

Legal opinion tables public radio system efforts

By Paula Dittick

An opinion from State Atty. Gen. Paul Douglas' office at least temporarily has stifled efforts to create a public radio system during this session of the Nebraska Legislature.

The Nebraska Educational Television Commission (NETC) cannot legally operate a radio station without additional legislation, according to the attorney general's opinion.

Waverly Sen. Jerome Warner, chairman of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee, consulted legal counsel when proponents of public radio suggested amending NETV's budget to include the operation of a radio station.

Warner said no bill has been introduced yet, nor does

he know of any being proposed to change the statutes and allow NETC to establish public radio.

La Rue Wunderlich of Roca, president of Nebraskans for Public Radio (NPR), said NPR would "wait until next year" to begin working toward the additional legislation.

Members of NPR and NETC appeared before the Appropriations Committee supporting NETC's recommendation that a public radio system be established.

Boyd Rooney, NETV assistant general manager, said the attorney general's opinion means that NPR will "have to back up and start over" in its efforts to establish public radio in Nebraska.

The same logic prevails for the establishment of public radio as for public television, Rooney said. Public broadcasting offers programming which commercial stations have found unprofitable, he said.

The NETC recommended that NETV operate a public radio station serving Lincoln, Omaha and eastern Nebraska. Rooney said this station would cost about \$186,000 to construct.

The recommendation was based on the results of a feasibility study completed in October 1975. A subcommittee of NETC studied the possibilities of public radio in Nebraska and recommended nine stations be established, Rooney said.

A station would be licensed to each of the four state colleges (Peru, Chadron, Wayne and Kearney). All the transmitters would be located where NETV already has towers, he said.

Only the eastern station would be licensed to NETC, Rooney said, and the question of who would operate the remaining four stations remains unsettled.

The total construction bill for all nine stations would be \$1.3 million, he said.

The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare would provide 75 per cent financing if the state would pay the remaining costs, Rooney said.

Some 40 television commissions in other states now operate radio stations, Asst. Atty. Gen. Harold Mosher said.

Corncobs stay de-Tasseled for now

The "spirits" still exist—but separately.

A proposal to merge UNL's two spirit organizations, Tassels and Corncobs, was turned down by both clubs Tuesday.

Susie Reitz, secretary of Tassels, said the group proposed the merger to Corncobs because both clubs seem to have the same type of activities and there is no need for two separate clubs.

Corncob president Ross Crist said the Tassels' proposal would have combined the monies of the two clubs and that all active members of both clubs would have the same privileges. An executive board of Tassels and Corncobs would have been set up to organize the new club, he said.

"I received a good deal of opposition from the Corncobs when I brought up the merger idea," Crist said.

"I don't believe the two clubs are doing the same things. The Corncobs see a difference in the clubs and voted against the proposal."

The idea of a merger passed unanimously in Tassels, Reitz said. However, the way the merger would be carried out was indefinitely postponed because a quorum was not present at Tuesday's meeting and the idea was dropped, she said.

"Another problem we face is that both clubs can take men and women because of Title IX laws giving equal participation for men and women in school organizations," she said. "Having two clubs is saying join this spirit club instead of the other."

Tassels had been for women and Corncobs for men until last year, Reitz said.

Crist said the Corncobs wanted to retain their identity and did not like the idea of taking two equal clubs to make one better club.

Tassels are facing a membership problem, Reitz said, and they wanted to see the merger pass before both clubs begin their annual membership drives.

She said Tassels have 25 active members and according to its constitution, the group becomes inactive when there are only 20 active members.

Crist said he expects the merger idea to be brought up again when both clubs believe they are doing the same things.

"We'll bring up the merger idea again," Reitz said, "because we will be forced to merge by the Athletic Dept. They will not recognize two different spirit clubs."

FAB agenda

FAB will meet tonight at 6 in the Nebraska East Union Sunflower Room.

I. Open hearing on Student Development Budget

II. Approval of minutes

III. Subcommittee reports on "A" Funds

I. UNL Crew, Judo Club, Weightlifting Club, American Association of Interior Designers, Horticulture Club, Rugby Club

II. MASA, Organization of Iranian Students, AIESEC, University Gay Action Group, Korean Student Association, Vietnamese Student Association

III. NUPIRG, Corn Cobs and Tassels, Cultural Affairs Committee, Engineering Exec Board, Innocents/Mortar Board, Ag Advisory Board.

IV. Other business

V. Announcements

At Last!

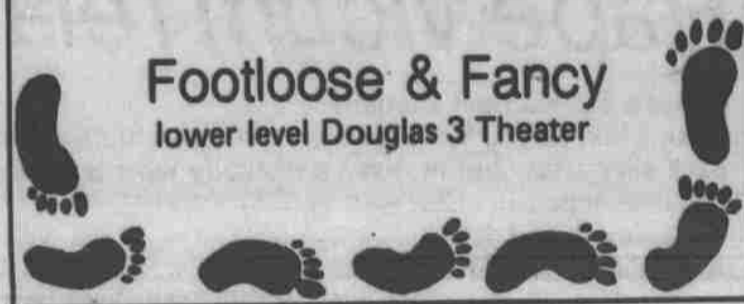
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