

# Bigger is not always better in technology struggle

By Dawn Baxter

If economic progress and technological development continue as they have for the past 20 years, with bigger being better, it is just a matter of time before water, energy or the human psyche gives out, said British economist E.F. Schumacher, Thursday.

Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, appeared at a luncheon as part of the Prairie Project, a series of conferences on the future of the plains states.

Schumacher is the father of the intermediary development theory, which calls for supplementing large-scale technology with smaller, simpler and less costly units

of production.

"Freedom was once defined as the recognition of necessity. If we don't recognize the necessity to adapt our technology to preserve our remaining resources, we'll end up being thrown into situations we can't handle.

### Plan needed

He said corporate policy should allow for a "lifeboat," a plan such as organic farming to back up our highly mechanized method of production. He compared today's corporate policies to the "rearranging of the deck chairs on the Titanic."

"We need corporate policy, though, since new things cannot be implemented

without it. It makes the ideas viable in a way that government and academia can't," he said.

Schumacher divided those who are grappling with the technological problems into two categories: the "forward stampede," and the "homecomers."

He describes the forward stampede as those who want to help the violence and giantism of technology by using more violent technology and giantism. However, the homecomers are trying to change their attitudes and find a way to work with nature by organic farming and use of simpler machines.

### Big is better?

The 66-year-old economist said no one asks for something smaller. Progress seems to be associated with growth in size.

"One example of this is the astonishing polarization in a pattern of settlement. There is much more colonization around the large cities and the small towns are emptying," he said.

"The small towns are only being used for places where you can get raw materials. College graduates cannot get jobs in the towns and end up going to large cities for work. In Montana, only 15 per cent of the college graduates remain in the state, with the remaining 85 per cent going elsewhere to find work," Schumacher said.

He added that the small family farm appears to be going the way of the small town.

"There are those who would like to move from the cities because of the pressure and lack of space, but they are finding that the door to rural living is solidly closed. Farming is being closed off to all but the very rich and the corporations," he said.

After the luncheon, four concurrent conferences met. Each conference was an alternative for communities; corporate policy in America; future of the farm; and soil and water. Schumacher spoke to each group individually.

## Baier: more fees needed

Operation on a continuation basis was the outline for the proposed Student Development budget presented by John Baier, associate dean of student development and Dan Steller, director of the Center for Students and Organizations (CSO) at a Fees Allocation Board (FAB) meeting Thursday night.

Baier and Steller agreed that without the increase in fees requested in the budget for Student Development, the only alternative would be to cut services and personnel. Baier said this would be a difficult task because he said he could not think of any expendable programs or staff members.

Steller cited examples of "phenomenal growth" in student participation in recreation programs. He said student involvement has increased every year, even when total UNL enrollment has decreased.

Baier said that the department's Environmental Health, Career Counseling and Placement Planning programs, currently financed by student fees, have been taken to the Nebraska Legislature for requested

state tax support.

Another attempt at trimming departmental costs has been the transfer of personnel from the Recreation Dept. to CSO office, Baier said. He pointed out that this move saved no fee dollars, but transferred costs to CSO, enabling the Recreation Dept. to stay within its budget in this area.

Included in the budget was the addition of a nine-month position and a graduate assistant position to the Recreation Dept. staff. Baier said that without those additional staff members, a limit would have to be set on recreational facilities, tennis courts and gyms, as well as intramurals programs.

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