

# A few days in, and things are hoppin'

by Steve Arvanette:

After only a few days in the session, early predictions that the 83rd session of the Legislature would be a lively production seem to be extreme understatements.

Already, bills have been introduced to eliminate capital punishment, hire a separate chancellor for the UNL's College of Agriculture, beef up the state's drug investigations and build a new life-science building on the UNL campus.

Adding fuel to the fire, Gov. J. James Exon has promised a bill to restore capital punishment for certain offenses. At least one senator plans to make an attempt to liberalize Nebraska's abortion law.

A proposal to pull Nebraska's name off the list of states which have ratified the Women's Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was made by Sens. Richard Proud of Omaha, Irving Wiltse of Falls City and William Hasebroock of West Point.

The resolution was sent to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee headed by Omaha Sen. Ernest Chambers. The resolution may be killed in the committee, which is controlled by moderate to liberal senators. However, the committee could be bypassed by a vote of 25 senators on

the unicameral floor.

**Chambers has promised a public hearing on the resolution but is waiting for public opinion to form before setting a date.**

All this adds up o controversy and a lot of it. And the Legislature starts this session in a most confused and divided condition.

On the opening day of the first session — which the state constitution limits to 90 working days — the state's 49 senators chose Proud as its speaker 29-20 over Lincoln Sen. Harold Simpson. Scottsbluff Sen. Terry Carpenter was unopposed in his bid for chairman of the Executive Board, which conducts the Legislature's business when it is not in session.

**The Legislature stuck by its December rule change to elect chairmen of standing committees by a secret ballot of the entire body, rather than leaving that decision to the Committee on Committees as in the past.**

One of the biggest surprises in the committee chairmanship races was Chambers' 30-19 election over Alliance Sen. Leslie Stull to head the Government Committee.

One apparent change in this year's Unicameral is the