonkiewicz, a farmer from Sidney and member of the Tri-State MX Coalition, said the coalition is a pro-defense group concerned about negative impact the MX would have if it were placed in Nebraska, Colorado or Wyoming.

"We believe if the MX missile is needed, it should be based at sea in submarines," he said.

The possibility of the MX being placed in an underground tunnel system still exists, Bonkiewicz said.

The "race-track" system would take up 19,000 square miles of land, and the cost would be astronomical, he said.

\$25 billion cost

The dense-pack mode would cost

\$25 billion with expansions being made until the end of the century, he said.

"The only reason we can farm west of the 35th meridian is irrigation," Bonkiewicz said. "The MX project would usurp vast amounts of water, which we cannot afford to lose."

Bonkiewicz said the plan to base the MX at Warren Air Force base in Wyoming poses a dilemma.

"Where will the water come from?" he asked. "Undoubtedly it will be upstream from us."

Warren Air Force base doesn't have enough land to house all the MX sites, he said. While dense-pack would take 9,600 acres, Warren has only 7,600 acres, most of which is taken up by buildings.

Bonkiewicz said he fears the lack of prohibition to stop the government from acquiring private lands.

"Dense-pack is an ever-growing proposal," he said.

"We hope to get answers to specific questions at the public hearing," Bonkiewicz said. "How much water will be needed? Where will it come from? How much land and where?"

This hearing may provide some answers to those questions, he said.

"By having this hearing we also hope to gather data to rally farmers against land-basing of the MX," Bonkiewicz said. "The more we educate people about the MX, the less they'll like it."

Chemistry department hailed for refined doctoral program

A study that ranked UNL's chemistry department as one of the country's six most improved doctoral programs should help attract more chemistry majors and quality members to UNL, said Reuben Rieke, the department's interim chairman.

The study was conducted recently to observe the quality of the 596 graduate education programs in the United States.

Two other UNL doctoral programs, in mathematics and physics, scored below the average of other programs in the same fields.

The results of the study, conducted by a committee of the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils and published in the Sept. 9 issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education, make up the first of a five-volume assessment of U.S. graduate programs. The Chronicle of Higher Education reported that the four additional volumes, including a study of humanities, social sciences, biological sciences and engineering disciplines, will be released by the end of October.

Rieke said the study is not an attempt to rank programs in any kind of numerical order.

"It would be hopeless to try and rank schools' chemistry programs like football teams," Rieke said. "We don't go out and have playoffs or anything like that."

Rieke said this is the first study to use a non-ranking approach. He said the study cannot be infallible, but that it is more reasonable.

The department also may attract more grant money as a result of its improved status, Rieke said.

The only thing wrong with the study, he said, is that some of the more prestigious schools around the country may be receiving high marks based in part on past reputation. But he added that it would be good for UNL to build such traditions.

Rieke praised the chemistry department's faculty for the improvement, saying that it takes a hard working and dedicated faculty to produce such results. He said he wants the department to do even better next time.

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, the last major evaluation of U.S. graduate programs was conducted by the Council on Higher Education in 1969.



Staff Photo by Craig Andresen

Debbie Cutcliff, coordinator of UNL's Educational Learning Center, drives a point home during her talk on study habits. Cutcliff's speech was presented as part of Wellness Week activities. Story on Page 8.

Beutler: Legislature should control UNL budget

By Jeff Goodwin

The Legislature's Appropriations Committee has the power to review the effectiveness of UNL's academic programs but doesn't do so, State Sen. Chris Beutler said Wednesday.

Beutler spoke at a Brown Bag Discussion sponsored by the Colloquium Committee of the UNL Political Science Department.

"The Appropriations Committee has that function in the Legislature," Beutler said. "They could do it now if they wanted to."

The Appropriations Committee does audit some governmental programs, but "they are usually small, relatively meaningless organs of government," he said.

Beutler said he favors the present style of university appropriations whereby the Legislature retains a certain amount of control over the way the university spends its money.

A substitute has been offered by Regent Kermit Hansen of Omaha that would have the Legislature give the university a lump sum of money with the right to spend it as the regents saw fit.

"I think the present system is advantageous," Beutler said. "It gives the Legislature some say in how the funds are spent, but the university can also spend federal funds and cash funds however they want to."

Beutler said the Education Committee, which he serves on, has little to do with UNL.

"The committee that deals the most with the university is the Appropriations Committee," he said. "Usually the only contact the Education Committee has with the university is when the university is involved in matters dealing with secondary and elementary education."

Beutler said the Appropriations Committee is generally sympathetic to the university.

"Jerry Warner is the chairman and you have two additional members from Lancaster County," he said.

"That gives Lancaster County three out of nine members on the committee. I would say all three are philosophically inclined to support the university."

Beutler pointed out that there is only one member of the NU Board of Regents from Lancaster county — Ed Schwartzkopf of Lincoln.

He said there is an agreement among the members of the appropriations committee to vote against any changes in the budget when it comes before the Legislature.

This and a tendency on the part of the Legislature to not vote against the Appropriations Committee make it difficult to make any major changes in the budget.

The personal attitudes of legislators also makes a difference, Beutler said.

"There is an element in the Legislature that is more rural than urban that tends to think the faculty is paid well enough — in some cases overpaid — and that the university gets enough money," he said.