

# Resolution argued for flag protection

By Andy Raun  
Staff Reporter

State senators and several officials of veterans' groups on Thursday argued that the Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee should approve a resolution supporting a U.S. Constitutional amendment against flag desecration.

But opponents of the resolution said such an amendment would undermine the very rights the flag was meant to symbolize.

About 150 people packed a hearing room at the State Capitol to hear testimony on LR222. A list circulated in the room indicated that most attending supported the resolution.

LR222, introduced by Sen. George Coordsen of Hebron and 23 co-sponsors, would encourage the U.S. Congress to pass an amendment stating that flag desecration was not sacred under the First Amendment.

Coordsen told the committee that his resolution would not endorse any specific amendment but simply would ask Congress to put one together and approve it. The amendment then would be sent to the states for ratification.

Thirty-eight states must approve any amendment before it can become law.

Eugene Schmitz, Nebraska department commander of the American Legion, said polls indicated that 77 percent of Americans did not believe flag burning should be protected by the Constitution.

But Sandra George, executive director of the Nebraska Press Association, said that while a vast majority of Americans believed the flag should not be mistreated, they did not necessarily favor an amendment banning such activity.

Schmitz said that a January Gallup poll showed 82 percent of Americans wanted to decide the flag desecration question by voting.

"We Americans, if given the chance, won't hesitate to protect our flag through the ballot box," Schmitz said.

Twenty-two states have passed resolutions urging Congress to let voters decide what to do about flag desecration, Schmitz said.

Vernon O'Neal, commander of Lincoln's Legion Post No. 3, said he thought flag desecration was a danger to the country.

Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, a member of the committee, called potential restriction of flag desecration "a nibbling away by those who say they want to uphold the Constitution, of one of the most important guarantees" provided by it.

Chambers said that popular or not, flag burning legislation was wrong.

When Chambers asked Joe Lapadula, legislative director of the Disabled American Veterans, whether he considered the U.S. flag or the Constitution more important, Chambers was greeted by a chorus of grumbling from the audience.

But when committee chairman and resolution co-sponsor Carol McBride Pirsch of Omaha told the crowd to be quiet, Chambers said the grumblers were entitled to their opinions.

"This is America, so let them express themselves," Chambers said.

# African-American students frustrated, counselor says

By Sean Green  
Senior Reporter

The frustration level is close to the breaking point for African-American students on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus, an official said Thursday night.

Some UNL students are close to "going off," and the administration is not listening, said Jake Kirkland, a counselor and coordinator at the UNL Career Services Counseling Center.

Kirkland made his comments during a panel discussion about race relations on campus at the UNL Culture Center.

The discussion, held as part of Black Homecoming Week, included shouting matches, tears and outbreaks of applause, as panelists addressed the question "What do you think about

race relations on campus? Are they good, are they bad, or do they even exist?"

Kirkland and other members of the panel criticized the UNL administration for not attending the discussion and said administrators were the ones with the power to do something about race relations at UNL.

Steve Dietz, a junior art major, said education was the key to improving race relations. To get Nebraska students to understand minorities, he said, education had to start when they were in grade school, not in college.

"I was about 15 before I started to question what was funny about a joke containing a racial slur," Dietz said. "We have to find a way to make children question what they're learning before they are old enough to question it on their own."



Dennis Alexander, a professor of mechanical engineering, watches a laser atomize particles by blasting a 100-micron stream of water. A micron is one millionth of a meter.

# Practical particles

## Professor's laser process helps environment

By Rainbow Rowell  
Staff Reporter

A UNL professor has developed a laser atomization process that could reduce the environmental hazards of large-scale spray painting.

Dennis Alexander, a mechanical engineering professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, developed laser atomization, a patented process for forming fine particles. The process can be used anywhere atomization is needed, such as spray painting, fuel injectors or medical treatments.

The process, which is used to reduce a substance to a fine spray, is better than air or liquid pressure, Alexander said, because the fluid being sprayed has a smaller change in volume.

When the particles emerge, he said, their drag is high, which slows them down. The smaller the particle is, the more it drags. Because

of this, the particles reach their terminal velocity one to two inches from the nozzle.

The process makes the particles easier to control, Alexander said. Thus, more particles end up on the surface being painted, and fewer end up in the environment.

Laser atomization is more environmentally safe than current processes because particles are more easily controlled, he said.

Alexander submitted a patent disclosure to the Board of Regents in 1985. The patent was granted in September 1991.

The process is more expensive than current atomization processes because lasers are more expensive than fluid or air pressure, he said. But when environmental factors are considered, it may be less expensive.

Alexander said the equipment involved in the painting process sometimes was the most expensive part of a factory. Because of Environmental Protection Agency regulations, plants are required to have a waterfall that picks up excess paint particles in the air. The par-

ticles in the water form a sludge that is disposed of in landfills.

Alexander's process would make such measures unnecessary. He also said he expected the prices for solid-state diode lasers with greater power to decrease, making the process more affordable.

The next step would be for someone to take his idea and make small-scale items to sell, he said. Alexander said he was trying to get someone interested in licensing the patent and developing products.

Alexander said he came up with the idea while researching for an army contract on how high-powered lasers propagate through the atmosphere.

One-third of revenue from the patent goes to Alexander, he said. One-third goes to the mechanical engineering department, and one-third goes to UNL.

Alexander has submitted another patent disclosure to the university for laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy.

This process could be used to detect heavy metals in environmental samples.

# Arson suspected in Harper hall fire

From Staff Reports

University police said arson might be the cause of a fire in Harper Residence Hall early Thursday morning.

Lt. Milo Bushing said a firecracker that produced smoke was lit and slid under the door of room 620. Once the firecracker heated up, he said, the

carpet caught on fire and flames spread to the vanity. The door and a light fixture also were damaged, he said.

The fire was reported to UNL police at 12:41 a.m., and caused about \$500 worth of damage, he said.

Bushing said the incident might be nothing more than a prank with no intentions of arson. But until this is

determined, he said, the arson charge will remain.

UNL police have no suspects at this time, he said. A \$500 reward is being offered to persons with information regarding the fire. Anyone with information should call university police at 472-3555, UNL Housing Office at 472-3561 or Crime Stoppers at 475-3600.

# Revenue

Continued from Page 1

in Nebraska based on five criteria: student financial aid, renovation or remodeling, fire or life safety projects, pilot instructional programs and pilot research programs.

Each dollar provided by the commission would have to be matched by an equal amount of non-state, private or reallocated institutional funds.

Bruce G. Stahl, executive director of the coordinating commission, said the commission supported LB1027. He said it would help meet needs in postsecondary education.

"The commission supports the bill," he said. "We hope it goes through because there are so many needs."

Stahl said the bill, which was backed by Gov. Ben Nelson, was a sign of growing support for education in Nebraska.

"These are tight times, and a new source of funds to be used in this way is a stamp of approval not only for the commission, but a recognition of the significant needs that might otherwise not be met in post-secondary education," he said.

LB1027 currently is being considered by the Legislature's Appropriations Committee.

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