

Loan processing delays up to eight months . . .

Bereuter calls for investigation

By Gene Gentrup

Rep. Doug Bereuter of Utica has asked the General Accounting Office to conduct an investigation into loan processing delays within the Farmers Home Administration.

John Amick, Bereuter's legislative assistant, said some farmers who have applied for loans are frustrated by delays and have waited up to eight months before learning if their application has been accepted or rejected.

"This is the time of the year when the farmers need their operating capital," Amick said. "They need to line up their credit early to operate throughout the year. What good does it do if they don't hear from the FmHA until harvest time?" he said.

Amick said, however, that the current agricultural situation gives the FmHA a heavy load of loan applications.

The Economic Research Service said in its annual report that the value of U.S. farmland has dropped for the third year in a row, the first time this has happened since the Great Depression.

The report cited low net farm earnings, high interest rates and tight credit as reasons for the decline.

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"As land values weaken, so do farmer's assets," Amick said. "With less collateral, they are unable to borrow as much to stay in the business."

Amick said Bereuter proposed some solutions to the loan processing delays at a recent meeting with Secretary of Agriculture John Block.

He said that Bereuter has asked that a larger share of the burden of the paperwork involved in loan applications be shifted from the FmHA to the lending bank.

Amick said this is currently the practice with the Small Business Administration loan guarantees, and both the S.B.A. and the banks seem happy with the agreement.

Amick said he and Bereuter agreed that the most serious problem that must be discussed by Congress is the cost and availability of farm credit.

"The situation is as bad as it has been in fifty years," he said. "Farmers must have access to operating capital at an affordable price."

Shorts

As part of Neighborhood Week, June 9 to 16, neighborhood groups will be presenting oral history tapes and slide shows June 9 at the state Historical Society 15th and P streets, beginning at 12:30 p.m.

With a grant from the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities, seven older neighborhoods have produced documentations of life as it was from the turn of the century.

The presentations are the result of countless interviews with long-time residents and a selection of the best of old photographs from many private collections.

The 20-minute slide shows will run through Saturday afternoon. Interested viewers are invited to come and go as they please. There is no charge.

The schedule:

South Salt Creek, 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
University Place, 1:35 p.m. to 2 p.m.
Yankee Hill, 2:05 p.m. to 2:40 p.m.
Near South, 2:45 p.m. to 3:10 p.m.
North Bottoms, 3:15 p.m. to 3:40 p.m.
College View, 3:45 p.m. to 4:10 p.m.
East Campus, 4:15 p.m. to 4:35 p.m.

Kerrey: Investigation must continue in Commonwealth

By Jeff Goodwin

Gov. Bob Kerrey left open the possibility that a special session of the Legislature may convene before the fall elections if the state is found liable for losses suffered by the depositors of Commonwealth Savings Co.

But Kerrey, speaking at a Wednesday news conference, said such a session wasn't likely to be called in the near future.

Kerrey said he also wants the Legislature's Special Commonwealth Committee to investigate more fully the issue of the state's liability.

In a related development, Kerrey said the settlement between former Banking Department Assistant Director/Legal Counsel Barry Lake and the Department of Banking was necessary.

Lake was fired by the Banking Department in January because of alleged errors he made in connection with the Commonwealth case. He took the state to court to get his job back and, under the terms of the settlement, he was offered his former position, but resigned instead.

Kerrey said the level of proof is higher in the public sector than the private sector. Therefore, he said, it would have been difficult for the state to

defend itself against Lake's suit.

Kerrey, responding to statements that the settlement was not intended to give Lake his job back, said Lake could have had his job if he had wanted it.

"My sense of it is that Barry Lake was offered the job and, had he accepted it, he would have had the job," Kerrey said. "But there was some thought beforehand that he might not take it."

In other comments, Kerrey virtually conceded the Democratic presidential nomination to former Vice President Walter Mondale, but said he would stay committed to Sen. Gary Hart.

Noting the bitter primary campaign the two candidates have fought during the last few months, Kerrey said, "They're the ones who will determine the course of this campaign. It will be difficult for some people in some of the states where the campaign was pretty heated. I can assure you it was pretty heated in New Jersey."

Kerrey was in New Jersey Monday, meeting with officials of AT&T.

Kerrey said the Democratic nominee would have a difficult time running against President Reagan in the general election.

"Whoever the Democratic nominee is, he's going to have a lot of work between now and November," Kerrey said.

Police Report

The following incidents were reported to the UNL police department between 7:30 a.m. Monday and 8:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Monday

7:28 a.m. — Theft reported from car parked near the Recreation Building.

1:33 p.m. — Indecent exposure reported in alley near Parking Area 30 on East Campus.

4:30 p.m. — Security alarm reported sounding at Hamilton Hall. Cause unknown.

Tuesday

12:56 a.m. — Person arrested for driving while intoxicated at 12th and R streets.

8:04 a.m. — Suspicious person reported near Teachers College.

10:21 a.m. — Two-car accident reported near the Dental College parking lot.

ing lot.

1:23 p.m. — Fire alarm reported sounding at 501 Building. Alarm was tripped by malfunctioning smoke detector.

2:43 p.m. — Two-car accident reported in parking lot near Selleck Quadrangle.

Wednesday

3:02 a.m. — People reported sleeping in Ferguson Hall lounge.

8:10 a.m. — Car accident reported at 16th and Y streets. Injuries were reported.

9:38 a.m. — Suspicious person reported near Nebraska Union. Police reported person was a transient.

8:31 p.m. — Fire alarm reported sounding at the Sheldon Art Gallery. Alarm was tripped by overheated motor.

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