

# Daily Nebraskan

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## Cigarette tax increase proposed by Legislature

By Melinda Norris

**Warning:** The Nebraska Legislature may determine that buying cigarettes could be hazardous to your income.

Three legislative bills and the executive budget are calling for individual increases in the Nebraska cigarette tax ranging from 1 to 4 cents a pack.

Currently, Nebraskans are paying 14 cents in taxes for each pack of cigarettes. Nine cents are placed in the general fund, while specific amounts are taken from the remaining 5 cents to finance state office buildings, the Downtown Education Center and outdoor recreation. All remaining proceeds are transferred into the Capital Construction Fund.

Gov. Charles Thone and Sen. Steve Fowler of Lincoln want to increase the tax by 4 cents a pack. Sen. Rex Haberman of Imperial has asked for a 2 cent increase

with LB569 and Sens. Vard Johnson of Omaha and Howard Peterson of Grand Island are co-sponsoring LB762, calling for a penny hike.

Thone called for the 4-cent increase Jan. 11 in his state of the state address as a means for increasing the General Fund. The 18 cent tax would add \$7 million to Thone's proposed \$749.2 million General Fund for fiscal year 1983.

In LB712, Fowler wants the increase to enlarge the Capital Construction Fund to be used specifically for buildings for higher education.

### Colleges benefit

Anticipating \$6.4 million annually with the six-year tax, Fowler has marked Kearney State College, the Institute of Natural Resources and all three campuses of NU as recipients, said Barb Richardson, Fowler's legislative aide.

At UNL, Architectural Hall and Bessey Hall would probably be renovated first with the revenue, she said.

"Architectural Hall is the oldest building on campus and a historical sight, and it is falling apart," Richardson said.

This tax would aid the university and improve the state's economy, she said.

The university, which was "hit with a terrible budget" by Gov. Thone Jan. 11, would receive additional funds for renovation, Richardson said. At the same time, these building projects would employ some of the "thousands of unemployed construction workers" across the state.

Richardson said a study was done before asking for the 4-cent increase and found that the proposed cigarette tax "is not high."

Massachusetts, Connecticut and Florida lead the nation with a 21-cent tax per pack, Richardson said. Iowa, Minnesota,

Oklahoma and other states have an 18-cent tax.

The increase would put Nebraska "right in the middle" compared with the cigarette taxes in other states, she said.

### Finance jail

Haberman has proposed a 2 cent per pack increase to finance the "construction, improvement, maintenance and operation" of a minimum security jail.

Johnson and Peterson have asked for the smallest hike of 1 cent per pack to support and promote community health services provided by local health departments.

These funds would replace those lost through federal budget cuts, aid in contracting with private health care providers for community health care services and improve or develop new health departments and services.

## Regents mandate review of all expense vouchers

By Leslie Kendrick

A 1979 proposal to tighten NU admission standards was resurrected at the Saturday meeting of the NU Board of Regents.

Regent Robert Simmons of Scottsbluff said minimum standards may be elitist, "but that is what we should be, an elitist institution."

A study presented at the board meeting revealed that several universities of comparable size have set minimum admission standards. The board will discuss details of the proposal at its March meeting.

The regents also elected James H.

Moylan as chairman of the board, and Kermit Hansen as vice chairman.

Both Moylan said Hansen represent districts in Douglas County. The chairmanship was previously held by Regent Robert J. Prokop of Wilbur.

Discussion and action on resolutions ranging from thanking local police officials for work done on football Saturdays to reviewing regents' expense vouchers played a major role at the board's monthly meeting.

### Gubernatorial appointments

The regents approved a resolution strongly opposing the passage of both

LB735 and LB736. LB735 provides for a constitutional amendment to authorize the governor to appoint three regents. LB736 provides for gubernatorial appointment of three regents. The two bills have been introduced in this year's session of the Nebraska Legislature.

The resolution, offered by Regent Robert Koefoot of Grand Island, states that the changes which are proposed in the bills would deny Nebraskans a direct role in selecting members of the Board of Regents.

The board passed another resolution that will give the executive committee the power to review all regents' expense accounts for meetings, subcommittee meetings, and board-approved functions prior to payment.

Regent Kermit Wagner of Schuyler, who introduced the resolution, also released figures for 1981 expenses of the regents. The figures did not include transportation to national meetings or telephone calls. Wagner's list shows that Prokop's expenses totaled \$5,171.10 for 1981. Scottsbluff Regent Robert Simmons expenses amount-

ed to \$1,954.53. Wagner had the lowest expenses for 1981, totaling \$255.49.

### Educational agreement

The regents also acknowledged an intent to contract with the University of Wyoming to provide for the education of six veterinary students at the proposed Regional College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Nebraska. In addition, the board approved an educational agreement between UNL and Doane College. The agreement provides fifth-year teacher education for Doane College students wishing to specialize in elementary, secondary and special education certifications.

The board formally congratulated and commended Athletic Director Bob Devaney, head football Coach Tom Osborne, the assistant coaches and players for a "victorious, exciting and entertaining season" of "inspired play."

And a formal message of thanks went to the Cooper Foundation of Lincoln for a \$50,000 challenge grant to purchase books to support the humanities and social sciences at UNL.

## Lincoln clergymen dispute homosexuals' morals, rights

By Chris Hodges

Three Lincoln clergymen supported homosexuals in their fight for civil rights while two others blasted homosexuals for what they called sins and perversions in a panel discussion Thursday night.

About 40 people, some homosexuals, attended the meeting at First Plymouth United Church of Christ.

Rabbi Mark Bisman of Tifereth Israel Synagogue, the Rev. Dale Hardes of Sacred Heart Parish and the Rev. Otis Young of First Plymouth United Church of Christ said they support homosexuals in their fight to amend the Lincoln city ordinance to protect homosexuals from job and housing discrimination.

Bisman compared the plight of the homosexuals to the persecution of Jews during Nazi rule in Germany. Anti-discrimination laws should be extended to include all people, including homosexuals he said.

Hardes agreed that homosexuals should not be deprived of their dignity and rights. A law to defend the civil rights of homosexuals would not necessarily endorse their lifestyle, he said.

Young said homosexual orientation is not a sin. Homosexuals are "made in God's image" as are all other people, he said. Dis-

criminating against them is evil and destroys society, he said.

The Rev. Rodney Hinrichs of Rejoice Lutheran Church and the Rev. John Morrow of the Living Word Fellowship, denounced homosexuality and said they oppose any changes in the law that would single out homosexuals as a group that needs special protection.

Hinrichs said homosexuals are disobeying God's law. The passage of gay rights amendment would signal a "relaxing of moral standards" in America, he said. Homosexuality brings no commitment, joy or assets to a community, he said.

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Photo by D. Eric Kircher

Robert Cirone and his four-year-old daughter, Jessica, found the weather was perfect for trying out the ice skating in the south cove of Holmes Lake Sunday.

## Inside Monday

**When IRIS Eyes are Smiling:** A new computer system called IRIS could put an end to those long registration lines . . . . . Page 4

**Now This Won't Hurt a Bit:** Columnist David Wood survives a trip to the dentist. . . . . Page 6

**So Close:** The Husker basketball team fell two points short of upsetting No. 2-ranked Missouri Saturday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. . . . Page 5