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March 1, 1995

## States doing what it takes to land Micron

By J. Christopher Hain  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska, Oklahoma and Utah all have been dangling offers in front of Micron — now they're just waiting for a decision.

That waiting game was prolonged Tuesday when Micron announced it would decide on a location for its \$1.3 billion, 3,500-employee, computer chip plant no sooner than the end of this week. The decision originally was to be made by today.

In addition to Omaha, Micron also is considering locating its plant near Oklahoma City, Okla., or in Utah County, Utah, near Provo.

All three sites have put together good incentive packages, said Rick Moore, assistant to the mayor of Oklahoma City.

Moore said state and local officials in Oklahoma had been working on an incentive package that would aid in paying Micron's relocation costs.

"I think we've got a great package," he said.

The package is worth \$500,000 to \$1 million, said Shirley Darrell, chairwoman of the Oklahoma County Board of Commissioners.

The package was put together by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, Darrell said. The county paid for \$200,000 of the package, she said.

Both Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma would work with Micron to provide master's programs in computer science and engineering at the Micron plant, said Natalea Watkins, director of public information for Oklahoma State University.

The two universities have provided similar on-site programs for other companies in Oklahoma, Watkins said.

Utah also has been aggressive in pledging to meet Micron's educational needs.

Marilyn Davies, director of extension and community relations for the College of Engineering at the University of Utah, said both the University of Utah and Brigham Young University could provide whatever Micron needed.

Davies said the College of Engineering at the University of Utah had a 20-member industry advisory board and was used to collaborating with businesses.

"The college of engineering works closely with state and local people to support local economic development," she said.

Gary Herbert, chairman of the Utah County Commission, said the incentive package for Micron was the same as packages put together for other businesses.

Herbert said the county would provide a site for the Micron plant and the sewer, water and power the plant needed.

"We will provide the infrastructure necessary to function on the site," Herbert said.

The cost of the package probably would range from \$25 million to \$30 million, Herbert said. It would be paid for from the tax money generated by Micron, he said.

With other high-tech industry already in the area, Herbert said, Utah County had a good chance of landing Micron.

"I'm cautiously optimistic."

## WHAT GOES UP ...



Nebraska's Assistant Women's Soccer Coach Marty Everding goes up for the ball during a practice session Tuesday morning in the Cook Pavilion.

Gerik Parmele/DN

## Approaches to execution being revised

By Paula Lavigne  
Senior Reporter

Death-penalty opponents and supporters are revising their approaches to the execution of Robert Williams in light of the party-like atmosphere during the Harold Lamont Otey execution last September.

Williams, 57, was sentenced June 30, 1978, for killing two Lincoln women and raping one in August 1977. His execution is scheduled for March 22.

Scott Wesely, coordinator for Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty, said the organization might try to appeal more to the rational, rather than the emotional, aspects of the issue.

The group will start a letter-writing campaign and hold coffee-house discussions on the death penalty at 7 p.m. Wednesday at The Mill, Cafe Shakes and Mo' Java.

Opponents also will work to support LB18, a legislative bill that would repeal Nebraska's death penalty and replace it with life in prison without parole, Wesely said.

He said he also would work to emphasize the high cost of executions and the ineffectiveness of the death penalty as a deterrent.

During the last election year, many politicians campaigned with a "tough-on-crime" stance that contradicted the organization's efforts.

"I think we learned that there's only so much you can do to affect the consciousness of public officials," he said. "There's only so much you can do to make a big press glut, and I think the two in combination can work against you."

He said he did not know if death penalty opponents would protest at the penitentiary.

"I would rather not have to go through what we went through again at all," he said. "I don't want that kind of horrible scene we saw at the penitentiary."

Groups around the country are avoiding penitentiary and public protests, Wesely said.

"They realize this mob attitude is kind of hard to face," he said. "It doesn't accomplish a great deal in terms of winning over the public and having any kind of impact."

Although an emotional response triggered some people's consciousness, he said, it was hard to control.

"We're facing a climate that's more angry and more violent, and that's a difficult thing to counter no matter what you do in the press or public," he said. "We have a lot of choices to make whether we provoke the kind of emotional response we had last time."

A "wait-and-see" attitude prevails with groups that support the death penalty, such as the Plainsmen.

Larry Ball, Plainsmen president, said his group did not have any immediate plans, but would give balance to any actions taken by death-penalty opponents.

"Honestly, we'll be reactive," he said.

Ball said the Plainsmen were taking a less aggressive stance than it did with Otey because Williams had a lower profile compared to Otey and current death-row inmates Roger Bjorkland,

See PENALTY on 3

## Legislature steps toward new electoral college system

By John Fulwider  
Staff Reporter

The Legislature advanced a plan Tuesday to return to the winner-take-all system of presidential electoral college voting used by 48 other states.

LB65 was advanced to the final stage of floor consideration on a 26-17 vote. A move to keep the current

system in place until at least 2006 was rejected.

In 1991, Nebraska departed from the electoral-college system used by most states. In Nebraska, the candidate who wins the majority of the statewide vote receives two of the state's five electoral votes.

The other three electoral votes are divided by Nebraska's three congres-

sional districts. A presidential candidate who wins a majority in a district would get the electoral vote for that district.

In every other state except Maine, all electoral votes are awarded to the candidate who receives the majority of the statewide vote. Electoral votes determine the president and vice president.

Sen. Doug Kristensen of Minden, who sponsored the bill, said it had two purposes: to put Nebraska in line with other states and to prevent Nebraska from becoming a forum for fringe candidates.

Under the current system, he said, a relatively unknown candidate could get national attention by spending \$5 million or \$6 million to win a Ne-

braska congressional district, and thus an electoral vote.

"I just have a great fear that we'll be a convenient forum for fringe candidates," Kristensen said. "And I don't think that's what the electoral process is all about."

Kristensen said Nebraska's electoral system did not affect the 1992 presidential election.