

few years the board has noticed that there has been declining enrollment at the campus located northwest of Sidney on the old depot grounds and what is happening is that cost per student has been going up very, very dramatically and we simply cannot afford to keep that open. We just, it just is not working anymore, it's not cost-effective anymore. I know I've been in here a number of times carrying legislation for the community colleges asking us to change the formula and stuff so that more money would be pumped into the western area because of some of the problems they have been experiencing. It came to the point where I finally had to say, no, we're not going to ask them for more money to do this anymore. We are getting to the point where we've got to start consolidating some of these services. So they are going to go through a restructuring in the western community college area and what they're going to do is they are going to try to either sell the campus out there that is located on the depot or they are going to enter into a long-term lease-purchase agreement and they are going to try to turn this into an industrial park area instead and get it off of the rolls of the community colleges. They are going to...when they do that they are going to do some expansion in the downtown area of Sidney because that is where their student growth has been. They are going to offer some of the programs that were offered out at the other one. They are going to move those downtown. Some of the programs that were offered at the depot they are going to actually move to Scottsbluff because that area has much higher demand for them. I think they will be much more successful programs if they are moved to Scottsbluff. So why do we need legislation you ask? We need this because in order for them to do the expansion and in order for us not to have to fund moving those programs to Scottsbluff and moving some of those other, moving some of those programs to Sidney, we need to give to that board the ability to enter into a longer lease-purchase, lease-rental kind of agreements. Community colleges are one of the political subdivisions that we do not allow to do that in this state. A number of the other political subdivisions already have this authority to do. Community colleges do not. We need to allow them that ability to do that so they can enter into some agreements and build some...they're going to have to actually build a building or two in Scottsbluff to expand those programs that they have there and then they're also going to have to have some more room in Sidney because they are going to expand that campus a little bit. In order for them to do that, the best way they can do it and pay for it with western Nebraska dollars, with the dollars that the people put in through the