

Legislature

Sales tax bill advances

By TODD ANDERSON
Assignment Reporter

The Legislature advanced a bill Tuesday that would include a small state sales-tax decrease, but it won't see the governor's desk unless it's passed within the last three days of the session.

Sen. Dave Maurstad of Beatrice introduced an amendment to LB1104 that would have decreased perma-

nently the state sales tax by 0.5 percent.

But senators said the state couldn't count on an extended economic boom to pay for a permanent decrease in the sales tax.

The Legislature then approved an amendment that would limit the decrease to one year.

If passed, the amendment to the bill would transfer \$80 million from the state's cash reserve fund to the general fund to pay for the tax cut.

Sens. Ernie Chambers of Omaha and Gene Tyson of Norfolk both said the sales-tax cut would benefit low-income households especially.

Chambers said poor people would benefit more from sales-tax decreases because they use a larger percentage of their income for daily spending than wealthy people.

The bill was advanced by the Legislature 38-1. The sole opposition vote was from Sen. Stan Schellpepper of Stanton.

Nelson signs sex-offender legislation

By TODD ANDERSON
Assignment Reporter

Nebraska caught up with the rest of the nation Tuesday when Gov. Ben Nelson signed into law a bill that will require the Nebraska State Patrol to notify families about sex offenders in their neighborhoods.

Nelson signed LB204, which will require the state patrol to tell residents when someone convicted of sexual misconduct moves into the area.

Nebraska is the 49th state to pass its own version of a 1994 federal law called Megan's Law, named for a young girl killed by a rapist in New Jersey.

"(This bill) will provide the protection and peace of mind ... to assure citizens that we're doing

everything we can do to protect them," Nelson said.

U.S. Rep. Jon Christensen, who supported the bill in Congress, said the passing of Megan's Law in Nebraska will make communities safer for children, though he regretted it was not passed sooner.

"Our streets are just a little bit safer," he said.

State Patrol Sgt. Gary Plank said his office is creating a system for determining the level of risk of sex offenders and will have it working in January.

Sex offenders will be ranked in three tiers based on the nature of the crime and the likelihood that the criminal will be a repeat offender.

Neighborhood residents will be notified in a letter or in person if a high-risk offender moves into their neighborhood, while schools and day care centers will be notified

about medium-risk offenders.

The state patrol will watch areas where low-risk offenders live and also will tell other states when a released criminal moves out of Nebraska.

Omaha Sen. Kate Witek, a co-sponsor of the bill, said the names of about 500 criminals will be released, but the law will not affect past offenders.

Nelson said a rating system needs to be in place to determine who should know about which crimes so that citizens are not overloaded with information that doesn't affect them.

The governor said the law finds a balance between safeguarding the reputation and interests of the individual and protecting the public.

"It's critical to draw the line in a fair way," he said, "and this bill does that."

Legislative Notebook

Local levy bill signed

Gov. Ben Nelson signed LB989 on Monday, a bill that will put a 2.5 percent base limitation on local governments' spending growth in the fiscal year 1998-99.

The base limitation could be exceeded by 1 percent with a three-fourths vote of the local government and could be exceeded beyond that with a vote by the people.

For all local governments, except school districts, the bill's lid actually would be imposed on restricted funds, which include revenue from property taxes, local sales taxes and state aid.

But for school districts, the lid would be imposed only on general fund expenditures, exempting special education expenditures.

Sen. George Coordsen of Hebron, the bill's sponsor, said he was happy the bill had passed after the several months of work that had been put into it.

"This addresses something the Legislature has had a prob-

lem addressing - property tax relief," he said.

The bill passed on a 39-5 vote Thursday in the Legislature and will be effective immediately because of the emergency clause.

Nelson signs POP bill

Tuesday evening Gov. Ben Nelson signed LB320, a bill that will create a graduated licensing system for young drivers.

Under the new law, 16-year-olds will get a provisional operator's permit rather than a driver's license. Teens with a POP will not be able to drive unsupervised between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m., except when they are driving to or from a job or school activity, or unless accompanied by an adult who is at least 21 years old.

The earliest age at which one could get a driver's license is 17.

Nelson also attached a note to the bill asking legislators to take a closer look at the curfew rule during the next session.

Peru State gets funds

Peru State College will receive a greatly needed makeover with funds appropriated by two bills that received final approval from the governor Monday afternoon.

Gov. Ben Nelson signed into law LB1138, which will give money to Peru State College for renovation and construction of buildings on its Peru campus.

The college will receive more than \$13 million from the State Building Fund to repair old buildings and construct an addition to Hoyt Science Hall.

LB1138 also authorizes the Commission for Postsecondary Education to perform a study to determine whether Peru State College should remain in Peru or move to Nebraska City.

Nelson also signed LB799 Monday, which will create the Nebraska Cultural Preservation Endowment Fund for statewide arts and humanities projects.

Compiled by Legislative Reporters Todd Anderson and Joy Ludwig

Model scouts scope Lincoln

By KELLY ROMANSKI
Staff Reporter

Their interviews lasted two seconds.

If they had long hair, they held it up so the scouts could get a look at their jutting jaw lines.

They heard one of two curt responses: "Thank you, you're free to go," or, "Thank you, please stay."

Recently, modeling talent scouts with Manhattan Model Search spent a day recruiting models at the Cornhusker Hotel, 333 S. 13th St., but the day and the glimpse into the modeling industry wasn't the fashion fairy tale many expected.

If they were one of the many "free to go," they were urged not to take it personally, then shuffled away.

"It does not mean you're ugly or a loser," said Katherine McKeever, director of scouting for MMS. "You just don't have what the companies we represent are looking for."

And if they're asked to stay, the scouts will provide information about the next step, McKeever said. But they won't promise fame, she said.

"We're not here to fill heads with falsities."

Out of the 200 model hopefuls - both boys and girls, men and women - who tried their luck in the Cornhusker's Grand Ballroom, only 10 were asked to stay.

Only four of them were older than 12.

Lisa McCune, a 16-year-old sophomore at Lincoln East High School, said she had been to model searches before and had been asked to stay each time.

But she was surprised at the Cornhusker when she was turned away.

"I just came for fun," McCune said, with a downward gaze and a disappointed look.

Had she been selected to stay after passing the initial inspection, she would have been asked to attend a Regional Model

"(Being rejected) does not mean you're ugly or a loser."

KATHERINE MCKEEVER
MMS scouting director

Search attended by scouts from several famous modeling agencies.

"The Regional Model Search is one day that can really change your life," states an MMS brochure. "It's your real-life chance to be signed by a top agency and begin an exciting career as a professional model."

Only those asked to stay got the brochure. But everyone got a video touting the rewards of modeling.

McCune called the video "fake."

The video states MMS has started more modeling careers than any other scouting firm.

MMS looks for all sorts of models for their affiliated agencies, the video states - everything from the high-profile fashion models to the more ordinary-looking commercial models needed to sell everyday products.

McKeever said scouts know the looks they search for, and they know instantly - right on the spot.

Only the right looks sell, and the modeling industry runs on commission from models' earnings, McKeever said.

Models typically keep 80 percent of their earnings, and their representing agency gets 20 percent. If talent scouts like MMS find the model for the agency, they take 5 percent of that model's earnings from the agency.

"It's a business," said McKeever. "Nobody cares about your feelings ... you're just making money (for the agency)."

Smith: State funds shrinking

SENATE from page 1

need of \$538 million to pay the salaries with the new increases. Those salaries now cost \$305 million.

A statute requires salaries to meet the midpoint of the university's peer institutions. NU is 6 percent below this midpoint, Smith said.

Raising tuition will not be the solution either, Smith said. For every percentage point the university increases tuition, it brings in \$900,000, Smith said. NU would have to raise tuition by 300 percentage points, which is too large.

Also, Smith said, Republican gubernatorial candidates hoping to cut the state budget will probably further cut the state's funding to higher education.

The Legislature Tuesday advanced LB1104, which included an amendment to cut state sales tax by 0.5 percent. If passed, this would cut a minimum of \$17 million from NU's budget, Smith said.

Smith and NU administrators have looked at possible solutions. These included the consolidation of some academic departments, increased funded research, business contracts and the reallocation of university funds. Administration also should consider ways to increase

enrollment, Chancellor James Moeser said.

Last year's UNL reallocations brought criticism from many faculty members who attended the meeting.

Merlyn Nielsen, animal science professor, said that when reallocations are made, administrators must make sure they are not shortchanging any parts of the university.

"How are you going to pick out a new pair of shoes when you don't know what leg you are going to cut off?"

The East Campus DEAL lab, a faculty-supported laboratory for developing multimedia, received the majority of money that should have gone to benefit all of Information Services on both City and East campuses, said Gail Latta, associate professor in university libraries. As a result, uniting the two campuses was stunted.

Moeser said faculty-member input was the only way to combat such problems and improve reallocation next year.

Smith said many state-funded colleges and universities are facing similar problems and many will collapse.

"I certainly want to not just be a survivor, but to become the best."

Daily Nebraskan

Questions? Comments? Ask for the appropriate section editor at (402) 472-2588 or e-mail dn@unlinfo.unl.edu.

Fax number: (402) 472-1761

World Wide Web: www.unl.edu/DailyNeb

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.

Subscriptions are \$55 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1998

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN

Editor: Paula Lavigne
Managing Editor: Chad Lorenz
Associate News Editor: Erin Schulte
Associate News Editor: Ted Taylor
Assignment Editor: Erin Gibson
Opinion Editor: Kasey Kerber
Sports Editor: David Wilson
A&E Editor: Jeff Randall
Copy Desk Chief: Bryce Glenn
Photo Director: Ryan Soderlin
Design Co-Chief: Jamie Ziegler
Tony Toth
Art Director: Matt Haney
Online Editor: Gregg Stearns
Asst. Online Editor: Amy Pemberton

General Manager: Dan Shattil
Publications Board
Chairwoman: Melissa Myles, (402) 476-2446
Professional Adviser: Don Walton, (402) 473-7301
Advertising Manager: Nick Patsch, (402) 472-2589
Creative Director: Dustin Black
Classified Ad Manager: Marni Speck