

Varner: Exon NU budget too small

By Ron Wylie

Passage of Gov. J.J. Exon's proposed university-wide budget will force the University of Nebraska to make major program reductions, NU President D.B. Varner said Thursday.

Testifying before the Unicameral's Appropriations Committee, Varner said that maintaining the university at the 1974-75 level, without including any plans for improvement or expansion, would cost millions of dollars more than the governor's recommendations.

With that budget, Varner said, "just to stand still, we will have to cut back existing programs somewhere between \$1.7 million and \$4.2 million."

"As a Nebraska citizen, I can appreciate the problem," Varner told the legislators, "it's not easy to be critical of tight budgeting, but the governor's proposed budget does not take into account the rise of university operating costs."

Salaries a priority

Appearing at the fourth day of Appropriations Committee hearings on the university budget, Varner said the number one priority for the university system should be faculty salaries. He

See related story p. 5

appealed to committee members to help the university provide fair treatment, boost morale, and retain a high caliber of academic personnel by offering greater faculty pay.

Varner asked for cost of living increases plus higher salary scale and stressed, "I am only asking this for faculty, not all university personnel."

"We ask ourselves 'What will we do if we don't get full funding?'" Varner told the committee, "but in terms of salaries, we have no choice. There's no question, in terms of the long term building of the university, competitive pay is vital."

Varner also asked the legislators to consider inflation's impact on university purchasing power. He appealed for an eight per cent increase in funding for chemicals, library periodicals, hospital expenditures, and maintenance and utility costs for university buildings.

Areas of Excellence necessary

Strengthening the Areas of Excellence program on each campus is a necessary improvement item, Varner said, and he stressed the Medical Center's Rural Health Program as a high priority case. Better health care for rural Nebraska is a major concern of the Board of Regents, Varner said.

During consideration of the State University of Nebraska (SUN) Varner said that SUN "has as much promise as anything I've worked with in education in 25 years."

Varner asked the committee to provide \$157,000 for next year's courses. He said that with this funding SUN would provide 15 televised courses. An average of

Continued on pg. 3



Governor J.J. Exon, John W. Warner, national administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, and D.B. Varner, NU president and president of the Board of Directors of the Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation, display one of the bicentennial flags given to the state Thursday.

Bicentennial projects lauded

Nebraska is the blueprint for all states to follow in their Bicentennial activities, according to John W. Warner, national administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration.

Warner, a former Secretary of the Navy, was in Lincoln Thursday to give national recognition to the Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project.

The sculpture project involves the commissioning of twelve American artists to create outdoor sculptures for twelve roadside park-rest stops along Interstate 80 in Nebraska by July 4, 1976. The artists hired for the project will construct as much of their project as possible in Nebraska, according to Art Thompson, project director.

Warner said the roadside project is one of the top three or four Bicentennial projects in the nation. It is the only one which has been recognized officially by the American Bicentennial Administration.

Big Corn, Big Red

"I always thought of Nebraska as Big Corn, Big Red and I hope that it will be Big Centennial," he said.

Any Bicentennial activity will make people think about how and why this country started, Warner said.

After traveling through 25 states, he said that Nebraska is one of the few to cover the whole spectrum of Bicentennial interests. But, he added, the Bicentennial will not be celebrated in

one place, but in each and every state.

At a luncheon attended by over 100 people, Warner presented the Bicentennial flag to NU President D.B. Varner. Varner, president of the Board of Directors of the Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation, in turn gave 12 identical flags to Gov. J. James Exon. The flags will be flown at the rest stops where the sculptures are located.

Great benefit

Saying the project is a great benefit to contemporary American sculptors and the works of art which will be produced, Warner said it will benefit each community, the state and the people long after the Bicentennial.

Exon endorsed the project, saying, "it will be a most important legacy to all future generations of Americans and a source of continuing pride to Nebraskans."

The idea of creating a "450 mile sculpture garden" along Interstate 80 as a Bicentennial project was introduced by Thomas Yates, then chairman of the tourism sub-committee of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. It was adopted by the Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission in August, 1973.

On Feb. 12, the commission tentatively approved 12 artists and four alternates selected from a national list.

There will not be a full-size sculpture of Bob Devaney, Thompson said. The sculptures mostly will be futuristic, constructed of brick, concrete and steel, he said.

Nuclear power debated

The possible danger of nuclear power plants was debated Thursday in a public hearing of the Unicameral's Public Works committee.

The hearing concerned LB 439, a bill which would place a moratorium on nuclear power plant construction.

Sen. Steve Fowler of Lincoln, who introduced the bill, said it would not effect present power plants.

Other options than building more nuclear plants are open to Nebraska, Fowler said. He mentioned possibilities for developing solar energy, hydro-electric and coal plants, and promoting individual conservation.

Fowler cited a Lincoln Electric System survey which calculated the cost of insulating every ceiling in Lincoln—about \$216 per home.

With new power plants, he said, at least one billion dollars is involved. That would produce a total indebtedness of about \$1900 for every home, he said.

Fowler said there are other reasons Nebraska should halt the construction of nuclear power plants.

Low-level radiation is detrimental to human health, but nuclear plants have not been tested completely, he said.

Colonel D.W. Kingsley, now a Nebraska physician, also objected to nuclear power plants.

"No reprocessing facilities are presently operating in the U.S. which will reprocess the waste from these plants," Kingsley said.

Experts have considered many ways to handle this waste, he said, from putting the waste underground to sending it into outer space. No solution has yet been found, Kingsley said.

Representatives from Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) spoke against the bill to halt nuclear plant construction.

Dr. Lloyd Wipple, OPPD, admitted the plants had not been fully tested, but he said he had more confidence in them than driving to Omaha in the automobile traffic.

Petroleum and natural gas have become too scarce to use for energy, Wipple said, so only three alternatives are left—power from coal, nuclear energy power or no power at all. He added that coal was not as economical as nuclear fuel.

Another representative from OPPD estimated it would require 1.3 million tons of coal to produce as much energy as the nuclear plant at Ft. Calhoun.



Dr. Lloyd Wipple from the Omaha Public Power District testifies against LB 439, which would halt nuclear power plant construction in Nebraska.