

# Newspaper bill nears final step

■ State would provide for voice newspaper system for visually impaired.

By Jill Zeman

Staff writer

Senators spent time on the floor on Monday debating the merits of separating a commission for visually impaired citizens from the state government.

LB352, introduced Jan. 12 by Sen. LaVon Crosby of Lincoln, would create the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and also would provide for a voice newspaper delivery system.

Lawmakers voted 35-9 to advance the bill from the second round of debate to final reading.

The commission now is a part of the state's Health and Human Services Department.

"(The visually impaired) are an independent group of people who feel trapped in the Health and Human Services Department," Crosby said.

Crosby said changing technology has provided for more opportunities for the visually impaired, which is why she feels they deserve a separate agency.

"Services and assistance to the blind have gone a lot further than Braille indications in elevators," she said.

Sen. Gene Tyson of Norfolk disagreed with Crosby and said he felt the bill would tear out a part of the state government.

"I'd like my independence on all sorts of things, but I ain't going to get it," he said.

Sen. Bob Wickersham of Harrison said he was concerned because he felt the new agency would cost the state more money that wasn't added into this year's budget.

"It seems the history of these kind of agencies is that no matter

what assurances we receive from them, it always costs us money," he said.

Sen. Dan Lynch of Omaha said he strongly supported the bill because it would give more independence to the visually impaired.

"Why do we think that someone with a disability isn't capable of handling their own destiny?" he said.

Lynch also said he felt the money spent on the agency is insignificant compared to the freedom given to the visually impaired.

"Let's give these folks a chance to maintain their own dignity," he said.

"It's important we at least try."

# Development proposal passed

By Cara Pesek

Staff writer

The City Council unanimously passed a resolution Monday night that will allow for major development in north Lincoln.

The resolution changes the land use plan for the area, which was approved in 1994, to reflect changes in the property between First and 56th streets, north of Interstate 80.

Large-scale industrial buildings, residential areas and possibly a theater may be built in the area, said Mark Hunzeker, a Hampton Development lawyer, the firm developing the area.

Among the industrial buildings planned is the world headquarters for Centurion International, a Lincoln business that manufactures cellular phones and antennas, said Bob Hampton, president of Hampton Development.

"Lincoln is very fortunate a business like Centurion chose to locate its international headquarters here," Hampton said.

Hampton said construction for the Centurion building is expected to begin late this fall or early this summer. The sprawling concrete structure will probably be complete sometime next year, Hampton said.

Although plans for the new Centurion building are well underway, Hampton said a few obstacles will have to be confronted before the construction of the residential areas can begin.

The Department of Roads deemed that some of the residentially-zoned land was too close to the interstate, Hampton said. The department was concerned that inhabitants of homes built in that area would experience noise pollution.

The council decided not to re-zone the residential land, despite the advice

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Bob Hampton

president of Hampton Development

of the Department of Roads.

"I think it's wise at this time for us to leave our options open," Councilman Jonathan Cook said.

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