

WEATHER: Tuesday, mostly sunny and cooler with a high in the 50s. Tuesday night, fair with a low in the mid-20s to around 30. Wednesday, partly to mostly sunny. High in the 50s.

Daily Nebraskan

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University and Omaha hospitals may merge

By Mary Nell Westbrook
 Staff Reporter

The University of Nebraska Hospital and Bishop Clarkson Memorial Hospital hired consulting firms that may suggest the two hospitals merge, said University of Nebraska Medical Center Chancellor Charles Andrews.

The consulting firms are discussing various options for the two Omaha hospitals to work together more efficiently, Andrews said.

"They (the consulting firms) could come up with anything from sharing bed sheets to totally merging both hospitals," he said.

Brent Stevenson, director of University Hospital, said the hospital has set no limits on what the firms may come up with.

The firms, Robert Douglas Associates in Houston and Herman Smith Associates in Chicago, have been working on the UNMC/Clarkson project since July.

The firms were supposed to reach a decision by Sept. 30, but the firms probably won't have a decision for another three to four weeks, said Steve Weyland, a consultant with the Houston firm.

"This is a very important decision for each of the hospitals," he said. "It's a very sensitive issue with complex organizations like these."

Stevenson said the firms are meeting with medical staff, governing boards and other staff members.

Because the hospitals are across the street from each other, they already share many functions and staff members, Stevenson said.

In the future, if the hospitals merge, costs would be cut for patients by sharing one particular service, for example, an emergency room, he said.

University Hospital receives less than 5 percent of its support from taxes, Stevenson said. Of its \$89 million budget, 95 percent comes from patient revenue.

The students at UNMC would benefit from a merger because the number of patients available to care for would double.

Having the outside expertise of the consulting firms look at both institutions "we might avoid any duplication" and therefore work more efficiently, he said.

Max Francis, chief executive administrator of Clarkson, said he hopes to hear a recommendation on how the two hospitals can work together better.

Regent Robert Koefoot of Grand Island said he thinks a merger would be an "excellent working arrangement."

U S West aids schools

By Amy Edwards
 Senior Reporter

U S West announced a program Monday that will give \$20 million over the next five years to education in the 14 states, including Nebraska, with U S West-owned corporations.

Jane Prancan, director of community affairs for U S West, said the U S West Education Initiative will combine several programs to ensure educational excellence.

The initiative, which will begin in 1988 with \$2 million, has four objectives:

- to encourage public and private educational institutions to continue to do better what they already do well.
- to establish broad-based links between parents, businesses, educators, government and communities.
- to establish a teacher recognition program.
- to share university knowledge outside normal confines of the campus.

Prancan said university information needs to reach areas outside the university community, primarily in rural areas.

U S West will establish a fellowship program in 1988 to recognize elementary and secondary education teachers who have developed teaching methods that go beyond normal teaching methods, Prancan said.

The fellowship program will select three teachers from the 14 states who will receive a salary and be paid by U S West to take one year out of their teaching careers to develop professional teaching skills.

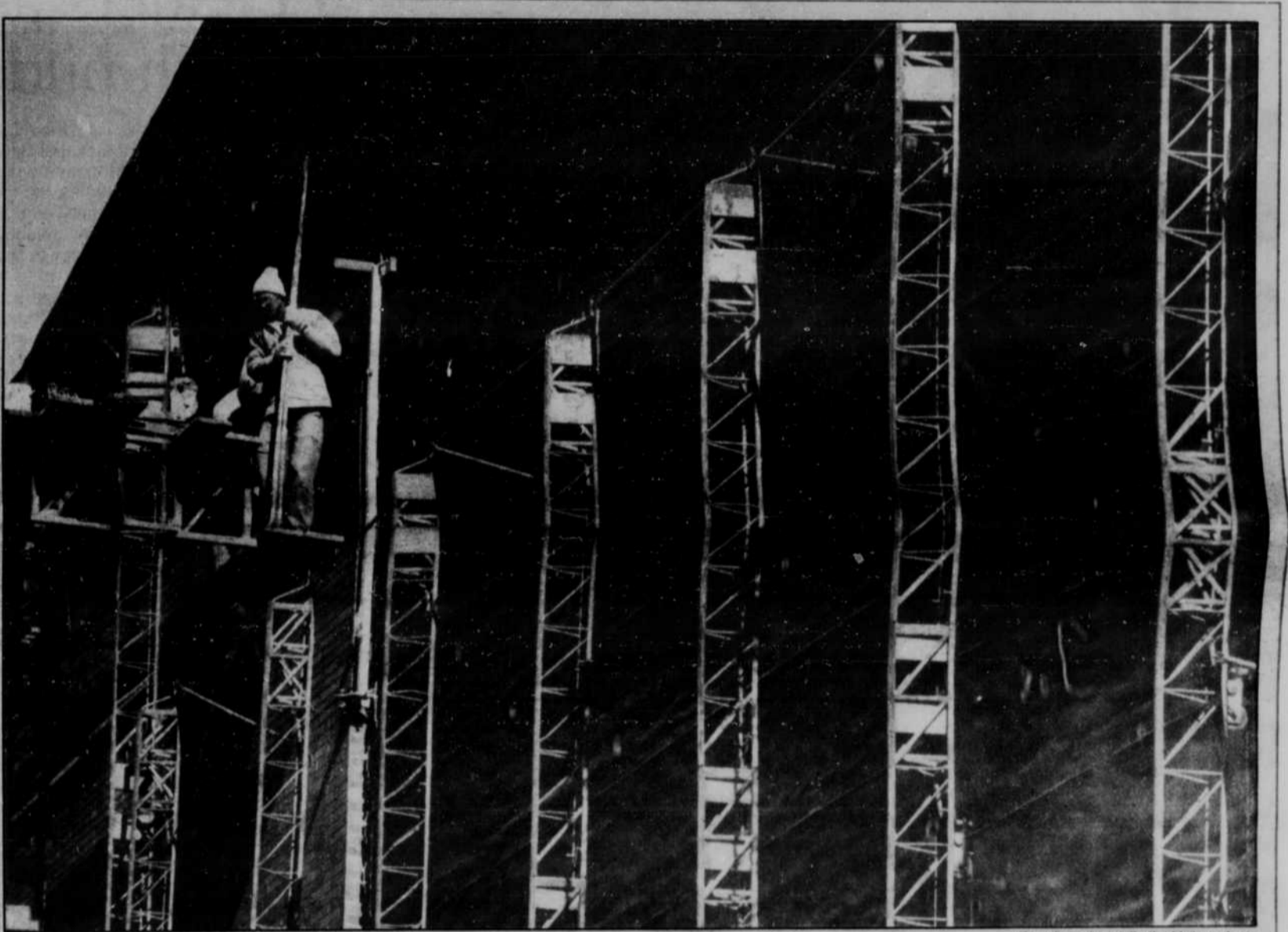
Prancan said the fellows decide what they want to do with that year, whether to go back to college or find another form of developing professional teaching.

Teachers from each state can apply for the program. A finalist will be chosen from each state. Prancan said each of the 11 finalists not chosen for the program will receive recognition and \$5,000 to aid in educational development.

The U S West Education Initiative represents all U S West corporations. Prancan said the initiative is a competitive process based on criteria and objectives that are not yet established.

The \$20 million that will be distributed over the next five years has not yet been allocated. Prancan said that when U S West officials were touring the 14 states in August for a location for a research center, the officials were impressed with the strong educational institutions in each state.

"In order to have a strong, sound economy, we have to have a strong, sound educational system," Prancan said. "The stronger the educational system, the stronger our company will be."



Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

Climbing the walls

A construction worker stands on the scaffolding outside the student recreation center/indoor practice field Monday afternoon.

Task force: UNL should improve image

By Bob Nelson
 Staff Reporter

The Image Task Force, formed to examine image and communication problems at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, recommended that UNL eliminate misperceptions by improving the "shape and form" of its image.

The task force made its recommendations Monday to UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale. Its main emphasis was to improve communication on campus and with grassroots Nebraska.

Some recommendations of the task force were to discard outmoded communications theories, to be open and responsive to the media and public, and to establish clear lines of authority and responsibility in communications at UNL.

The report says the university's image can only be improved by the

adoption of and commitment to these broad and basic principles.

Task force chairman R. Neale Copple, dean of the College of Journalism, said the university's image policy must be broad enough to satisfy an almost endless list of constituencies in Nebraska. He said the policy must encompass the different interests of students, parents, legislators, the media, interested citizens, and UNL faculty and staff members.

Copple said UNL must extend communication to grassroots Nebraska.

"We don't feel that we know what grassroot Nebraskans are thinking about the university or what they expect from this university," Copple said.

Because of this lack of communication, Copple said, the task force recommended a formal organization of listening forums.

"We need to get out and listen to what people have to say about the university," he said.

Copple pointed out communication problems within the university as well. He said there have been problems with relations between students and faculty members and between students and administrators.

"We got a lot of horror stories about people that handle students," Copple said. He said these stories go from the student to the parents and then are spread throughout whole towns.

"We've got to train everyone to be more sensitive," Copple said.

He said this includes faculty members.

"This includes the professor who is too busy . . . who doesn't stop to help a student properly," Copple said.

Copple said the report contains perceptions of his task force only and does not commit the university to

implement any of its recommendations.

"The ball is in his (Massengale's) court now," Copple said.

Massengale said he was pleased with the report.

"I think the task force has presented an excellent report to improve relations with our complex constituency," he said.

Massengale said he plans to create a follow-up committee within the next few weeks to develop strategies to apply the broad guidelines in the report.

The Image Task Force is one of five task forces designed by Massengale to examine the past and present at UNL and to recommend changes for the future.

The other task forces are role and mission, accessibility and standards, restructuring and consolidation, and business and academic service.