

**IN LIEU OF
DIRECTORS' MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 27, 2009**

I. CITY CLERK

II. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE MAYOR & DIRECTORS TO COUNCIL

MAYOR

1. NEWS RELEASE. Date changed for open house on street projects. Now set for Monday, August 3, 2009 at Mickle Middle School, 2500 N. 67th Street.
2. NEWS RELEASE. Mayor issues statement on Council budget votes.
3. Washington Report, July 17, 2009.

DIRECTORS

FINANCE/BUDGET

1. Memo from Steve Hubka, Budget Officer, regarding July sales tax reports reflecting May activity:
 - a) Actual Compared to Projected Sales Tax Collections;
 - b) Gross Sales Tax Collections (With Refunds Added Back In) 2003-2004 through 2008-2009;
 - c) Sales Tax Refunds 2003-2004 through 2008-2009; and
 - d) Net Sales Tax Collections 2003-2004 through 2008-2009.
2. Memo from Sherry Wolf-Drabal regarding status in Mayor's budget of positions held in the hiring freeze.
 - a) Fiscal Year 2008-09 - requisitions for hiring review; requisitions; on hold- to be rated; on hold-sent for interviews; and hold.

III. COUNCIL RFI'S & CITIZENS CORRESPONDENCE TO INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

JON CAMP

1. Letter and article from Rosina Paolini. Do not charge an admission fee to the Pioneer Nature Center.
2. Reply to Ty Westover in regards to his email on the proposed telecom tax.
3. Request to Greg MacLean, Public Works & Utilities Director - RE: 9th and Harrison Traffic Warning Device. (RFI # - 07-22-09)
4. Request to Mike Lang, Economic Development Coordinator, and Fred Hoke, Building and Safety Department Director, on research done to investigate Development Service Centers in other cities.
5. Correspondence to Lynn Johnson, Parks and Rec Director, and Steve Hubka, Budget Officer, regarding the Crawford Trust.
6. Correspondence to John Cripe, Classification and Compensation Manager, regarding matrix for union contracts, and reply from John Cripe.

JONATHAN COOK

1. Correspondence from Sue and Ron Samson regarding not charging fees for the Pioneers Park Nature Center with possible funding ideas and a thank you for supporting the neighborhood libraries and swimming pools.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE FROM CITIZENS TO COUNCIL

1. Email from Sherm Bastron on being charged an Occupation Tax at the North 48th Street transfer station.
2. Email from Emily Levine. Saddened by recent proposal to begin charging to enter the Chet Ager Nature Center at Pioneer Park.

V. ADJOURNMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR CHRIS BEUTLER

lincoln.ne.gov

PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

Engineering Services, 531 Westgate Blvd., Lincoln, NE 68528, 441-7711, fax 441-6576

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 17, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Erika Nunes, Engineering Services, 441-5675

DATE CHANGED FOR OPEN HOUSE ON STREET PROJECTS

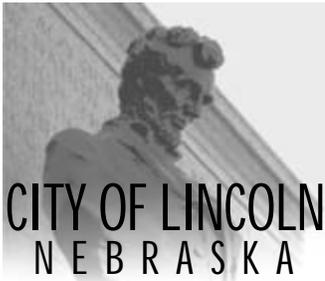
An open house to discuss City arterial street rehabilitation projects being funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is now set for **Monday, August 3** (The original date was Thursday, July 30). The public is invited to attend the event from 5 to 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at **Mickle Middle School, 2500 N. 67th St.** Parking and the entrance are on the west side of the building.

The following projects will be discussed:

- The rehabilitation of Holdrege St. from 33rd to 47th
- The rehabilitation of Adams St. from 57th to 62nd
- The rehabilitation of N. 70th St. From Aylesworth to Vine
- The rehabilitation of Holdrege St. from 70th to 79th

These projects are currently in the design stage and are tentatively scheduled for construction in 2010 and 2011. The meeting will allow citizens the opportunity to review the proposed projects. Representatives from the City Public Works and Utilities Department will be available to explain the projects. The design teams will seek public input on the proposed projects and will meet with attendees one-on-one to answer questions.

Those needing special accommodations are asked to call Erika Nunes in Engineering Services at 441-5675 at least 48 hours prior to the open house. If you cannot attend the open house and have questions or would like more information, see the City Web site at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: recovery) or contact Nunes.



NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR CHRIS BEUTLER

lincoln.ne.gov

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508, 441-7511, fax 441-7120

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 20, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Diane Gonzolas, Citizen Information Center, 441-7831
Steve Hubka, Budget Officer, 441-7698

MAYOR ISSUES STATEMENT ON COUNCIL BUDGET VOTES

The City Council this morning voted on tentative changes to the Mayor Chris Beutler's proposed City budget for fiscal year 2009-2010. Mayor Beutler said he was gratified that Council members agreed with him on most of the important issues facing the City.

“The Council recognized the importance of parks, pools and libraries to Lincoln's quality of life and were willing to support the revenues that saved those programs,” Beutler said. “We took a giant step forward on speeding job creation projects with the favorable vote on initial funding for the Development Services Center. The Council also understood the necessity of a cash reserve or 'rainy day' fund to maintain City services during economic downturns.

“I am disappointed in the removal of money from the Fast Forward Fund,” he said. “There was a great deal of discussion on the need to support job growth and economic development, and this is a fund to do exactly that.

“Overall, I look forward to continuing the budget discussion with the Council and the public as we move forward.”

A summary of the Mayor's proposed budget and the City Council changes will be published in the August 1st issue of the Neighborhood Extra. The information also will be available on the City Web site, lincoln.ne.gov.

The public hearing on the proposed budget is Monday August 10 from 2:30 to 6 p.m. and 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. The Council votes on final changes at 9 a.m. Wednesday, August 12 and is scheduled to adopt the budget Monday, August 24. All those meetings are in the City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th St.



WASHINGTON REPORT

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Washington Report

Archived at:
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CONGRESS BEGINS HEALTH CARE OVERHAUL

CONGRESS

Sotomayor hearings make headlines, but Congress moves ahead on budget and health care as well. Many in Washington this week were focused on the hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee for the nomination of U.S. Appeals Court Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the United States Supreme Court.

Sotomayor faced hours of grilling over four days and after public statements by Republicans that a filibuster attempt is unlikely, she now appears poised to be approved by the Judiciary Committee as early as next week and the full Senate prior to the chamber's recess that will begin on August 8.

Meanwhile, the Obama Administration and Democratic leaders began a full-court press on the issue of health care reform, with some committees formally taking up draft bills in the House and Senate and many more behind-closed-doors meetings with moderate Democrats concerned about the reach and cost of a proposed public health care system (see related story below).

Progress was also being made on the FY 2010 budget front. The House Appropriations Committee has now completed action on 11 of the 12 budget bills, with only the Defense Department measure remaining, and nine of 12 have been approved on the floor. Floor approval is expected next week on the Transportation-HUD measure and the Labor-HHS-Education bill, and with Defense approval the following week, the House will have met its goal of approving all 12 spending measures prior to the August recess.

One of the highlights of House floor activity on the spending bills was debate on an amendment to the Financial Services appropriations bill that would force general Motors and Chrysler to reinstate agreements

with local automobile dealers that were dropped as part of restructuring. Many Members are concerned that the two companies received billions in federal subsidies, yet they are causing job losses in their communities. The Obama Administration opposes the provision, maintaining that ending the agreements are important to the restructuring process.

The amendment was narrowly approved, but Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and House Appropriations Committee Chair David Obey (D-WI) have each indicated that it will ultimately be dropped from the bill before it is sent to the President.

TRANSPORTATION

Senate panel approves 18-month SAFETEA-LU extension; House committee takes up FY 2010 DOT budget. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved legislation this week that would extend the current law governing federal surface transportation programs (SAFETEA-LU) for 18 months. SAFETEA-LU is scheduled to expire on September 30.

The measure, which would extend highway and transit programs at their current levels, is intended to be combined with measures from three other committees with jurisdiction over transportation (Commerce, Banking, and Finance). The Finance portion would provide the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) with an additional \$20 billion from the General Fund to prevent it from running out of funds over the 18-month period. The Obama Administration has indicated that the HTF may become insolvent as early as August.

The decision in the Senate to delay the transportation reauthorization bill is in line with recent recommendations by the Obama Administration. However, the Senate bill did

not contain some of the policy suggestions regarding project planning and delivery made by the White House (see June 10 *Washington Report* for additional details).

Meanwhile, House leaders continue to press for immediate action on a six-year SAFETEA-LU reauthorization, and House leaders are pointing to the \$500 billion measure crafted by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee last month as an excellent vehicle for job creation. In addition, a subcommittee of the House Science Committee approved the reauthorization of research and development programs at the Department of Transportation that are under the panel's jurisdiction.

However, faced with opposition from both the White House and the Senate, chances are slim that the House bill will be considered outside that chamber this year.

In addition, the House Appropriations Committee approved its version of a FY 2010 budget for the Department of Transportation (DOT) this week. Overall, the agency would receive \$75.7 billion, an increase of \$8.5 billion over FY 2009 levels. Recommended funding levels include (with difference from FY 2009 level in parentheses):

- \$41.1 billion for federal-aid highways (+\$407m)
- \$8.3 billion for transit formula and bus grants (+\$82m)
- \$1.8 billion for New Starts rail program (+\$18m)
- \$1.48 billion for Amtrak (-\$7m)
- \$3.5 billion for the Airport Improvement Program (same)
- \$4 billion for high speed rail (+\$4b), with \$2 billion of that available to be transferred to a National Infrastructure Bank, should one be authorized

The measure is expected to be considered on the House floor next week.

HOUSING AND CD

House committee considers FY 2010 HUD budget. The House Appropriations Committee this week approved its recommendations for a FY 2010 budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Overall, HUD would receive \$47 billion in the measure, an

increase of \$5.5 billion over FY 2009.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program would receive \$4.6 billion, an increase of \$700 million over FY 2009. It was unknown at press time how much of that total would be directed to formula grants. Other HUD program funding levels (with difference from FY 2009 levels in parentheses) are as follows:

- \$2 billion for the HOME program (+\$175m)
- \$1.85 billion for homeless assistance grants (+\$173m)
- \$26 billion for Section 8 Rental assistance (+\$2b)
- \$2.5 billion for public housing capital grants (+\$50m)
- \$4.8 billion for public housing operating grants (+\$345m)
- \$250 million for the HOPE VI program (+\$130m)
- \$1 billion for Section 202 elderly housing (+\$235m)
- \$350 for Section 811 housing for the disabled (+\$100m)
- \$25 million for the Brownfields program (+\$15m)

The bill is expected to be considered on the House floor next week.

HEALTH CARE

House and Senate panels begin consideration of health care overhaul; bills include grants for local health and wellness programs. Congress began to tackle one of President Obama's top priorities this week as Committees in both chambers took up legislation to overhaul the nation's health care system.

In the Senate, the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee cleared an unnumbered bill that would provide most Americans with health insurance through a combination of existing employer-provided plans, increased public coverage and mandates that employers provide health insurance and that individuals obtain health insurance. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) said this week that he is almost done drafting his portion of the bill, which will address Medicare and will include a financing mechanism for

the Senate bill, which the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates will cost \$1 trillion over 10 years.

This week, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) created difficulties for bill sponsors with a report that maintains that the pending bills would not do enough to contain health care costs, and may in fact escalate increases to Medicare and Medicaid spending.

In the House, the Ways and Means Committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Education and Labor Committee all began consideration of a similar bill (HR 3200), that would be largely financed by a tax surcharge on income above \$350,000 per year estimated to raise \$544 billion in revenue over a decade. The committees will continue consideration of HR 3200 next week, with the bill going to the House floor as soon as late next week but more likely the following week.

Both the House and Senate bills would create a public health insurance option to compete with private health insurance plans, a provision that is anathema to Republicans and ensures that both bills will receive few, if any, Republican votes. In addition, the House bill faces the opposition of the Blue Dogs, the bloc of moderate Democrats, who are pushing for higher Medicare reimbursement rates in rural areas and for more focus on reducing overall health care costs.

As part of their efforts to tamp down health care costs, both the House and Senate bills devote hundreds of pages to prevention and wellness programs.

The House bill, HR 3200, would create a Public Health Investment Fund authorized at \$89 billion over ten years for a wide array community health, prevention and wellness and health professions training and education programs. A sizable chunk of the Fund, \$38 billion, would go to increased funding for Community Health Centers, \$35 billion would go to federal, state and local prevention and wellness programs and the remaining \$16 billion would go to health professions training and education. Of the \$35 billion over ten years authorized for prevention and

wellness programs, \$17.2 billion would be for a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) grant program to fund local government and community-based prevention and wellness programs that meet the goals of a National Wellness and Prevention Strategy developed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. HR 3200 would also authorize \$13.6 billion over ten years for formula grants to state health departments and competitive grants to state and local health departments to increase core public health infrastructure.

The Senate bill devotes an entire title to health care workforce training and education, as well as new Community Transformation Grants administered by CDC for the implementation, evaluation and dissemination of proven, evidence-based community preventive health activities such as:

- Creating healthier school environments;
- Creating the infrastructure to support active living;
- Developing and promoting community nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation and community safety programs;
- Implementing and assessing worksite wellness programs;
- Highlighting healthy options at restaurants and other food venues;
- Developing strategies to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities, and
- Addressing the needs of special populations.

Hoping to capitalize on the current momentum, President Obama has called on Congress to send him a health care overhaul bill before the August recess. However, House leaders hope to pass HR 3200 in the next two weeks and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) says that he will set aside floor time for Senate action before the August recess. However, reconciling the 1,000-plus page House and Senate bills, which have as many differences as they do similarities, into a final package that can garner majorities in both chambers in less than two weeks is close to impossible.

STIMULUS WATCH

Weekly update on stimulus activities:

Department of Energy

DOE has received 1,800 applications for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Formula Program but is still waiting for 16 percent of the applications. The final application deadline is August 10, 2009. Details on applying for EECBG Competitive Grants will be provided in a Funding Opportunity Announcement expected in late August.

Housing and Urban Development

Community Development Block Grant Recovery Act (CDBG-R) funds will be distributed no later than September 30, 2009. HUD has made proposed activities reports for all CDBG-R recipients available:

http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page?_pageid=153,8039950&dad=portal&schema=PORTAL

Department of Justice

Awards are expected to be made in 4-6 weeks for the \$1 billion Community Oriented Policing Services Hiring Recovery Program. All applicants are being evaluated based on each community's economic distress, Part 1 crimes, and community policing data.

States were allocated Justice Assistance Grant formula funds and each state is required to pass-through a certain percentage of state funds to local government. State pass-through percentages can be found here:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/jag09/09JAGvpt.pdf>

Office of Justice Program (OJP) formula grants are awarded directly to state governments. For more information on how a state intends to distribute formula grant funds, contact the administering state agency:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/>.

All OJP applications are currently being reviewed and awards will be made on a rolling basis beginning this week and ending December 30, 2009:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/recovery/awards.htm>.

Department of Transportation

DOT officials have indicated that they will choose to waive the \$20 million minimum grant application requirement for some submissions to the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant Program. Applications are due September 15, 2009.

The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) website provides an ARRA Grants Digest that posts information about FTA's grant-making activity:

http://www.fta.dot.gov/news/news_events_7963.html

Office of Management and Budget

OMB and the Recovery, Accountability and Transparency Board are holding webinars July 20-24, 2009 to provide information on implementing the guidance set forth in OMB Memorandum M-09-21, "Implementing Guidance for the Reports on Use of Funds Pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009" that was released on June 22, 2009. Schedule and registration:

<http://www.recovery.gov/?q=node/658>.

The White House

The Recovery Board introduced a new mapping capacity designed to track on stimulus spending. There is also a new Recipient Map detailing major awards to companies in communities across the country:

<http://www.recovery.gov/?q=content/maps>

GRANTS & NOTICES

Housing and Urban Development

HUD announced the availability of \$113 million in FY 2009 for HOPE VI Revitalization grants for "severely distressed" public housing. A five percent local match is required and applications are due November 17, 2009:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa09/hopevirevisec.pdf>.

Mary M. Meyer

From: SHubka@lincoln.ne.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2009 1:49 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: July sales tax reports
Attachments: BFb090721-1.pdf; BFb090721-2.pdf; BFb090721-3.pdf; BFb090721-4.pdf

Attached are the July sales tax reports reflecting May activity. There's not any good news in these reports other than next month's refunds are very low. As you probably have heard, the State of Nebraska also did not have a good month and we usually reflect the same trends they do.

(See attached file: BFb090721-1.pdf)(See attached file: BFb090721-2.pdf) (See attached file: BFb090721-3.pdf)(See attached file: BFb090721-4.pdf)

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**Actual Compared to
Projected Sales Tax Collections**

	2008-09 PROJECTED	2008-09 ACTUAL	VARIANCE FROM PROJECTED	\$ CHANGE FR. 07-08	% CHANGE FR. 07-08
SEPTEMBER	\$4,648,330	\$4,377,476	(\$270,854)	(\$144,262)	-3.19%
OCTOBER	\$4,842,011	\$4,736,074	(\$105,937)	(\$237,187)	-4.77%
NOVEMBER	\$4,836,314	\$4,851,237	\$14,923	\$191,378	4.11%
DECEMBER	\$4,534,401	\$4,336,273	(\$198,128)	(\$387,336)	-8.20%
JANUARY	\$4,654,027	\$4,209,000	(\$445,027)	(\$381,789)	-8.32%
FEBRUARY	\$5,930,039	\$5,691,880	(\$238,159)	\$585,203	11.46%
MARCH	\$4,312,238	\$4,184,988	(\$127,250)	\$88,852	2.17%
APRIL	\$4,101,468	\$4,048,629	(\$52,839)	(\$70,083)	-1.70%
MAY	\$4,785,046	\$4,626,889	(\$158,157)	(\$103,949)	-2.20%
JUNE	\$4,631,241	\$4,179,081	(\$452,160)	(\$543,861)	-11.52%
JULY	\$4,699,599	\$4,169,394	(\$530,205)	(\$336,398)	-7.47%
AUGUST	\$4,990,120				
TOTAL	\$56,964,834	\$49,410,921	(\$2,563,793)	(\$1,339,432)	-2.64%

Actual collections through July are 4.93 % below projections for the year

**CITY OF LINCOLN
GROSS SALES TAX COLLECTIONS
(WITH REFUNDS ADDED BACK IN)
2003-2004 THROUGH 2008-2009**

	ACTUAL 2003-2004	ACTUAL 2004-2005	ACTUAL 2005-2006	ACTUAL 2006-2007	% CHG. FR. PRIOR YEAR	ACTUAL 2007-2008	% CHG. FR. PRIOR YEAR	ACTUAL 2008-2009	% CHG. FR. PRIOR YEAR
SEPTEMBER	\$4,453,875	\$4,648,160	\$4,630,210	\$4,573,597	-1.22%	\$4,612,020	0.84%	\$4,812,555	4.35%
OCTOBER	\$4,670,587	\$4,706,690	\$4,823,369	\$4,712,519	-2.30%	\$5,052,950	7.22%	\$4,845,000	-4.12%
NOVEMBER	\$4,526,166	\$4,687,792	\$4,799,275	\$4,658,480	-2.93%	\$4,818,715	3.44%	\$4,937,998	2.48%
DECEMBER	\$4,314,111	\$4,500,338	\$4,511,403	\$4,445,761	-1.46%	\$4,753,456	6.92%	\$4,545,947	-4.37%
JANUARY	\$4,335,924	\$4,264,010	\$4,342,902	\$4,554,634	4.88%	\$4,617,097	1.37%	\$4,465,270	-3.29%
FEBRUARY	\$5,531,405	\$6,086,841	\$5,797,893	\$5,993,653	3.38%	\$5,596,617	-6.62%	\$5,775,594	3.20%
MARCH	\$3,980,041	\$4,158,874	\$4,247,908	\$4,125,074	-2.89%	\$4,421,405	7.18%	\$4,258,773	-3.68%
APRIL	\$3,889,388	\$4,097,988	\$3,991,159	\$4,018,709	0.69%	\$4,227,476	5.19%	\$4,119,617	-2.55%
MAY	\$4,602,788	\$4,730,317	\$4,543,369	\$4,895,921	7.76%	\$4,753,366	-2.91%	\$4,744,089	-0.20%
JUNE	\$4,599,245	\$4,557,735	\$4,539,614	\$4,664,470	2.75%	\$4,859,251	4.18%	\$4,624,054	-4.84%
JULY	\$4,391,257	\$4,519,466	\$4,655,061	\$4,772,617	2.53%	\$4,983,976	4.43%	\$4,501,197	-9.69%
AUGUST	\$4,893,438	\$4,803,665	\$4,991,723	\$4,887,329	-2.09%	\$5,026,702	2.85%		
TOTAL	\$54,188,225	\$55,761,877	\$55,873,886	\$56,302,764	0.77%	\$57,723,030	2.52%	\$51,630,093	-2.02%

**CITY OF LINCOLN
SALES TAX REFUNDS
2003-2004 THROUGH 2008-2009**

	ACTUAL 2003-2004	ACTUAL 2004-2005	ACTUAL 2005-2006	% CHG. FR. PRIOR YEAR	ACTUAL 2006-2007	ACTUAL 2007-2008	% CHG. FROM PRIOR YEAR	ACTUAL 2008-2009	% CHG. FROM PRIOR YEAR
SEPTEMBER	(\$69,997)	(\$135,858)	(\$80,882)	-40.47%	(\$27,350)	(\$90,282)	230.10%	(\$435,079)	381.91%
OCTOBER	(\$110,193)	(\$165,219)	(\$358,866)	117.21%	(\$166,695)	(\$79,688)	-52.19%	(\$108,925)	36.69%
NOVEMBER	(\$219,454)	(\$101,531)	(\$173,972)	71.35%	(\$3,881)	(\$158,855)	3993.08%	(\$86,760)	-45.38%
DECEMBER	(\$390,445)	(\$325,510)	(\$6,319)	-98.06%	(\$175,440)	(\$29,848)	-82.99%	(\$209,674)	602.47%
JANUARY	(\$59,315)	(\$220,967)	(\$269,713)	22.06%	(\$84,287)	(\$26,308)	-68.79%	(\$256,270)	874.13%
FEBRUARY	(\$323,218)	(\$394,324)	(\$73,395)	-81.39%	(\$327,119)	(\$489,939)	49.77%	(\$83,713)	-82.91%
MARCH	(\$22,759)	(\$99,240)	(\$165,869)	67.14%	(\$133,574)	(\$325,269)	143.51%	(\$73,785)	-77.32%
APRIL	(\$199,018)	(\$69,900)	(\$196,682)	181.38%	(\$130,611)	(\$108,764)	-16.73%	(\$70,988)	-34.73%
MAY	(\$155,787)	(\$122,283)	(\$166,567)	36.21%	(\$381,653)	(\$22,529)	-94.10%	(\$117,201)	420.23%
JUNE	(\$194,593)	(\$34,811)	(\$14,085)	-59.54%	(\$186,252)	(\$136,308)	-26.82%	(\$444,973)	226.45%
JULY	(\$42,086)	(\$162,998)	(\$39,492)	-75.77%	(\$155,825)	(\$478,184)	206.87%	(\$331,804)	-30.61%
AUGUST	(\$531,884)	(\$148,028)	(\$57,700)	-61.02%	(\$569,595)	(\$43,759)	-92.32%	(\$11,878)	-72.86%
TOTAL	(\$2,318,751)	(\$1,980,668)	(\$1,603,541)	-19.04%	(\$2,342,280)	(\$1,989,734)	-15.05%	(\$2,231,050)	12.13%

**CITY OF LINCOLN
NET SALES TAX COLLECTIONS
2003-2004 THROUGH 2008-2009**

	ACTUAL 2003-2004	ACTUAL 2004-2005	ACTUAL 2005-2006	ACTUAL 2006-2007	ACTUAL 2007-2008	% CHG. FROM PR. YEAR	ACTUAL 2008-2009	% CHG. FROM PR. YEAR
SEPTEMBER	\$4,383,878	\$4,512,303	\$4,549,328	\$4,546,247	\$4,521,738	-0.54%	\$4,377,476	-3.19%
OCTOBER	\$4,560,394	\$4,541,471	\$4,464,503	\$4,545,825	\$4,973,261	9.40%	\$4,736,074	-4.77%
NOVEMBER	\$4,306,712	\$4,586,261	\$4,625,303	\$4,654,599	\$4,659,859	0.11%	\$4,851,237	4.11%
DECEMBER	\$3,923,666	\$4,174,828	\$4,505,085	\$4,270,321	\$4,723,609	10.61%	\$4,336,273	-8.20%
JANUARY	\$4,276,609	\$4,043,044	\$4,073,189	\$4,470,347	\$4,590,789	2.69%	\$4,209,000	-8.32%
FEBRUARY	\$5,208,187	\$5,692,517	\$5,724,498	\$5,666,534	\$5,106,677	-9.88%	\$5,691,881	11.46%
MARCH	\$3,957,283	\$4,059,634	\$4,082,038	\$3,991,501	\$4,096,136	2.62%	\$4,184,988	2.17%
APRIL	\$3,690,371	\$4,028,088	\$3,794,477	\$3,888,098	\$4,118,712	5.93%	\$4,048,629	-1.70%
MAY	\$4,447,001	\$4,608,034	\$4,376,803	\$4,514,268	\$4,730,837	4.80%	\$4,626,889	-2.20%
JUNE	\$4,404,651	\$4,522,924	\$4,525,529	\$4,478,219	\$4,722,943	5.46%	\$4,179,081	-11.52%
JULY	\$4,349,171	\$4,356,468	\$4,615,569	\$4,616,793	\$4,505,792	-2.40%	\$4,169,394	-7.47%
AUGUST	\$4,361,554	\$4,655,637	\$4,934,023	\$4,317,734	4,982,944	15.41%		
TOTAL	\$51,869,477	\$53,781,209	\$54,270,346	\$53,960,485	\$55,733,297	3.29%	\$49,410,922	-2.64%

Year to date vs.
previous year

Mary M. Meyer

From: SWolf@ci.lincoln.ne.us
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 2:28 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: vacant positions BFb090723-1
Attachments: BFb090723-1.pdf

Attached below is information requested regarding the status in the Mayor's budget of positions held in the hiring freeze.

(See attached file: BFb090723-1.pdf)

Sherry Wolf-Drbal
City of Lincoln - Budget Div.
402-441-8305

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FISCAL YEAR 2008-09

REQUISITIONS for HIRING REVIEW

REQ NUMBER	HOURLY RATE	HRS WEEK	CLASS CODE	TITLE	DEPT	DIV
20-0094		40	4575	Police Trainee	Police	Operations
20-0095		40	3110	Police Officer	Police	Operations
20-0101		40	4575	Police Trainee	Police	Operations
20-0107		40	2110	Police Officer	Police	Operations
20-0559	\$13,072	20	5023	Gatehouse Attendant I	Public Works	Wastewater (Landfill)
20-0103	\$73,108	40	3307	Engineering Specialist	Public Works	Engineering Services
20-0105		20	4504	Professional/Technical Worker	Health	Dental Health
20-0105	\$16,619	40	3130	Police Records Technician	Police	Administrative Support

\$ 1,828,880 weekly

\$95,101.70 annually

currently posted

to be railed

dept is interviewing

REQUISITIONS

REQ NUMBER	HOURLY RATE	HRS WEEK	CLASS CODE	TITLE	DEPT	DIV
Approved						
25-0066	\$57,401	40	1400	Information Services Manager	Finance	Information Services
25-0259	\$10,793	20	2406	Community Resource Specialist (part time)	Health	Platoon & Outreach
25-0009	\$19,845	40	3559	Registered Nurse (Temporary)	Health	Health
25-0055	\$17,076	40	3620	Environmental Health Specialist I	Health	Environmental Public Health
25-0104	\$13,615	40	3696	Animal Control Dispatcher	Health	Animal Control
25-0095	\$23,009	40	1124	Accounting Supervisor	Mayor's Department	Aging Services
25-0076	\$14,481	40	3130	Police Records Technician	Police	Administrative Support
25-0088	\$23,423	40	2110	Principal Planner	Planning	City Range
25-0080	\$31,540	40	2053	Senior Engineering Specialist	Public Works	Engineering Services
25-0096	\$37,781	40	1444	Assistant PWU Business Manager	Public Works	Walter
25-0082	\$70,739	40	5022	Solid Waste Operations Supervisor	Public Works	Wastewater
25-0102	\$14,806	40	5226	Utility Equipment Operator I	Public Works	Wastewater
25-0035	\$24,793	40	5000	Utility Supervisor	Public Works	Wastewater
25-0035	\$19,733	40	5206	Utility Plant Mechanic I	Public Works	Wastewater
25-0087	\$21,908	40	5010	Labor Supervisor I	Public Works	Street Maintenance
25-0088	\$13,802	40	5078	Public Works Trainee	Public Works	Street Maintenance

\$ 15,502,620 weekly

\$806,140.04 annually

On Hold - To Be Railed

20-0294	\$30,696	40	3620	Environmental Health Specialist I	Health	Environmental Public Health
20-0305	\$11,382	20	4107	Library Assistant II	Library	Public Service
20-0308	\$12,143	20	4107	Library Assistant II	Library	Public Service

08-0291	\$11,779	30	4107	Library Assistant II	Library	
08-0292	\$18,534	30	4108	Library Assistant III	Library	
07-0274	\$19,493	40	5314	Maintenance Operator II	Public Works	Wastewater
On Hold - Sent for Interviews						
08-0273	\$25,746	40	1624	GIS Analyst	Health	
08-0270	\$11,779	30	4107	Library Assistant II	Library	Core Branch
08-0034	\$21,968	40	5307	Utility Plant Technician	Public Works	Wastewater
08-0274	\$29,234	40	7748	Economic Development Specialist	Urban Development	
Hold						
08-0197	\$13,619	40	1927	Senior Office Assistant	Mayor's	Human Rights
08-0250	\$17,108	30	3120	Public Service Officer	Police	Administrative Support
09-0005	\$33,976	40	3112	Police Sergeant	Police	Operations
09-0079	\$13,002	26	3139	Police Records Technician	Police	Administrative Support
09-0080	\$17,258	40	3144	Victim/Witness Assistant	Police	Management
09-0093		40	4973	Police Trainee	Police	Operations
09-0094		40	3110	Police Officer	Police	Operations
09-0014	\$17,248	40	5020	Bus Service Worker 1-21-09	Public Works	Startran
09-0092	\$18,385	40	5615	Bus Apprentice Mechanic	Public Works	Startran
08-0313	\$13,997	40	5228	Public Works Laborer 1-7-09	Public Works	Street Maintenance
08-0265	\$14,667	40	5225	Utility Equipment Operator I	Public Works	Water
08-0088	\$24,106	40	2035	Assistant Sanitary Engineer	Public Works	Wastewater

Dear John Camp,

The Harris Family was so good ^{and} bequeathed beautiful Pioneer Park and it's attributes. They did so ^{with} the intention of keeping it free. That included the Nature Center.

An admission fee at a gate posted by the entrance of the Nature Center will ruin a tradition of Lincoln, driving through the loop to see the bison and elk on the prairie.

An admission fee ^{will} prevent young families from attending the Nature Center. Pioneer Park Nature Center is one of the few

Shoot for the moon.

Even if you miss,

you'll land among the stars.

things ~~extra~~ people can do for free in this town.

I feel the Nature Center should remain free of charge. I have to this date 300 people who agree w/ me. These people are young families, immigrants, working people and visitors from other states. Keep the Nature Center free!
Kosme Salin

Deed To Pioneers Park, Gift Of Mr. and Mrs. John Harris, Is Approved By City Council

Pioneers Park, given to the city by Mr. and Mrs. John F. Harris of New York, now belongs to Lincoln, the deed from them having been approved by the council Monday afternoon, and ordered recorded. This will be done as soon as the deed from the Burlington to Mr. Harris has been filed.

According to provisions of the deed the city is given authority to make such changes of admission in the park as may be deemed necessary. This is done to enable the municipality to install self-sustaining amusements. It is not believed, however, that advantage will be taken of the clause except as it will apply to swimming, boating, etc. being the intention to make everything free as far as possible. In the handling of golf, it is the belief of city officials, that this activity should be continued after the manner that now prevails at Antelope park, with possibly a change in the manner of handling the funds. There is a well defined opinion among city officials that this should all be handled through the treasurer's office as is that of the municipal symphony orchestra, and the municipal swimming pool. When lakes are made and bath houses, built the swimming and boating probably will also be handled in this way.

There has been no talk of a charge for tennis and any of the other games. The policy now in vogue should follow for Pioneers park, the commissioners say, everything that can possibly be operated without charge, being on that basis. After giving a legal charter, on of the property, the resolution, acceptance, signed by every member of the council, says:

"Whereas, John F. Harris, formerly of this city, has today tendered the City of Lincoln a deed conveying Pioneers Park, now:

"Therefore, be it resolved by the city council of the City of Lincoln, Nebraska, That the conveyance be and hereby accepted and that we pledge the City of Lincoln to a full compliance with the conditions therein recited.

"On behalf of our citizens of today and past to Mr. Harris our deep gratitude. Many of our people remember the days when in our pioneer era, Mr. Harris was living with us. Our community is deeply indebted to the Harris family. The father, Alex Harris, and their children, were among our pioneers. They had a vision of life destiny and hoped to lay the foundations of our community. Their contributions were more than material. Endowed with the qualities of sterling integrity and Christian character they made a lasting contribution to our spiritual heritage. In memory of them and the many they recognize as their friends and co-workers we study and with propriety in accord with the suggestion of Mr. Harris, designate this tract as 'Pioneers Park.'"

"Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution, authoritatively certified, be sent to Mr. John F. Harris."

They would undoubtedly know only in a general way what was being done by any department as the city manager is to have charge of the management of all of the city departments, and to report to the council with recommendations. The city manager in fact would determine the salaries, the dues, and the method used as the council would be obliged to accept his information as to the records and the success or failure of the department, as he would be the only person coming in contact with the council, who would know what was being done.

Section 7 enumerates the duties of the city manager, and I believe that anyone reading this section will agree that it would be impossible, except in a general way, largely physically at least, for any one to do what is specified, except in a general way, by way of advice. The city manager would take the place of each department of the present board, doing what they now are doing better if he kept in touch with the details as they go.

Second—elections.—The proposed plan is to have the nomination for councilmen made by petition. Why not let the primary which has carried many of the old evils of the ward ward system?

Following that the new plan was in force and a certain section would be given to the council. They would be given about three men, then they would go to one section of the city and say—"you need a councilman from this section—now we are interested in seeing Jones, and Smith, and Brown, section—you give us your three—and we will support your three—then they would go to about twenty other sections and work the same idea—the result would be the three concentrated upon, with the rest backing for a division of the spoils, and a defeat certain. In two years this faction would get control. I ask some of the old timers, if I am not correct in my proposition.

Now for a little technical analysis on nominations.—When do the nominations close?

Section 6 and 7-11 seems to me are not clear—read them.

Third—Purchasing and selling.—Under the present charter, page 6, the city has power to sell Article Section 5 as follows:

"To sell and convey real or personal property owned by the city and to make such orders respecting the same as shall be deemed conducive to the interests of the city; but shall not have the power to sell real estate of the city, except such real estate as may be purchased upon sale for general or special taxes or assessments, or real estate of the city, the use or occupancy of which shall have been abandoned or discontinued for city purposes, and not exceeding in market value the sum of \$10,000, unless authorized to do so by a vote of the council."

here and, by an added incentive to extending the state's park plant which has only recently started to develop. More, it should open the way to an elaborate parking plan for the rural communities adjacent to Lincoln that has not heretofore been thought of except in the most vague way.

"Any gift to a municipality is acceptable, and generally one is no better than another, but where a donation fits into a city's program and can be used as can this gift, certainly is it magnificent."

Lincoln was in need of this kind of a gift, the mayor said. Now it must be developed. This should be done, however, under expert direction that will not build in a way that in the years to come will force doing the work all over. When a permanent development is made it should be done with a knowledge that it is correct procedure.

Commissioner Bair concurred with the mayor in this last statement. In fact, as soon as he was told that the gift was to be made he stated that any plan for development that contemplated anything other than expert advice, would not have his sanction, regardless of what he himself might believe the proper thing to do.

Now that we have the property it must be fenced at once, Mr. Bair declared, announcing that he would have men on the property immediately to start the cleaning up process. There is much of this to do before any actual development can be started.

Cross fences must be taken out. There is a high hedge cutting one part of the tract and this must be grubbed out along with a number of old trees that have passed their usefulness, and others that are dead. The cross fences can be used elsewhere on the park plant.

While this work is under way a study of the boundary lines will be made with a view of marking them with hemlock spruce or pine, possibly both. This will not be attempted, however, unless expert advice agrees with that of the commissioner. It is the plan of Mr. Bair to close the park entrances for a time, he said. The gates are unlocked now, he added, and as long as they remain so, campers and other itinerants will roam over it constantly. There is a camper there now who will have to be ordered off, he said.

Although immediate attention is to be directed to Pioneer Park, Mr. Bair said that this would not hinder in any way prosecuting his plans for the improvement of the airport, the lake on the Stewart tract, and developments contemplated for the other parks during the coming summer.

The deed to the park will be accepted by the council Monday, Mr. Bair having started Thursday to draft the acceptance resolution.

City Briefs

JANUARY 15, 1929.

Working on Park Ground—Removal of Old Wire Fences, cutting trees from the timber tract and general cleanup of Pioneer Park started Tuesday, following an inspection of the plant Monday afternoon by Commissioner Bair and Executive Kittinger. The work will be taken out and after each weather opens up used in

People's Forum

Forum communications to the Lincoln Star should be limited to 500 words. The letters in this department represent the individual views of the writers and may or may not express the views of this newspaper.

Sees No Advantages.

LINCOLN, Neb., Jan. 24
To the editor of the Lincoln Star: In the evening issue of Jan. 18, you gave a prominent place to the item "Defense of the City Manager Plan" and I ask again for a further comparison with the present plan. That article read "In other words, the amendment alters only one-eighth of the charter, dealing with the form of..."

9.

Harris

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Tammy J. Grammer

From: Jon Camp
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2009 8:13 AM
To: Ty Westover; Doug Emery; Jonathan A. Cook; John Spatz; Eugene W. Carroll; Adam A. Hornung; Jayne L. Snyder; Mayor
Cc: Doug Emery; Jonathan A. Cook; John Spatz; Eugene W. Carroll; Adam A. Hornung; Jayne L. Snyder; Mayor; Tammy J. Grammer
Subject: RE: Proposed telecom tax

Dear Mr. Westover:

If you watched our televised budget session Monday morning, you observed my motion to do this very thing--eliminate the telecom occupation tax by using vacancy/turnover savings, which have been budgeted for approximately the last 5 years.

I was surprised that our budget discussions did not address this major change in budgeting and the first time we discussed this vacancy/turnover change was Monday, July 20, 2009.

Please consider attending the Budget Public Hearings on August 10, 2009, to express your concerns.

Best regards,

Jon

Jon Camp
Lincoln City Council

From: Ty Westover [ty.westover@bhi-1.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 3:10 PM
To: Doug Emery; Jon Camp; Jonathan A. Cook; John Spatz; Eugene W. Carroll; Adam A. Hornung; Jayne L. Snyder; Mayor
Subject: Proposed telecom tax

Members of the Council, my name is Ty Westover and I live at 6512 South 32nd Street. It's my understanding that in the past few years you have budgeted for staff vacancies. If you were to follow that process again this year, we would not need to have the telecom tax. I would support having the council again adopt this process for 2009-10 and eliminate the telecom tax. Thank you for your consideration.

(FYI - the telecom tax would raise \$385,000 this year and about \$650,000 every year after that. The vacancy savings have averaged \$400,000 to \$600,000 per year according to testimony by the city budget officer, Steve Hubka).

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Ty Westover

Tammy J. Grammer

From: Jon Camp
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 8:18 AM
To: Mike Lang; Fred A. Hoke
Cc: Doug Emery; Jonathan A. Cook; Jayne L. Snyder; Eugene W. Carroll; Adam A. Hornung; John Spatz; Tammy J. Grammer; Mayor
Subject: DSC Research

Mike and Fred:

Please provide a history of the research you have done to investigate Development Service Centers in other cities. In particular, please include:

1. City contacted
2. Person contacted and his or her position (please provide address and telephone #)
3. Method of contact (personal visit, telephone, email, google search, etc)
4. Date of contact and response date
5. Date of subsequent follows-up
6. Type of municipal government (mayor, city manager, etc.)
7. Definition of "Development Service Center" for that city
8. Length of time the city's DSC has existed
9. User fees charged for the DSC
10. How did you discover each city had a "DSC"?
11. Describe the management of the DSC, i.e. does it have a "central coordinator" or "czar"?

You will recall that I have asked for this information verbally on two previous occasions but to the best of my knowledge, this has not been provided.

If you anticipate a delay in providing this information, then please initially and promptly furnish Items 1-5, 10 and 11.

Thank you,

Jon

Tammy J. Grammer

From: Jon Camp
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 8:29 AM
To: Lynn Johnson; Steve D Hubka
Cc: Doug Emery; Jonathan A. Cook; John Spatz; Adam A. Hornung; Jayne L. Snyder; Eugene W. Carroll; Mayor; Tammy J. Grammer
Subject: Crawford Trust

Lynn: and Steve

A constituent brought to my attention that the Crawford Trust had its primary intent of providing future park land for Lincoln. His comment was to the effect that perhaps we should "follow the intent of Mr. Crawford" and use the interim distributions, required by the IRS, to purchase future parkland. One specific example was to purchase segments along the future South Beltway to provide a "linear park".

While providing art along I-180 is also meritorious, it is not the intent of Mr. Crawford.

Would it be better to delete this provision from the Budget and schedule separate public hearings to discuss the Trust and what the citizens feel is best?

Another question raised was the "vagueness" in the Budget resolution presented by Steve Hubka. There appears the need for more than a simple sentence or two to define the expenditure of these funds. Furthermore, the proposed language says there will be "matching" by the private sector, but does not define the amount of the match.

Thank you for your thoughts. All of us are pleased that you and the Administration are proactively reviewing this unique opportunity.

Jon

From: Jon Camp
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 8:09 AM
To: John E. Cripe
Cc: Mark A. Koller; Doug Emery; Eugene W. Carroll; Jayne L. Snyder; Jonathan A. Cook; John Spatz; Adam A. Hornung; Tammy J. Grammer
Subject: RE: Matrix for Union Contracts

John:

Would you please provide a matrix for all union contracts that lists the evolution of contractual provisions.

The following are some key elements:

1. Feature
2. When added or deleted (such as longevity pay)
3. When benefits are modified (changes to percentages paid by City or Employee)
4. Merit plans for each group
 - A. Percentages between steps
 - B. # of steps
 - C. When percentages modified
5. Cost of Living adjustments
6. Range and class adjustments
7. Other special features such as changes to management prerogatives to mandated elements (e.g. staffing levels)

I recall noticing you had a notebook with some form of matrix at one of our executive sessions some time ago, so hopefully you can use this to build my requested matrix.

Thank you,

Jon

1

From: John E. Cripe
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 8:37 AM
To: Jon Camp
Cc: Mark A. Koller; Doug Emery; Eugene W. Carroll; Jayne L. Snyder; Jonathan A. Cook; John Spatz; Adam A. Hornung; Tammy J. Grammer; Rick D. Hoppe
Subject: RE: Matrix for Union Contracts

I do not have the time or the staff to do that.
The matrix you saw for just the items on the table for one union and it did not have any history.
Sorry but I will not have time to comply.
JEC

John E. Cripe
Compensation Manager
City of Lincoln/Lancaster County
555 South 10th
Lincoln, NE 68506
(402) 441-7879
Fax (402) 441-8748

Mary M. Meyer

From: Tammy J. Grammer
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 11:41 AM
To: Council Packet
Subject: FW: Proposed fees for PPNC

From: Sue Samson [mailto:ssamson91@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2009 11:53 AM
To: Tammy J. Grammer
Subject: Proposed fees for PPNC

Dear Jonathan,

We've met at the Brasch's home and other places when you were running for City Council. Now, as a member of the City Council, Ron and I thank you for supporting our neighborhood libraries and swimming pools. Our present concern is about the proposed fees for Pioneers Park Nature Center.

We feel that it is essential that the city continue to fund the Nature Center; it is an integral part of Pioneers Park and serves as a unique place for exploration of our native habitat and provider of a place for natural play.

My experience (Sue) as an elementary teacher in Lincoln from schools-Prescott and Elliott--that provided field trips to the Nature Center, left me with gratitude for such a place in our city. After I retired, I began working a few weeks each year as a Naturalist; this gave me experiences with children from many Lincoln schools, and it has increased my optimism about kids. They still love exploring nature!

When Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods, was here to meet with civic leaders and give his address at the Lied, I was struck with a point he made about his own childhood. He said the it was his many experiences in the outdoors that lead him to be caring and concerned about our environment. You probably remember his ideas for city planners: include native habitats and natural play areas in planning. We have these at the Nature Center. It's SO important that the benefits the Nature Center offers be open to all. Otherwise, it becomes a place that a few people visit once in a while. I can't imagine the clientele that I see when I'm visiting the Center being able to pay to walk through the prairie or stand by the edge of the pond in the spring to hear the chorus frogs. The ponds, wetlands, woodland paths and prairie are all encompassed in the Nature Center. Tax payers deserve the right to enjoy them.

I am past president of the Friends of PPNC. We have earned some money for special projects at the Center, but honestly, in my time on the Board, the thought of potential entrance fees never came up. Perhaps the Board could embark on securing grants to supplement the Nature Center during this dismal fiscal time, but I don't see how they could finalize anything before September 1.

My mantra is "pay a visit to the Nature Center", so, if you haven't been there recently, I invite you to visit!

Sue Samson and Ron Samson

Mary M. Meyer

From: Tammy J. Grammer
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 11:42 AM
To: Council Packet
Subject: FW: Land Fill

Subject: Land Fill

Members and Mayor.

I have a problem with your North 48th Street transfer station, Saturday, July 18, 2009, I went to the transfer station with some old furniture from my deceased mother's home, which now is in my and my brother's name.

The clerk in charge asked me questions about where this trash came from and I told her it was from my house over in Havelock area, & I was cleaning out my mother's house and she asked me if I LIVED THERE and I said no and she charged me additional \$3.50 because of the: (Occupation Tax , Assessed to any person who, as part of their business or occupation, hauls refuse (any material other than yard waste or brush) to solid waste disposal facilities operated by the City of Lincoln @ \$3.50 per Trip) I just can't believe this to be correct , I do not see how I can be charged an "Occupation Tax" when I am not in the business or occupation of hauling trash for hire & this is not a rental so I am not making money on this home. The home is located at 6112 Platte Ave, Lincoln, NE 68507.

This is absurd - because I was honest & stated that even though I own this home it is not my primary residence I was charged an additional \$3.50 fee. I could of lied just as easily & not been assessed this fee. I guess honesty does not pay in the Ciity of Lincoln.

Sherm Bastron
7227 Walker Ave
Lincoln,Ne 68507
464-1134

Mary M. Meyer

From: Tammy J. Grammer
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 11:25 AM
To: Council Packet
Subject: FW: Chet Ager Nature Center

From: Emily Levine [mailto:emily.levine@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 9:49 AM
To: Tammy J. Grammer
Subject: Chet Ager Nature Center

To the City Council:

I am saddened by the recent proposal to begin charging to enter the Chet Ager Nature Center at Pioneer Park. At a time when it is becoming increasingly apparent that exposure to nature is vital to children, it certainly seems to be moving in the opposite direction. Families need free activities, school field trips must be affordable, and a resource as special as Chet Ager must remain accessible to all of Lincoln's citizens.

When children go on field trips led by the Center's Teacher-Naturalists, who I believe are paid minimum wage, they are exposed to experiences that they get nowhere else. When countless people take the drive to see the elk and buffalo every summer evening, they are partaking of a Lincoln tradition, when families spend a Saturday afternoon walking the Center's trails, they are strengthening their bonds.

Chet Ager is a unique resource for Lincoln. The underpaid and dedicated staff are committed to enriching our lives through their state-of-the-art, environmentally sound "Prairie Building" and their exhibits of wildlife. The experiences one obtains at Chet Ager can be found nowhere else in the area.

Charging a fee for these experiences will certainly impact the number of Lincolniters whose lives are enriched by having them.

I have been visiting the nature center for fifty years. I have supported it as a Friend. Please, raise my taxes, but don't charge the children of Lincoln for experiences that we, as caring adults, should provide for them.

Thank you,
Emily Levine

Emily Levine
Independent Scholar
2615 C Street
Lincoln NE 68502
(402) 438-3240
emily.levine@earthlink.net