

Chambers proposes higher limit

By John Fulwider
Senior Reporter

State Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha says 75 mph is not too fast for Nebraska interstates.

Nebraska's roads are so straight and long, he said, that "if you squint your eyes you can see the curvature of the earth."

"Seventy-five is not going to create a hazard at all."

Chambers said he planned to introduce a bill in the Nebraska Legislature's second session that would raise the speed limit on rural interstates from 65 mph to 75 mph. The minimum speed would go from 40 mph to 50 mph.

"Rural interstate" is a misleading term, he said. Basically, he said, everywhere the speed limit now is 65 mph, it would increase to 75 mph.

States can now raise their speed limits if they choose. President Bill Clinton signed a bill Tuesday that ended the federal 55 mph speed limit. The federally imposed limit had been in place since 1974.

To decrease controversy, Chambers said, his bill raises only rural interstate speed limits. He said he wouldn't allow anyone to attach amendments to his bill dealing with

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ERNIE CHAMBERS
State Senator

motorcycle helmet or seat belt laws.

He said he would listen to arguments about raising the speed limit on interstates near cities. That limit is now 55 mph.

One issue Chambers hasn't decided on, he said, is whether to allow trucks to travel at 75 mph.

"I haven't made up my mind on the issue," he said.

Chambers said he had heard other senators predicting a lot of debate on the issue. But Chambers said he thought there would not be extended debate and that a speed limit increase would pass.

Chambers said he thought Gov. Ben Nelson also might introduce a bill to raise the speed limit, but only to 70 mph.

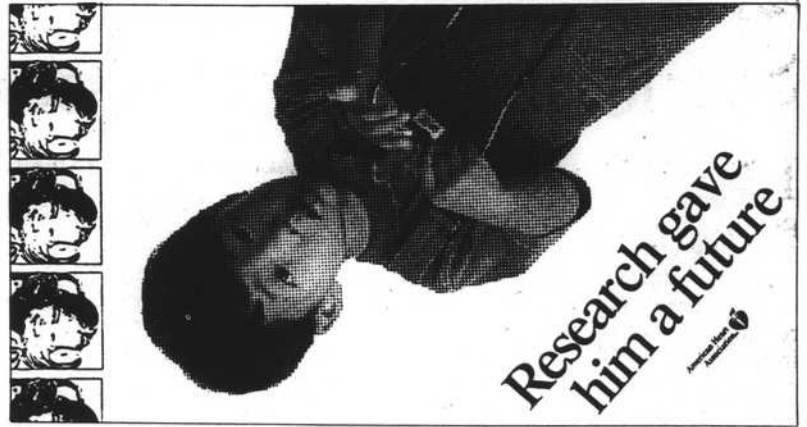
Dara Troutman, Nelson's press aide, said Nelson was pleased that Washington gave the states authority to set their own speed limits. But Nelson will let the Legislature decide what that limit should be. He does not plan to introduce legislation of his own, Troutman said.

"The governor has not stated what he thinks the speed limit should be," she said.

Chambers said he wants the limit raised because people who travel on the interstate want it raised, and because the roads can handle it.

"I'm not interested in race car driving," he said.

"I just want people to drive at reasonable rates of speed based on what the roads are designed to allow."



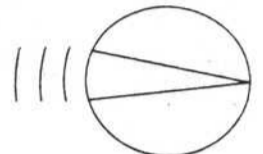
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Benefit choral concert to finance operation for girl's rare cancer

From Staff Reports

A benefit concert for an 11-year-old girl battling cancer will be Dec. 2 at Zion Congregational Church, 9th and D streets.

Chanel Jenkins-Todd has renal medullary carcinoma, a rare kidney cancer. Chanel, the daughter of university employees Lynda and Thomas Todd, is the 35th person in the nation to be diagnosed with the cancer. The other 34 have died.

The University Association for Administrative Development has been organizing fund-raisers for Chanel since October.

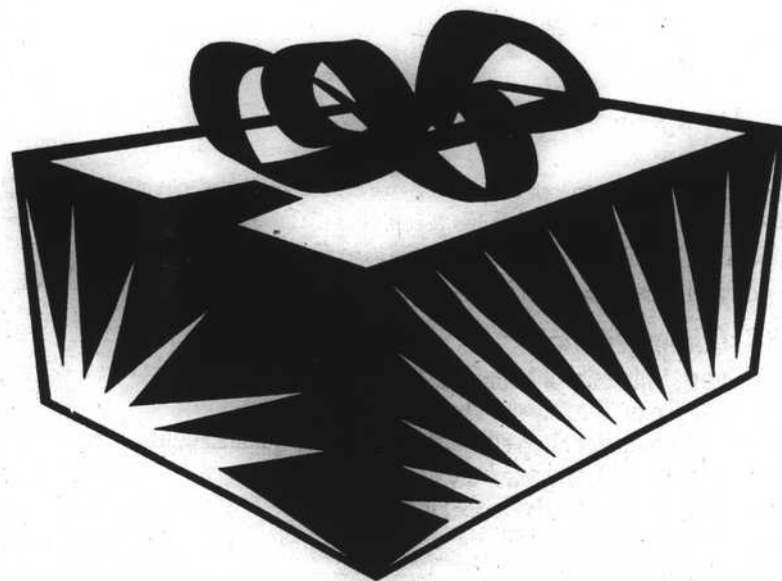
Doctors say a bone marrow transplant may save her life. But the operation costs \$250,000 and isn't covered by her family's medical insurance.

The benefit concert will feature five gospel choirs, including Images, the Lincoln Community Gospel Choir, the Mt. Zion Baptist Choir and a special guest choir yet to be announced.

The event is free and open to the public. Donations will go to the Todd family.

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