

January 13, 1993

by sound business principles, driven by a clear mission, oriented toward and accountable for results, viewing expenditures as investments upon which a return is expected, guided by an understanding of markets, getting employees involved in decisions. This new era is beginning to take shape in Nebraska. Improvements throughout state government are increasing efficiency and improving quality. Total quality management, TQM, is being implemented in a number of state agencies--the Military, Public Institutions, Administrative Services, Economic Development, Education, Social Services and more. An Interagency Coordination initiative is underway, sparked by employees in the Department of Labor and several other agencies. Coordination among agencies is also being improved through director exchanges in which department heads change places for a short time to improve their understanding of each other's missions and operations. Efficiency in government also requires a selective review of return on investment. Rather than appoint a large general efficiency commission, I intend to work with the Legislature and State Auditor to utilize small, short-term problem-solving teams targeted to specific areas. For example, I am forming a team to head up an assessment of our information technology strategy. This team will include leaders from the private sector that have experience with large-scale technology investments. They will be asked to assist in reviewing the current management structure for information technology, and to make suggestions for improvements that may be needed. Efficiency measures will help us live within our means, but they will not help to slow the growth of government. I intend to move aggressively to halt government expansion. I've already asked the directors of agencies under my direct supervision to devise a strategy for controlling growth. Our goal is a lean and efficient state government, which is what Nebraskans want and expect. State employees clearly recognize that fact, as shown by their willingness to bite the bullet on salaries. Major bargaining units have agreed to a package that is considerably less than I and they would have preferred, but it is a package that fits within the current budget context. I want to thank the negotiating teams for their good faith efforts, and I want to thank our valued state employees for their understanding. During the special session on the budget we agreed that cuts in most state aid programs for local governments were ill-timed. We served notice, however, that state aid would be on the table in 1993. State government has taken a strong dose of castor oil--managers with smaller budgets to administer, employees with