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Star-studded
Spring movie season brings both
blockbusters and bombs.
A&E, PAGE 10

Examining Education

Three different columnists take issue with the bevy of problems our education system has today. **OPINION, PAGE 5**

Unidentified flying object



JOEY BOSQUÉ, 22, takes a lunch break from work in order to play a round of Frisbee golf at Max E. Roper Park in northwest Lincoln on Tuesday. Lydia S. Gonzales/DN

Bill would combine boards

■ The proposal would merge the Board of Regents and the State College Board of Trustees.

By Kimberly Sweet

Staff writer

If speaker Doug Kristensen of Minden could have his way, two colleges in the state would get an "NU" affiliation.

For the second session in a row, the speaker of the legislature is lobbying hard for the passage of a bill that would merge two governing boards of higher education and add two state colleges to the University of Nebraska system.

Talk of the bill that would merge the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and the State College Board of Trustees has been light.

Kristensen said he is aware that lawmakers and citizens are happy with keeping the state university and college set-up status quo.

But for a state whose citizens' dollars are becoming strapped, forethought on how higher education can become more efficient needs to happen now, Kristensen said.

"I believe this is a very good concept to make state government more efficient," Kristensen said. "But until there is a crisis, people will probably want things to stay the same."

Kristensen's bill, which is sitting in the education committee, would add Wayne State College and Chadron State College to the NU system. It would eliminate the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

The bill, LB631, is held over from last year's session.

The move would end the duplication occurring between the boards that govern education currently, Kristensen said.

Six community college boards, along with the regents, the trustees and the commission all fulfill the same function, he said.

"That's a tremendous amount of duplicated governments," Kristensen said.

Along with being able to run more efficiently, Kristensen said, the state's colleges and universities need to be able to speak with one voice as they become the target for budget cuts.

Higher education takes up one of the biggest portions of state funds. Consequently, they are most vulnerable to cuts in funding, he said.

The small, state colleges are the ones that typically sustain more of the cuts, Kristensen said.

"We need a board who can speak with a unified voice and tell the Legislature where to go," he said.

Last year's bill included changing Peru State

— LEGISLATURE —

Savings program proposed

■ State college fund would give percentage of total trusts to in-state college students.

By Veronica Daehn

Staff writer

Sen. Ed Schrock wants his grandchildren to go to college.

And to help them do that, he's been putting money into a federal college savings program.

If Schrock's bill, LB1003 passes, Nebraskans will soon be able to do the same with a state college savings program.

Based on College Savings Iowa, the savings plan that Iowa uses, Nebraska's plan would add 10 percent of the students' money to what they deposited if they attend school in Nebraska.

Students could use the money to attend school anywhere, but the state would not add 10 percent if they went to an out-of-state school.

The 10 percent back is an incentive for students to stay in Nebraska, Schrock said.

"Other colleges are recruiting here, and I want to keep students in Nebraska," he said.

The bill states that contributors could begin a savings plan at the birth of the beneficiary and continue to put money in until that person's 17th birthday, or until the maximum amount of \$34,000 was reached.

Nebraskans interested in the plan would need to contribute a minimum of \$300 a year.

The maximum that could be contributed to the plan annually would be \$2,000, but Schrock's aide Randy Stovall said that number might change.

"\$2,000 might be a little low in terms of maximum contribution," Stovall said. "We'll

see what the committees want to do with it."

The bill was introduced Jan. 5 and was sent to the education committee Monday. Committee debate begins in late January.

Stovall said the maximum amount someone could deposit could increase because of the rising cost of tuition at Creighton University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Nebraskans with children planning to attend college would benefit from this plan, Schrock said, because the money they contribute would be tax-free.

Taxes would apply, though, if the beneficiary withdrew the money and used it for something other than education.

Stovall added that there were "all kinds of exceptions" to the plan.

If the child died or could not attend college, the money could be transferred to another beneficiary.

Former governor remembered for honesty, sense of humor

By Margaret Behm

Staff writer

The late former Gov. Robert Crosby had many roles in legislature, law and his family.

"Bob was many things to many people," said William Kuester, former law partner. "The bottom line is that he was a fine gentleman."

Crosby died Friday at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, and his funeral was Tuesday morning.

Crosby was elected to the Nebraska Legislature in 1941, when he was 29. Two years later he became the speaker, and he was the

youngest senator up to that time to hold that position.

Crosby became the lieutenant governor in 1946. He became governor in 1953 and served in office until 1955.

Crosby continued to work as an attorney and lobbyist until he suffered a stroke on Feb. 3, 1998.

Crosby loved being a lawyer, and he represented people who other lawyers wouldn't, Kuester said.

"He felt that everyone deserved a fair trial," Kuester said, "and a lot of people didn't like that."

An example of that was the murder case of Duane Pope. Pope was charged with killing three people and permanently disabling a fourth person during a bank robbery in Big Springs.

Crosby represented Pope after he was asked to by a district judge.

Crosby did his best to represent Pope even though many people were upset at his efforts, Sen. Donald W. Pederson said.

Crosby received threats because of the Pope trial, Pederson said.

"I know that he had personal threats to his own safety and to his family's," Pederson said, "because he was representing Pope."

These threats led Crosby to not keep his trial notes in his office, Pederson said.

"He kept his files on the case in a separate location," Pederson said, "because he feared that his building would be burned."

Sen. DiAnna Schimek said she was impressed when she heard that Crosby represented Pope.

"When a lot of people would have shied away from that case, he didn't," Schimek said. "He didn't shy away from tough issues."

Crosby was not interested in money when

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