

# Nelson to announce budget cuts

By TODD ANDERSON  
Assignment Reporter

Faced with a budget package that is only half complete, Gov. Ben Nelson is running out of time to make some tough cuts in the mainline budget sent to him as LB1108.

The governor has less than a day to finish his review of the budget bill passed by the Legislature last week, and he said he is disappointed by the excessive spending measures proposed by the bill.

"In my review I see a lot of spending and a lot of room for improvement," Nelson said during his weekly teleconference. "I do not understand the reason for all this budget spending."

Nelson said he estimated \$35 million worth of spending in excess of the mainline budget he originally proposed at the beginning of this year's session.

In addition, he said, the Legislature is still debating other bills that would increase spending even further.

That makes cutting spending in LB1108 tricky because it will be difficult to anticipate how many other bills make it to his desk in the eight days remaining in this year's short session, Nelson said.

"It certainly means we're more conservative in our approach," he said.

Senators have yet to make a decision on Nelson's proposed income tax plan, which includes extending

last year's cut indefinitely and increasing the tax cut.

But Nelson said he doesn't feel pressure from the Legislature to sign the budget package just because they've hesitated to pass the income tax plan.

"The Legislature needs to cut taxes just as much as I want to see taxes cut," Nelson said. "I would hope that they would not fail to pass the tax cut because I cut spending."

The governor said he would announce more specifically, today during a news conference, which parts of the budget plan will fall to the cutting room floor.

Nelson said he is sure LB1108 will not pass his desk without vetoes. "I'm ordering red ink by the barrel."

# Council delays vote on park development

By TODD ANDERSON  
Assignment Reporter

City Council

Environmentalists breathed a sigh of relief Monday after city council members decided to delay voting on the fate of Wilderness Park in southwest Lincoln.

More than 20 opponents of the proposed city ordinance to change the zoning code for the area near South 14th Street and Pine Lake Road held signs in front of the new addition of the county-city building and collected signatures on a petition before the city council meeting began.

Pat Rand, a former University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor of plant ecology, said she wanted to help protect Wilderness Park — a plot of land that has remained undeveloped for the last 28 years — from the intrusion of industrial development right next to its borders.

"Development would destroy the

development of the Wilderness Park," Rand said. "It's the only wild park the city has."

The council had scheduled the third and final reading on the resolution after receiving community input on the measure through six public hearings in the past two years.

Late in the meeting, as the third and final reading of the resolution neared, opponents prepared to interrupt the voting process to present their opinion.

David Hall, a Lincoln resident, presented a petition with more than 140 signatures and a collection of facts about the park.

The emotional presentation incited discussion about the preparedness of the council to make a decision on the issue if there were still concerns.

Curt Donaldson, city councilman,

said he originally opposed delaying the vote, but that changed after he talked to his mother-in-law, he said.

"She said 'Who's going to win, the money or the environmentalists?'," Donaldson said. "I decided we need to do more work on this."

City representatives also debated waiting two years for a study to be completed before making a final decision, but ultimately voted to schedule another public hearing on April 13 and vote on the proposal.

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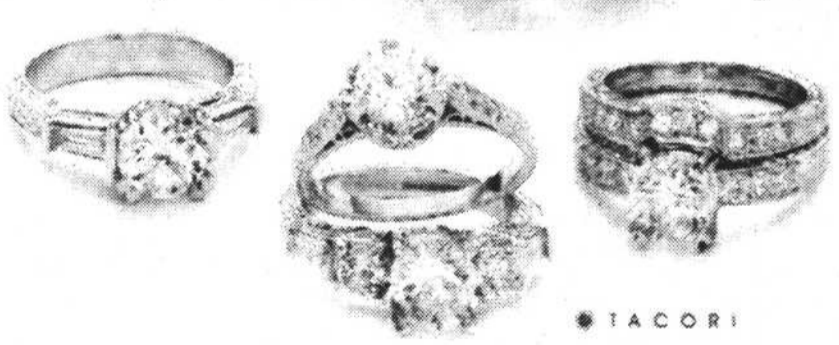
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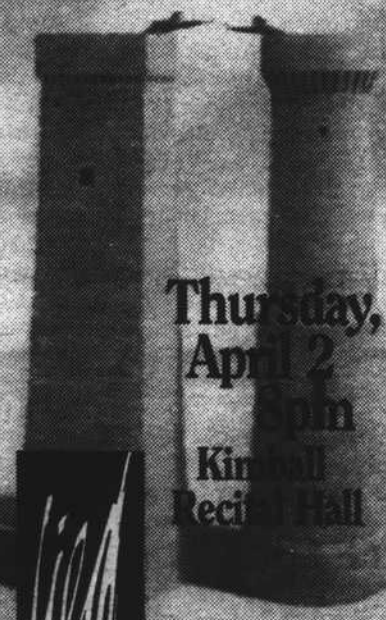


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