

Handicapped...

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"If I were putting a gauge on the importance of the money," he said, "I would say it is an important step rather than a huge step."

Munn said he is certain that even before the recent allocations the university had complied with federal standards.

"I have every bit of confidence that the university is in compliance with federal law," he said. "I know what other institutions are doing and I feel good about what we're doing."

The federal law referred to is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which was not signed into law until April 28, 1977. The thrust of the legislation is to ensure that education programs be "equally effective" for disabled persons. This applies only to programs which receive federal financing.

The legislation says program accessibility should be the guide for modification plans. It does not require that all buildings be accessible, and says capital construction should be the last resort in redesigning.

Munn said federal agencies are supposed to conduct periodic compliance reviews, but added that universities rarely undergo such reviews. The purpose of the program under review determines which federal agency will check on compliance. For example, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare would conduct a review for a university.

There are also investigations by federal agencies, but those are conducted only after someone has charged discrimination, Munn said.

"The law says we will make reasonable accommodations, but that is not to say we are doing everything," he said. "You can't do overnight what hasn't been done in a century."

The current accommodations offered at UNL include provisions for access to new buildings or those being remodeled, parking places, modifications in residence halls such as lower rods in closets and special showers, and assistance in finding aides if necessary.

There is a list of capital construction items prioritized and waiting for funds, Munn said. The \$161,000 will take care of some of these items, which are determined by the individual needs of physically handicapped students, he explained.

Munn must depend upon the cooperation of other university offices to help with the handicapped since he had a full-time job before he began working with the disabled.

The auxiliary staff which helps him includes food service, housing and maintenance, plus his staff—one secretary.

"I just don't have the time to do the job," he said. Oklahoma State University is the only other Big Eight school which puts responsibility for handicapped students on the Affirmative Action officer. However, he is assisted by a committee and a student club for disabled students.

Iowa State University and the University of Colorado also place handicapped services with the Affirmative Action office, but there are six people on the staff at Colorado and four at Iowa State.

Advisory committees are used at the University of Oklahoma where they have a coordinator for handicapped students services and an assistant. A committee is also used at Kansas State University, where the group works with the Center for Student Development under the Educational Opportunity Center. The University of Kansas has an ongoing task force, originally created to assure compliance with federal legislation, and a Student Assistance Center to help with the handicapped.

The University of Missouri, which began working on programs for the handicapped in 1960, has a Handicapped Student Programs Office, which includes a director, an interpreter, a secretary, two work study students and part-time help.

Schools in the Big Eight also differ in their methods of financing construction for handicapped accessibility.

Iowa State, Colorado and Kansas have line items in their budgets for construction costs relating to accessibility for the disabled. At Iowa State, \$2 million has been received since 1975, when they set up a plan for modification of facilities. Funds at Kansas are also added from the housing budget.

From 1960 to 1966, there were special funds for working with the handicapped at Missouri, but costs are now absorbed by various departments. Special services provide funds at Kansas State, in addition to \$850,000 which has been provided by the state legislature. The Kansas Legislature is also considering a request for \$600,000 to be used for modifying the exterior of buildings.

At Oklahoma, funds come from various budgets and at Oklahoma State, most of the money to work with the disabled comes from maintenance funds.

Budgeting at Oklahoma State is similar to UNL where money for construction, such as access ramps, curb cuts, elevators and bathroom renovations, comes from the physical plant budget.

Harley Schrader, director of physical plant operations, explained that the budgeting process varies from year to year.

For the past six or seven years, the "lion's share of money has come from special maintenance or fire and life safety," he said. The "beg, borrow and steal" techniques have also been used to try to locate funds, according to Schrader.

Money to help remove barriers for the handicapped has been available for the last three years through the provisions of LB309. This year the \$875,000 allocated was divided among all state buildings, according to Carolyn Eberly, administrative assistant for the task force.

She said UNL received limited funds the first two years of the program because the money was spent on buildings used every day such as the Beatrice State Development Center and the Nebraska City School for the Visually Handicapped.

Last year, UNL received about \$25,000, which was used for renovations in the 501 Building and for modifications in the parking lot between Bancroft Hall and the Health Center, according to Jim Money, physical plant administrator in charge of deferred maintenance and fire and life safety.

The year before, Schrader said the university received no money from the LB309 funds.

One reason for the limited money is that the physical plant began modifications for the handicapped before it was required by law. Therefore, they are ahead of most state agencies and have not received money relative to the percentage of state buildings at UNL, Schrader said.

There is, however, a limit to how much can be taken from the maintenance budget.

"There has not been adequate amounts of money to take care of major kinds of maintenance items that have been deferred and deferred and deferred," he said.

When the situation merits, there is also some money available through the chancellor's discretionary fund. Money said the chancellor gave them \$5,000 to help with the parking lot and the 501 Building.

"We're picking away as best we can," Schrader said.

The LB309 Task Force was designed to help control the costs of preventive maintenance. Work with the handicapped was added as shown by the appropriations budget hearing held before the bill was passed. During that hearing, Grand Island Sen. Ralph Kelly said the "attention for the handicapped and so forth" was an excellent addition to the bill because such provisions were not included elsewhere.

Eberly said the building inspectors involved in the project emphasize preventive maintenance. She said

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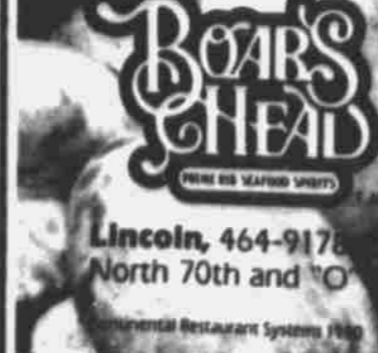
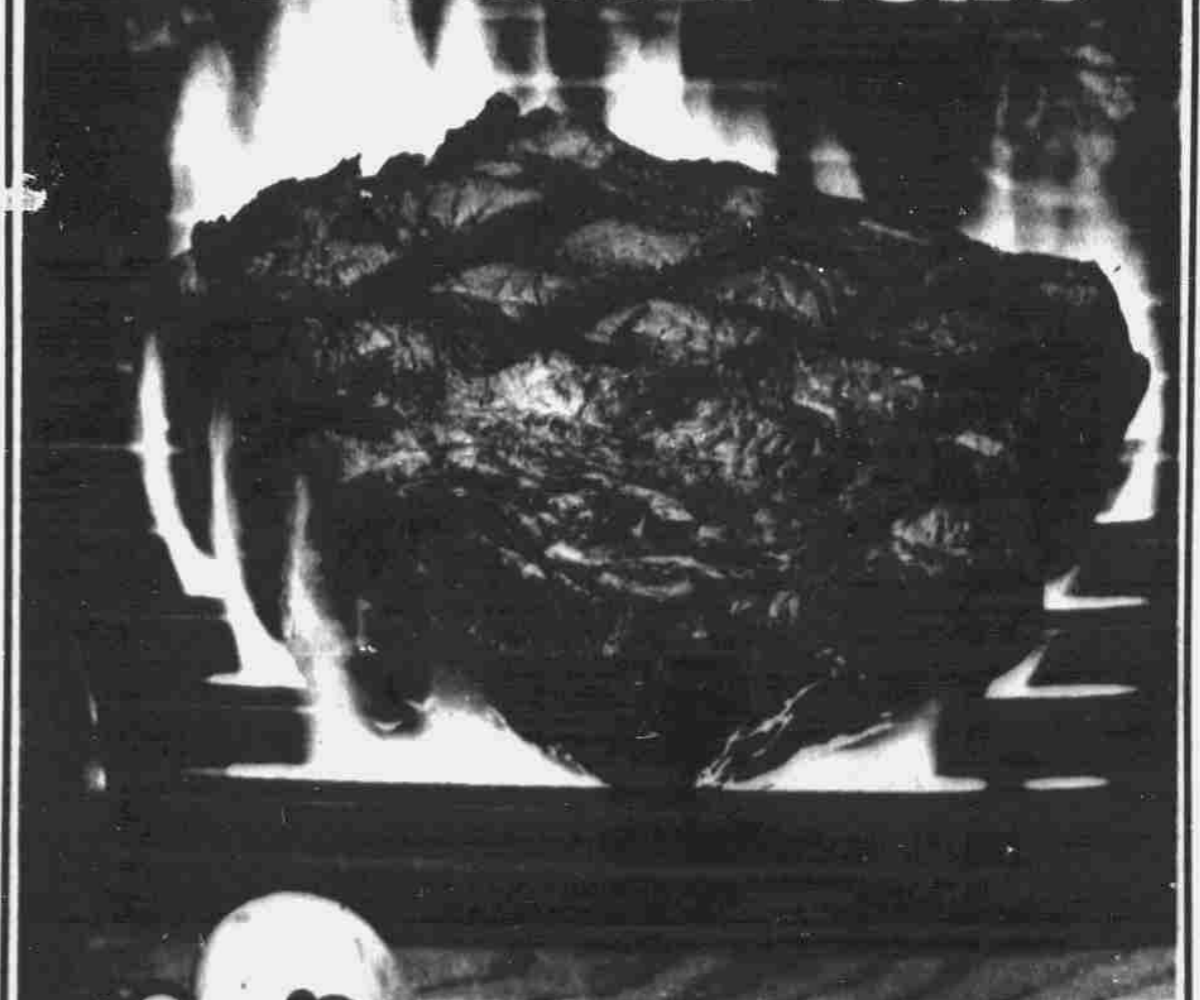
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