

SENATOR ASHFORD: ...there is no reason to tear it down. It is a project that will jump-start, in my opinion, other projects. We've already heard about, I've talked to you about the Peoples Natural Gas commitment to build a parking garage right adjacent to the auditorium. There is a hotel planned at the Aquila Court Building, which is on down 16th Street on the other side of Dodge Street, which is an old building that, hopefully, will be renovated into a hotel. These, all of these projects mean jobs for the people who do the construction work, and who work in the facilities, once they are completed. These are jobs, these are jobs that are important to our state, that bring in tax dollars to the state. It will bring in more people to use the facilities and, hopefully, it will allow us to do some facelifiting in our downtown area and start that process going, even further than what...

SENATOR CROSBY: Time.

SENATOR ASHFORD: ...we have done in the past four or five years. Thank you, Senator Crosby.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Ashford. Senator Moore, on the Ashford amendment. Senator Moore. I don't see Senator Moore. Senator Pirsch. Senator Pirsch, on the Ashford amendment.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Senator Crosby and members of the body. I don't know if you all got this report by the Mayor's Advisory Commission on the need for a municipal convention center. Someone had passed these around or I assume they did, although I don't see an initial. Anyway, in that advisory commission is listed my name, and I was one of many business, professional, and regular people who did intensively look at the need for a municipal convention center. And we said, yes, our city most definitely needs a convention center. There is no doubt about that, if we want to compete. We have all been or most of us have been to places like Cincinnati, and New Orleans, and some of these bigger cities, who have enormous, wonderful convention centers. We would like to have that, and we recommended that. One of the trips that the group took was to Des Moines, who has just built a beautiful, large, wonderful convention center, and they kept it downtown, and as a matter of fact, it is not too far from their old city auditorium, which was built approximately the same time that our auditorium was, only it's smaller, and a lot less usable space in it. And they