

Professor: Legislators too busy

By Wayde Wrich

Time, information and staffs of state legislators can be useful if used and managed properly, according to a nationally recognized political scientist.

In a speech before Nebraska state legislators, Alan Rosenthal, professor of political science at Rutgers University, said many legislatures are so busy with large amounts of information they are unable to find what they need.

"Some legislators have too much staff and are finding out the staff is making more work for them," said Rosenthal, director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics.

"It should be the job of the staff to figure out what information is relevant to the concerns of the legislators."

Rosenthal said time is also an important factor in legislation. "Full time sessions give the members no time. They are being pulled 110 different ways and have no

time to think," he said.

Instead of increasing the lengths of the sessions, he said, senators should use extra time to oversee possible new ideas and formulate possible legislation.

"Mostly, they need time to think."

Rosenthal said there are three ways to run a legislature: Ignore problems and hope they go away, increase time, information, and staff every time there is a problem or employ management skills to use existing information and staff effectively.

"The senators should have a better supervision and management of their staff and better control of the influx of information."

Rosenthal, author of "Politics in New Jersey," said one thing not to do is copy other legislatures. "What is good for Minnesota may not be good for Florida. What is good for Wisconsin may not be good for Nebraska—and nothing works for New Jersey," he said.

Rosenthal said he could not offer specific information to Nebraska legislature but gave general information from observations of legislatures nationwide.

"From what I've seen, Nebraska's Legislature is doing a good job of holding down legislation," he said. "States like California and New York are passing so much legislation that they have no idea what laws they are making and what these laws are doing to their state."

Rosenthal said Legislatures are using information from companies to limit those companies.

"Businesses are spending most of their time justifying their movements and are finding it hard to run their businesses."

Rosenthal said if the staffs would become information brokers and pass on only information that is really needed, senators' jobs would be much easier.

Rosenthal was invited to Lincoln as part of a Legislative Council Seminar for state legislators. The seminar was a program on the better use of legislative staffing.

Marshal warns about false alarms

By Rich Jurgens

Dormitory residents may cry wolf once too often, said State Fire Marshal Wally Barnett.

This week is National Fire Prevention Week, and although UNL buildings don't have any major problems, the dormitories do, Barnett said. He said there has been an increased number of fire calls reported by dormitories that are either false alarms or small fires set by students.

Barnett said dormitory students should start reporting the names of people who start small fires. "Kids up there (dormitories) had better get involved. If they don't, they (firemen) may be carrying them out, and it won't be because we didn't try to tell them," said Barnett.

Barnett said there was no state law that says the fire department must answer every call.

However, Barnett said the problem with dormitory fires probably would continue until there is a serious fire, where someone doesn't get out in time, then "all hell will break loose."

Barnett said people become conscious about fire safety when it directly affects them. For instance, he said, the fire at Hickman where two children were killed made the residents there aware of fire safety. But he said that concern would wear off as time passes.

Fire safety should be practiced 52 weeks a year, Barnett said. This week is spent stressing fire safety and honoring firemen who have died on duty.

Barnett said there were no major fire hazards in the UNL buildings. If there were safety hazards, they wouldn't be opened, he said.

The buildings with chemical labs are watched closely, he said, because they deal with potential fire hazards.

Two weeks before the semester began, Hamilton Hall was given 48 hours to cleanup the large numbers of chemicals sitting around before classes could be held there, Barnett said.

He said Hamilton Hall is still checked once a week because of the number of bomb threats reported last year.

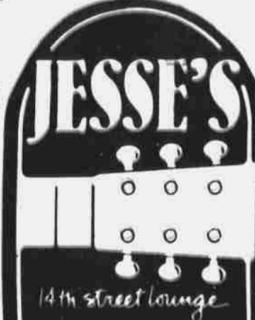
In 1969, Avery Hall was closed until fire escapes and exit doors were installed, Barnett said.

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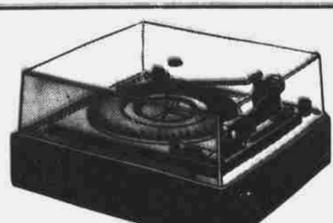
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1 p.m.-2 p.m.—Muslim Student Association, Room 401.
2 p.m.-4 p.m.—Student Y Jazz Group, South Crib.
7 p.m.-8:30 p.m.—Chi Alpha Campus Ministry, Room 402.
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