

LINCOLN GROUP

NEBRASKA ENERGY OFFICE FOCUS GROUP 1
LINCOLN GROUP

Moderator comments

I'm (name) from (town), Nebraska. I'm on the school board there. This is my 8th year and yes, we have, our superintendent is here and he can better explain that so I'll just leave that up to him, if that's o.k.

(M) Sure

I'm (name), I'm with (town) Schools, I'm their coordinator out there in the maintenance area and custodial and we've had energy grants in the past primarily in our heating systems and insulation and that type area.

(name), maintenance supervisor for the school district of (town) and yes, we've applied for grants and did quite a bit of work in the grant area, not in the loan area though, only in the grant area for energy management, insulation, the same type of thing.

I'm (name) from (town), on the school board there and I've been on the board for 3 1/2 years, I guess. I'm not sure whether we have or not. I think we have applied but I'm not sure.

(M) Not everyone here has applied so don't feel like you have to say yes to that question because we're trying to get a mix of people who have and have not.

I'm not sure whether we have or not.

I'm (name) from (town). I've been there 7 years as an elementary K-8 principal. We have applied for some grants, I know we have an application in now for I think a matching type, I was talking with the superintendent, but I have been indirectly involved while I was superintendent at (town) before I came to (town) and we applied for a grant on windows for an old building to update windows.

(name), Superintendent of Schools, (town). Been there 12 years. Yes, we've applied for every grant we could find. We've done windows, roofing, weather stripping, lights, heating, computer control.

I'm (name) and I told this gentleman it was my 9th year on the board and to show you how time flies, its my 10th year. Yes, we've applied for a lot of the energy things, we've done some that are successful, some that were not and (name) down there is really more expertise in the details than I am but we worked a lot with the Nebraska Energy Council and I called (name) yesterday and said what can you tell me, and he said all I can tell you is

they've sure helped us a lot because the federal people tell us what has to be done, it's so confusing, everything's so detailed, and he said, I can go down there and those people can really give us an in to what's really going on and help us through these things.

My name is (name), I'm superintendent at (town) school. We completed an energy grant about 2 years ago which involved some work with our heating systems and also some storm windows and closing in some large walls that were almost all window, blocking those in.

I'm (name) from (town), I'm a school board member, been on the board about 4 years, and (name) has already answered about the energy grant.

I'm (name), I'm the business manager at (town). We've done extensive energy work in terms of boilers and energy management systems, windows, roofs, insulation on hot water heaters and pipes and louvers in the boiler rooms and things like that. We've done quite a bit.

I'm (name) with (town) Public Schools and I've been there going on my 9th contract. I'm with buildings and grounds and transportation. We have done extensive work with the energy people, in fact, we're working with them right now replacing all the windows in our one building and then putting on storm windows on two of the other buildings. We've had some good work done and we've had some very poor work done.

(M) It sounds like most of you are familiar with these types of programs then. We've got a pretty good cross-section that most of you have been involved with the grant programs at least in the past. I'd like to ask you now, have you ever read, seen or heard anything about the Nebraska Energy Efficiency School Loan Program and what can you tell me about the loan program?

I've heard about it but we've done about everything we can do so we're just not interested.

We've seen the pamphlets and the mailings but we haven't really pursued it because to us the loan program is not nearly as attractive as the grant program.

That's exactly what happened in (town) too. We looked at it real seriously for one project that we were doing and I worked with the state office in trying to determine whether or not it would be something valuable for us and it ended up that we went through the technical analysis portion and received a grant for that but we decided not to follow through with the loan. The board isn't that interested in a loan type thing as they are the grant.

(M) What is it about the loan program in particular that you see?

I think from my standpoint anyway, it seems like for one thing, school board members do not want to tie in other school boards down the road to something that they have to pay on that was decided by a former board and that seems to be kind of the tricks to the whole problem for us.

These programs with this loan stuff, that's what we're working on right now and let's face it, we're talking probably \$100,000 on windows and normally that's savings, so if you're going to pay it back in 15-20 years, we're saving and we can prove that that we're saving so it's actually the savings that you're going to make the payments with so yes, we're working with it right now.

(M) So you're using the loan program?

Yes, we are.

(M) I was just going to ask if any of you are aware of any other schools that are ... so you're using it, (name). Have any of the others of you talked with people that have used the loan program?

The feedback that I have on it, that it's difficult to assume the loans and I don't you know we're just kind of entering into that area but there are some fears there that if we go through all this research and prepare ourselves and then we'll be denied the loan in that area anyway. And that's something we're working on right now.

(M) So wondering about whether the funds are really going to be available if you do go through it all.

And there's an investment in architects and different things like that.

(M) Where have you learned about the loan program? What sources have you used to find out about it? Other schools? You mentioned brochures, what led you to believe maybe that there might not be monies available, I guess, is what I'm asking.

With us particularly, it was follow-up on the initial energy grant that we had done. I did some research with him and he basically laid the plan out for us and gave us a little input.

I attended a workshop put on by the state energy office that explained the loan program and I think they have a series of those for people who are interested in knowing more about it.

(M) Those of you that are on school boards, how have you become aware of the loan program or how have you received your information about the loan program?

We work with a firm called Manitola and they come down regularly, whenever we have a project and they explain exactly what they're going to do, the cost, and they do all of the survey and the payback and we have to kind of see if its worth the savings. That's who we have worked with so far. We had a couple of them down originally to go through their programs and we chose Manitola.

(M) Manitola, is that private consulting group?

Uh huh. And that's all they do is go through and find your problems.

(M) Any others of you on the school board that have gotten any input on the loan program.

We've been very active with the grants and I guess personally, I don't what the other board members know about it, but I guess I haven't really been that interested so, we've done a lot of things, I guess I agreed with whoever said that we hate to get in debt and I'm getting off the board in December so and leave a new board with responsibilities. I don't know what (name), we would really be looking at now.

Right now, nothing of a major nature. We just got done putting up a school addition, that about took care of us for awhile financially so...

(M) So you feel like you've done a lot of things and met a lot of your needs already and also that I hear the theme of committing another board to a loan is a concern. What are the terms, length of time on some of these loans? Can you tell me that or does it vary?

It varies according to what you're doing. Like on some of those windows, some were 5 year paybacks, some were 7.

I think though we're working probably with a 15 year loan right now.

It depends, every project has a different payback period.

(M) I was just checking if you knew that it varied so whether you... o.k.

Oh yes.

How big a project is that, (name), that you're talking about, a 15-year payback. How dollar wise?

\$100,000. Right at \$100,000, I'm not for sure, its \$89,000 or \$100,000, I'm not for sure right now.

What was the rate of interest that they set on it or does that vary too?

There is no interest...

No interest at all.

(M) What these are revolving fund loans which are not noninterest loans and (name), maybe you can tell a little bit about your situation. One of the things I'm hearing here is, would you be interested in talking to other people that have applied for the loan program? Would that be something that might be helpful or have you done that already?

One thing about, you know, when we get mailings out that talk about loan programs, we really probably don't look at that nearly as close as we do the grant programs. I think maybe that is, you know, maybe just change the name of it, you know, somehow to get you interested in it. When it comes out as a loan program, we are kind of instantly turned off about it.

Matching funds.....

Use our money free for 15 years.

Yeah.

There is no grant program right now though, is there?

(M) No, the grant program is over with.

That's what I thought.

(M) The initial programs were federally funded grant programs and those have been discontinued. Now there's the revolving fund loan programs. I have an aided statement here that kind of describes it so that we're all talking about the same thing. You may or may not be aware that you can get grants or loans from the Nebraska Energy Office to pay for a school building energy analysis audit or to finance the purchasing of more energy efficient heating and cooling equipment for your school. Now when it comes to the Nebraska School Energy Efficiency Loan Program, that's money that is funded out of severance taxes for gas and oil and that is money that is revolving fund money that is noninterest, there's no interest to the school on it, once the loan is paid off, then another school can apply for those funds and use the money again. So that is the concept. How many of you are aware of, now that I've read a little bit about the loan program, how many of you were aware that its a noninterest loan? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, about half of you then were aware that it was noninterest bearing. The term "loan" I heard is something of a flag word because it has the

connotation of commitment and paying interest and that type of thing, is that correct?

If you're borrowing money, you feel that you have to pay interest on it.

Excuse, I always thought at a board meeting when they bring up the terminology "loan," everybody is sitting up like this all of a sudden. We kind of had the same fears you know. Bring that up, and they bring it into the newspaper and everything, everybody is right away going, oh, what are our taxes going to be?

We approached it a little differently in that like with these windows, the heat that went out those windows, now how much is that heat costing us versus you know this, and then when you look at it that way, it's paying for itself in not losing all that heat and the faculty was definitely behind us on that, weren't they, (name)?

You bet.

They, you know, they've been sitting there freezing with those kids and everybody's running their temperature way up because of it and so that's the way we looked at it, we didn't look at as . .

See, the problem we have, is we're unsure where our facilities are going and where our future is going. I think they need to look at that a lot before they get into this other thing. But that's where the fears are. They don't want to renovate an older school that won't basically do what they need it to do in the future.

'Course if they look at the building cost nowadays, I think they'll start renovating.

I want to make a statement here and I don't know her name now, it was Jan Knight, but I believe she's now married from the energy office, but I'll tell you, if anybody's interested in a loan or a grant or whatever, you call that office and she'll talk to you and I'll guarantee she'll explain it and that's how I started all this in the first place.

I'll second that, she was great.

I think one of the things we have to do in terms of the loan is sell it from the standpoint of ultimately it will be a savings. If you're going to sell it. The reason for that is when we went through the grant application, that doesn't require the district to budget any money for that, it doesn't include raising taxes or anything else. The money is the grant's approved, the money is there, you complete the project, you pay it off, it doesn't increase your general fund expenditures or your income. Under the loan, you've got to pay that loan back. It should not, as we said, it should not increase your budget either, if it is a true

savings, if the energy that the work that you do saves you in terms of fuel bills, or light bills or whatever, it ought to be a trade-off for the years, you know, if it's a 10-year payback on that energy grant, at the end of 10 years, then it should become a money savings to you, but what happens is, in the meantime the price of gas and electricity and everything else has gone up and you really never see that budget come down like you'd like to see it come down but yet it is a savings and I think that if you're going to sell it to people, the school board or the community or whatever, they have to understand that it is a true money savings. And it really is because . . .

(M) It sounds like those of you that have been involved in the programs have been very pleased with them, that there haven't I mean some of you that are considering this are weighing the pros and cons, but those that have been involved with it have seen the benefits and have seen it lead to savings.

I think one of the things that I do not know about the loan program, either because I haven't read the pamphlets, brochures, or whatever, we had a number of projects that we'd applied for under the old grant program that were not approved simply because of the payback period on them. In my own mind, I'm wondering if some of those would now be eligible under the loan program.

They are. They are because our we call it the lower elementary did not pass the first time on the grant and now the loan, it did.

(M) Let me ask this, you're leading right up to my next question, it's almost like you've anticipated my script here. How long has it been since you've conducted an energy analysis audit of your energy usage in your current school buildings?

A year ago.

It's been 3 years.

It's been 3 years for us too.

I think with us it's probably, we've had one at our building, it's new, was built in '81, and as far as the high school goes, I don't think just a total analysis and audit has been done.

We haven't done a formal one but I think it's kind of difficult to actually document what savings are there are some of these things. Because on boilers, for instance, it's difficult to gauge your usage because of weather and other factors you know, and that's something that I'd be interested in is having a place to go to to help you decide, you know, exactly what you want to do. There's a lot of different people that would give you a lot of different answers. We got burned on a few things I feel. They sure looked good on paper but it was they, the figures, weren't true.

(M) Didn't always work out? (name), did you...

Three years since we. . .

(M) (Name), I know that maybe you're not involved in this

I'm not that involved.

(M) But we want that kind of input too because it's people like you we're also wanting to hear and reach so...

I know that those things go on but it's just not in my area of the need. I give my feedback when asked my opinion of do you want a loan or something like that, but I have to have the details.

(M) What I'm hearing is a few of you have had them done in the last year but most of you it's been 3 years or more or you're not sure when you had the last one done. Is that, (name), do you know how long it's been?

I'm with (name) so

(M) He said 3 years, that's right. O.K. I'm sorry. Do you feel you've already done everything you can to decrease energy usage in your schools?

No, I don't think so.

That's not possible.

There's no end to it.

Lock doors.

(M) Keep the kids from running in and out.

That's the problem you have in schools, kids going in and out.

(M) Given that, then, why do you feel you haven't, I'm going to be the Devil's Advocate here a little bit, why do you feel you haven't done an energy analysis audit more frequently?

I'd say for one, we've had some real mild winters here lately and our fuel costs have been down, it really has not been something that blew up in your face.

That's true, way down.

And getting back, just answering one other question is, maybe we're kind of coming off a backlash here, because the grant program at first, it was so good, then we moved to a loan program, maybe the loan program should have been first and then got to the good stuff later on.

Serve the best wine last.

I'd like to go back about people who don't know about this type of thing. I'm being a principal, a lot of energy information goes straight to the superintendent's office, that's where it goes. And where it should be. That's where the business is conducted and so forth. A lot of that doesn't get out to the principals. You got to think of something with this new retirement bill and everything, a lot of superintendents will be going out and principals will be moving in to these positions. Wouldn't hurt, you know, to get that information out to the principals on the mailing list, is what I'm saying. For example, we have a situation in my building where we have a commons area on the south side and this is where we have lunch and the high school comes over and when it's cold weather, that high school comes in, those doors open up and so forth, and really a lot of cold air rushes out of there. That would be I know we haven't talked about grants or anything at our board meeting, but if I knew of this noninterest loan thing, I'd start looking at maybe some kind of a foyer or some sort of a situation there where maybe we could look at paid back, you know.

I was going to ask you (name), did you say something about a grant to study?

It's a technical analysis grant and they will fund those up to \$2,500.

Is that state or federal?

That's from the state and that's what we did the last time. We had a roof fail and that roof that failed was put on originally with federal grant monies through the energy office and so I called them when that roof failed and I said, what can we do about insulation replacement if we have to replace the insulation under there again, can I get another grant? Jan and I worked on that at that point too, and that was one thing that just wouldn't pay off either, and as it turned out, we had to replace very little of that insulation, it was very minimal. The last TA we did was on some additional work in our boiler room at the senior high where it needed to be louvered and vented better and pipes in the steam tunnels. We had not gotten those with our first grant so they paid, we had Olson Associates do that and they did a very good job for us. We've used Manirola before too and we've not had any difficulty with either one of them.

(M) How do the rest of you feel about (name)'s idea of sending the information to principals as well as superintendents. Do you think that's appropriate?

I feel the superintendent's should have contacted his principals at one of his meetings and discussed it with them. What do you think ought to be done in your building? What are your concerns? It wouldn't hurt to have them know.

As superintendents come and go though, you don't know whether that's his philosophy or not. As a board member, I wouldn't know whether that's getting done, I don't know whether they're delivering me all the information or just what they want to deliver to me, as far as that goes.

I think the principal should be made aware, now how it's done is you know, up to the school, but yes, if they're aware, then they can watch for these things cause sometimes you live with things and don't even notice them, and if it's not important, you're not going to mention it, right, because you're too busy mentioning which other problems that you have at the meetings but if they're aware.

The particular situation that I'm in, it seems that the superintendents and principals are basically involved in education. The facilities issues, they rarely touch on. I put all that together for them, otherwise, I don't think they'd do anything with it. They're worried about educating kids and keeping on top of things.

(M) That's what I was thinking, there are a lot of pieces of information that come across the superintendent's desk, I guess the issue, (name), you said you'd attended the workshop and its where you had learned about this and you're anticipating my script again because my next I'm going to ask for hands up on this again, were you aware that up to \$2,500, as (name) says, per building, is available from the state energy office to pay for an energy audit? How many of you were aware of that? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Most of you have been ones that are working within the last year or so, some of you that have been not working with a grant in the last 3 years, then you're not aware. Given that, that there is up to \$2,500 available to pay for an energy audit, would you be willing to reexamine your current energy usage?

Yes.

Who conducts the audit?

Engineer.

(M) (name) can probably go through it, you can hire an engineering or architectural firm, an outside consulting firm, the department of energy has lists of people you can use or you can use local, you can tell them what you did in your situations.

Depending on what type of project that you're looking for, if you feel you need outside expertise, you can hire some of those firms to do that. Some of the projects you can get help from the state energy office. They'll come out and tell you how to figure it and what to do if it's a minor project. Jan is very knowledgeable in that, she has worked through a couple of the smaller ones for me without even hiring anybody. The situation with the outside

energy audits, if you've got a person like you on your staff, with some help from the state people, you could probably do it yourself. I don't know if you're going to get any of this script or not but I have a bit of concern about the relationship and the interaction with the outside agencies, like the architects and the engineers and that type of thing and I don't know if I would like to say that it might be easier if we didn't have to have that step or not.

(M) You're nodding your head, (name).

Well, you know I wonder if maybe a lot of us, especially we're all talking, most of these are smaller schools, Class B, C, you know, your A schools probably all have engineers but your smaller schools, they can't afford engineers, let's face it. In order to get an energy grant, you almost have to go through an engineering firm because you need a Philadelphia lawyer to fill the doggone thing out. That to me, I think, is a big problem. We've had 2 firms work with us now and I'll just tell you a little story, we had about 280 feet of pipe underground, about 6 foot deep, steam pipe, that they came in and they looked at the top of the ground and said, you need to reinsulate it and we got the grant, had it reinsulated and it is not as good a job as it was in the first place. It was actually perfect before it was insulated. They tore it all apart, it was encased in a concrete cuivert, air tight, now they had to break it all up in order to get it out, they had to reinsulate it, now the engineering firm, they came and they looked at the top of the ground, how anybody can look at the top of the ground and tell me what's underneath it, I don't know, but that's what they did and we reinsulated.

Grass was greener, grows faster. No, I'm serious.

I think a lot of us I know if I did it for the school system myself I know that I'd have been digging and I'd have found out what's down there before I said we're going to do this.

(M) Well, and I think you made an important comment that larger schools may have engineers on staff that can do this, the smaller schools, it's a different situation,

But even at that, don't these types of things normally require you, the grant programs required you have a professional consulting firm. This happens so much in these town projects, I remember up at (town) where I was, they wanted to build some tennis courts, they wanted to get some funding for that but what stopped them was that they from going through grant type things, you know, they had to pay a consultant fee and it had to be professional consulting company, I mean a 4 or 5 grand fee just to come out and take a look at the ground and the city engineer could go over and look at the same thing as part of his daily work and tell you you could put something there or not. And I think that part of it is, that's another thing I was curious about the loan program, does

the loan program require you also to have professional consultant fees and to what extent or you know, if all your windows are broken out and you need windows in there, you don't need to pay a professional to tell you that.

(M) You do need to have a projection of the payback period, so in order to come up with that payback projection and qualify for the loan, you do have to go through this analysis step.

Do the large like the large districts, the A districts, do their own engineers qualify on that in that respect?

(M) Generally, they'll have an outside firm doing it. I guess one of the things I was wondering about and I think you've answered it, do you feel that the audits, those of that who have had them, have they been helpful?

Oh yes, they'd have to be.

Yeah, they've been helpful.

(M) Technical assistance from the consulting firms, like from Olson and those, o.k.

In a general way, I would think, you know, in a general, overall not pinpointing certain items, but in a general.

(M) Now some of these paybacks can be conducted too by the Nebraska Energy Office staff, I mean, if it's a situation where they have the resources to come out and do the analysis, they can compute the paybacks too, I didn't want to say it had to be because they have staff available that will do that too, but on larger situations it's typically involved an engineering firm too in addition to the larger school systems staff.

Would it be out of line to recommend that the state energy office employ their own engineer to be used by the schools that need it so that we've not got the private conflict?

(M) What do you think of that idea?

It would be a cost savings.

That's basically what we've always had great fears in is these people come out and consult and they aren't unbiased you know, they have their interests.

They're getting a commission on it.

They need to make their car payment, they need, you know, they want their group to grow, you know, and its just ridiculous, some of them, the figures they come up with.

There were a lot, especially during the grant program, I think, there were a lot of firms out doing energy audits that realistically you knew darn well the savings was not what they were saying it was but because they were willing to sign it, you just figured, o.k., he's telling us that.

They're going to get me my money, yeah.

Yeah, you know, that's what he's telling you.

Free money.

And you knew it was not possible.

(Name), what was the deal and you know it better than I, on the venting at the high school, how they closed those, they recommended we close the venting to save heat and then it messed up our heating system? I mean, this is the way I interpreted it.

It closes it in the evening.

Well, now, but didn't they close it to save the heat from going out and then we had to go up and redo that? to make it comfortable? So the heat didn't get out but the kids nearly died in the room because there was no circulation.

(M) So again, that was a situation where you had a consultant make a recommendation that didn't always work.

The one I was going to tell you is that we had a consultant fill out our last forms for our energy grant, and when they wrote it up for the energy office, they put that if we changed the windows in our east building, it would save us 80%. Now there ain't none of us going to believe that in here, and in fact, the energy office, they fired back a letter at us and also at the engineering firm saying, hey, wait a minute, we're not going to believe that.

(M) I've heard that suggestion, I'm going to follow it up a little bit, that (Name) had, I want to get the rest of your reaction...how would you react if the energy office were to expand in this area providing technical assistance to do the audits, in other words, if they had engineering staff rather than the private sector, do you think that's appropriate?

I'm going to digress a little bit farther, something else were talking about and then I'll come back to that. We talked about sending information out to principals, and getting the information out. When you talk in terms of like your C and D schools, we do not have staff or people there to do these things and this as you well or may or may not know, is the year of asbestos and aids and everything else, and that takes time as well, all of that comes through my office and I'm there with my secretary and that's it.

We've been involved in the asbestos issue this year, how many consulting firms sprung up that are going to do asbestos inspections for you and you sort through those and you have to try and find one that you feel is going to do a good job and that has the expertise in that area, that all takes time. The same thing applies to energy grants, as these firms, if they know that you're interested in an energy loan or grant, your mail in one morning could be that high with pamphlets and brochures and everybody that wants to do your energy audit for you. How do I know as an educator who has been trained to work with curriculum and staff, which one of these people are going to be able to do us the job, and I realize you know, with asbestos, you can call the state people and I assume the same might be true with the Nebraska Energy Office as well, they say, well, they're not in the position to recommend, and I can understand that, who does good work and who doesn't, we still have to sort through it, we've got to call our neighbors down the road if they've had a firm, or something. That all takes time. Hence, I think whether it was a grant or a loan, I felt like when the grant program first came out, we just didn't jump into it right away, it was kind of sit back and see what happens, it was on the back shelf for awhile and I think the same thing we take the same approach with the loan, although I wasn't aware that I could reapply maybe for some of those other projects that we didn't do the first time. But I do think how much time is involved in selecting those people and they all come in, and if your interested, even if you say, well I'll only talk to three of you, they want to come in, they want to visit with you, they want to make a presentation to the board and then you have to select, and even if and then prior to that I've got to think, now what are the criteria for selecting this individual or this firm? How are we going to go about that?

(M) So it would be helpful to you if the state could, there's always this philosophical thing about the private sector and the state doing this function, but you're saying that you would see it helpful if you could get more guidance from the state on the analysis part of it.

What would be the pitfalls of having the state have the ability to do the analysis?

(M) Well, they have the staff now to do some of these analyses, but a lot of it, just depends on each situation.

I don't think, I didn't want my remarks to be misconstrued about not getting information because I get a lot of information from the superintendent's office. My thinking in that situation where I was talking about, and he said the administrators in his district down here, the gentleman, I can't see your name, (Name) said the administrators in your district were involved in

education but when you get in a district like (town) and (town), you're involved in education, bus supervision, energy management, psychology with, you know, it just goes right down the line.

Well, what I was saying basically, at least the philosophy in our district is that the principals are responsible for their buildings, say building the educational plan, the energy consumption, everything that goes into it, and if you look at it from that point of view, then those types of things are good to have since that's the role I have to assume. It's not like, for example, the chapter 1 has to go through our superintendent's office and he always mails that over, but he is the designated person that has to do all the signing and he gets it so he sends it and I send it back. I understand that are so many, many things to do and we can't keep get everything out from the superintendent's office, that's just not possible.

(M) Suppose we take about a 5 minute break, and then we're going to try to wrap up right at 11:00, maybe 5, 10 minutes after, but we'll be close to 11, I'm sure. The next part of our discussion, we're going to get at a little bit on it, what is the decision-making process in your school and how have you used this type of information to make decisions? I'm going to take about a 5, 10 minute break and then we'll start out again. I'm sensitive to you need to stretch a little bit so I'm watching my clock.

(M) I'm also going to talk with the people in the energy office to see if there's anything they want me to really follow up on from what we've discussed so far, so I'm very, this is the process exactly that I was expecting and that we like and you're giving us the exact kind of information we need to improve on some of these programs, so thank you.

(M) We have about 35-40 minutes before it will be 11:00 and there are a couple of things I want to follow up on. One is, in terms of the information you can get from an energy analysis audit, one of the things is that 1, 2, or 3 years after actual improvements have been made, schools can receive a score card identifying their dollar and energy savings resulting from their building improvements. Were you aware of this ongoing energy scorecard information?

We have to fill out forms every year, if I'm not mistaken, for instance, if you've changed boilers or so forth, but I didn't know anything about score cards but I did know that we have to check with them and they send us forms and we have to fill them out. I didn't know they called them score cards.

Our first year, we had score cards, without me asking for it and then the last two years we haven't received anything.

(M) Have any of the others of you experienced the score card kind of system?

Who puts that together? Who develops that?

(M) Well, actually, what you do, you submit the energy consumption information to the energy office and then they calculate this score card by reviewing the information that you've submitted.

I'm not as far as score card, we did that and we get the papers, like (Name) said, and they send us back a little sheet saying you saved (town) School saved so much energy, now if that's what they mean, yes.

(M) That's it. You submit your consumption information and they send back how much your savings has been based upon the improvements you've made.

And that has been a consistent thing since the grant program.

(M) Do you find that submitting the information is a help or a hindrance?

I don't like it.

I don't mind it but my secretary hates it.

Lot of details. Every time I get one of those I say, here we have another one, Oh my Gosh!

The score card is only as good as the information that's provided to develop the score card and its hard for to develop that information, to come about it and feel good about it. Sometimes you stretch that a little bit here or there because it doesn't compute, it doesn't look right.

We have a situation where these grants were set up by building so we had senior high ones and we had junior high ones. The boiler in the junior high heats part of the senior high. So when they want energy consumption, you have to figure out, o.k., now what percentage of the heat in the junior high was supposed to go to the senior high and when I started at (town), most of these grants were in the process so I wasn't involved in how it started, so when I started filling in figures, I had the concerns that you have here, am I using what they did when they started this thing, so I know that we've got the same base so that the savings that I get back are going to be valuable. That's I'm not certain there.

(M) So there's a little bit of uncertainty about how to fill it out at times.

And that was just because of the fact that I came in in the middle of it. If I had started with it in the beginning, it probably wouldn't have been so difficult.

(M) How is the information used once you get it back? The score card information. Who sees it?

The board. Sometimes it goes into the newspaper.

If it's positive.

I think we tell 'em regardless.

That's exactly right. Politics enter into it.

I know, but that's still the way it is.

That's right. You had an audit made in good faith, you committed the money in good faith, you were trying to help the district and I think you're exactly, it either did or didn't. Which brings me to this question, is there any sort of penalty clause on the people that do your auditing who give you all wrong information so you can go ahead with that project,

The projects are normally completed by this time.

(M) This would be after the projects are completed, just to give you ongoing feedback of...

We have an awful hard time down there because I sat up at the high school with 10,000 gallons of standby fuel and down at the elementary with 11,000 gallons and they're telling me, lets get this burned up, nobody told me, it was my idea in the first place, this fuel's been in the ground 17 years, it's time we burn it up and get some new down there. There's no place to put it if you have to get it sucked out and hauled away unless we get the dump here in Nebraska. That'd still be very costly. So I sat there this year and burned all the fuel up and so now when we're supposed to send in records, it's going to be awful tough.

We did that a year ago.

So did we.

It's awful tough, but anyway you just, I know how many gallons of fuel I had, though, so I used that.

(M) So you could fill it out that way rather

Don't you feel there is some problem in that boiler system by them not being able to calibrate your actual oil usage in the boiler system itself?

Well, yes,

They have a regulator and meter on your water system don't they. Why couldn't they go to those means on a fuel I mean, you know what I'm trying to say?

Yeah.

(M) Let me ask, what suggestions, if any, would you have for the Nebraska Energy Office as far as helping you with ongoing management after you have had these improvements made, you've received the grant or the loan and the improvements have been made, what kinds of suggestions would you have for ongoing assistance?

I guess I'd say that, I'm happy with the little sheet you fill out with your consumption and you get a little feedback. I don't want anymore after that because I, this after-the-fact paper work is just a huge pain and I think its fine that you get some idea of if things are still working for you but this ongoing paper work is just, it kills us, and our department, we're a little bit bigger than some of the other schools, but we're finding that, you know, 17 years ago when I started, we didn't have an office or anything. Now we have an office, and copy machines, and this asbestos thing is just rolling us toward computers and the whole ball of wax because we just are not geared to handle a lot of paperwork and we're ending up gearing more that way all the time but I don't want a whole lot after that.

(M) Would you be interested in attending or sending people to an energy management training session?

Yes.

Sure.

(M) In other words, rather than the paperwork process, perhaps having training sessions or seminars, not as a condition to getting a grant or loan but after you've had your improvements made.

I feel it should be geared to head custodians or the supervisor of custodians.

Like awareness type thing.

(M) So the rest of you think for the maintenance engineers, custodians, that would be a good thing to do.

I think it definitely would be.

(M) (Name)?

I guess my feeling is that I as a taxpayer, if (town) is going to take 100 grand of the taxpayers money, interest free, and use it in a project, I think they ought to and I know you do this work, in any district, I think there's got to be a certain amount of obligation, even though it's a hassle that you have to the taxpayers that paid that in, that you've got to put up with some hassle and justify that thing. And like (name) said, you got to show it positive or negative, you got to put it out there.

(M) Now these monies are not taxpayer monies, they are monies that are generated from severance taxes on gas and oil so its a tax that comes from our gas and oil drillings in the state, its not general fund monies, but either way, there's an obligation to an accountability.

Well, the money you pay back is taxpayer money. The loan is not tax but when you start paying it back, then that's taxpayers money.

(M) Then it's coming from ...

It may be interest free but it's still going to come out of the budget someplace.

Well, if it pays back though

I feel the same way

Well, that's great if it does, but just like you said, that's pretty iffy. I would imagine I could walk through that building and come up with about the same analysis as what they're going to come up with.

(M) Where the money comes from is a technical issue, the community perception is, there's an obligation here, yeah. And I think you're right Steve, you have to be sensitive to that.

I think a good thing would be if the government would send people out and kind of give the superintendents and principals information on what they can do and do this annually. The system I came into, they didn't know what a night setback was. That's just your basics that you set back in the evening, I mean that's just basic, and all these years they poured that money away, and they had no idea, they weren't educated in that area. They knew a lot about everything else but they didn't do anything in this area so they needed to be educated too.

(M) I saw a lot of people saying, yeah, I'd be interested in ongoing energy management training sessions. How would you construct it? (Name), you said it ought to be targeted to engineers and custodial people, if it's constructed for others, what would you see as being a part of this? What would be helpful?

What do you mean, others?

(M) Well, the goal would be to have ongoing training sessions to have people be aware of what's available and to help them after they've received their funds, to manage their energy efficiency more effectively. It might be for maintenance people, it might be for principals, it might be for school board members, I guess we don't know, we're just asking you how you would construct that type of ongoing program.

Well I think you have a cross-section of head custodians that some of them are new and some of them have been around for 17 years, but I think you have to gear it to both of these experience levels, the old and the new. I really don't know what it all should be included really.

I think you might look at, there's two different parts of it, one is if you're talking about help and getting information out about the grants and how to work with the grants, and then the other part is the follow-up after the work has been done. It may involve two different segments of your population. Prior to the.. you might be working more with the head maintenance man or the administration in grant applications and what's available, then a follow-up is going to be either if you have a head maintenance man or the head custodian in each building or something. And I think that's one thing that we probably lack in Nebraska is training for our maintenance and custodial staff.

(M) A lot of paper work but maybe you'd rather have the training sessions maybe that would be more beneficial.

The thing that's different about school administrators, teachers, they're all trained in exactly that area when they come to work. O.K. the normal maintenance person like (name) or I if we leave tomorrow, the guy who's going to come in, it's more likely he's going to be a plumber, he might be an electrician and he's not going to be trained in that field, so what's going to happen is he's going to have no knowledge of this energy management in a public building like that and so somehow you have to get those people an awareness training of what's going on with the Nebraska Energy Office and another thing that might not be too bad would be the Nebraska State School Boards Association has a meeting or convention in Omaha usually I believe. Maybe some of the school board members, maybe down there, some of the awareness could be done with school board members to kind of plant the seed.

I think school board members do need to be aware because you have to make the final decision, if it's good or bad, you're sitting up there and suddenly this guy just gets up there and tells you blah, blah, blah,

I think the energy office ought to look into these custodial schools that they hold around the state in Kearney and Hastings, Omaha.

Don't you feel that they don't budget too much money into the custodial and maintenance areas for their people to grow in these areas?

That's professional growth for noncertified staff generally does get less attention than professional staff.

I think it's changing though. It is changing because it's had to evolve.

(M) O.K. let's talk about some different ways maybe they could promote or inform or have you aware, one of the things they do are press releases in newspapers about these loan programs and loan procedures. Do any of you recall seeing this source of information? Do you feel that's an effective way through the newspaper to announce?

It depends on if you happen to catch the paper that night you know, if you have a ballgame to go to, your daughter's ball game, and it's 100 miles away, you're in the car on the road right after school. You're not going to read the paper that night.

(M) What would be a good way in your judgement to inform you?

I think, Gary, the very same thing we're doing here, should be done with superintendents and principals and to give them the information there and get them excited about fuel savings and things that they can take and put money back into their budgets instead of clamping down in different areas to make savings, there's other ways to put money back in your budget other than take away from departments and that's a focus they should put on there.

Can't that be done at a meeting where they already have them already there?

(M) Yeah, there's the School Board Association meetings, the school superintendent's association meetings, some of those types of things but I think what (Name) is saying is there might need to be some other vehicles in addition to having, as (Name) said, someone gets up for 5 or 10 minutes at a school board association state meeting, you're getting a lot of pieces of information during those meetings and maybe it needs to be separated.

Jan was at last year's school boards meeting and there weren't very many people attending that session. They're making the effort there. They were down there.

Yeah, they were down there though, so that's good.

But that's a volunteer type thing. How many people are interested when you see the program about energy management?

Was the total program over that or did it deviate away into other things?

No, it was totally energy. She had one complete section.

But they chose between other workshops.

But they can pick

... pick the one you want to go to.

I think one of the big problems we have with this is that now we're not interested in energy savings like we were 5 years ago. With the crisis on, now we just think, well, we're over the hump and nothing is ever going to happen.

And asbestos is the crisis now.

I would bet half of the problem is the asbestos right now because nobody's looking for more paperwork. I can tell you that.

(M) That's a good point (Name), the perceived you need to be motivated to pay attention

That's right, let me get your attention first.

You have a good point when I would expect that to pursue the loan, every time you say, well, this is going to be a good deal, I'm going to pursue it, you just added to your work load. The psychology of that is to say, well if I don't tell anybody about it, I can just take it on through here you know. I would imagine that would certainly be the case, or could be.

I've done that.

We all have, every day.

The priorities you set, I don't have time to do that this time.

That's why I'm so...this paperwork, you know, I think its great that we get some kind of an idea what's happening over the years, but to come out with booklets that a quarter inch thick, they just go this way across the desk and that's about it.

It's hard for boards to justify people to do paperwork, isn't it? The public does not...they need three secretaries? I can't understand it, and if you want to get crucified, just get too many secretaries in an office.

I don't know what your clients are hearing, but I'm hearing that maybe the number 1 priority is to cut down on the paperwork.

There has to be a vehicle to inform them that they've invested their money wisely so that has to be done in paperwork. I think it could be made it a smaller piece of paper but...

Make it a little smaller.

The guy that's best at filling it out is the one that gets the bucks, that's the system, that's and they have to filter through the system.

(M) Let's look at the decision-making process in your school situations and on grants, many of you that have gone through and applied or you're in the process of working on grants now, what is the decision making process for programs such as this? (Name), you're involved in a program. Where did you become aware of it or what the first place you became aware of these loans and grants?

I guess it was really truthfully it started back probably 8 years ago with the man that owns Sack Lumber in (town) right now. He said to me, why don't you get those windows replaced in that east building and you can get a loan for that through the energy office in Lincoln. I took it up from there, I went to the superintendent and talked with him about it and I also talked with the board about it or buildings and grounds went about it and kept pursuing it and finally it's a reality.

(M) So it was kind of someone who knew about it, word of mouth, right?

Well, in our district we, the administration, would talk it over and then take it to the board first on the audit part and say these are some things we feel might be helpful if we had it audited and then the board would give permission for the audit and that would be it. The money for the audit whether it was grant money or came out of the district pocket then we would do it and of course the findings would be presented to the board and they would make the final decision on it. That's basically the process.

The guy that's sitting right down at the end of the table, I think it's his responsibility. I think the board can't be knowledgeable in all these things, we've all got other jobs hopefully, and I think our main job is hiring the best administration we can and especially the head administration, the superintendent and I think it's his responsibility to make sure that the custodial staff, the engineering staff gets to these workshops and he is the number 1 factor. In our school, we listen to that man, he's the expert and we've been blessed for 12 years to have him.

Two more months.

That's his job, that's what we're paying him for.

You know, Gary, I think a big thing that leads into fears with the people that I deal with is like (Name) had said that (Name) handles it, when we tried to put together the energy thing when I got there, everybody was scared to death of it, because of the paperwork and the different things and so I got involved into it, so then we had to get a consultant to put the thing together and like it would go to (Name) Russ, for instance, and (Name) would look at it and if he felt comfortable with these people or the people who were given the consultation or generally the low bid, and so the consultant comes to me and asks me what I want to do. So I had a program all put together, I give it to this guy, they pay this guy \$10,000 to take my work and hand it back to the superintendent and I'd already given it to him but these are professional consultants, you know, and it burnt me and I just thought, boy, there's something wrong here. Then the whole thing went through the process and it was a sad thing.

(M) Well, one of the things that I was checking during the break, under the grant program, you had to have an outside registered engineer report but under the loan program now, there's more flexibility, that you can do more of your own technical analysis and the department of energy has a registered engineer now too that can help, but there's more flexibility under the loan program of doing the computation and more and more they are working with schools so they can do their own analysis. So that's something just to be aware of that...

Well, the private sector looks at school boards like they got a gold mine and they go down and they dig up another rock and they bring it up and trade it in for money, you know. I think that it's kind of a manipulative thing. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, maybe it's just the way I perceive it but I've never had the private sector work with me and want to really satisfy me nearly as much as I've had them try to take some money away from us, in any way they can. I mean it's like you were saying with the pipe thing and they came in and they looked at it and they said, man, you gotta do this, you know. When I first came in to this situation, everybody was bombarding me because we had a lot of problems you know, and it was difficult.

I just wanted, you asked about the process and how we go about starting this. During the grant process, we were all made aware of it, I think, through the department of education. Where the real pressure for me to do something about it came, it came two-fold, it's almost, well, the department said, it's available if you wish to apply, it's available. The pressure came from two places, one about '84, '85, I forget, maybe the last really tough winter we had when our gas bills were up and we had a part of building we

just could not warm up, it was so cold in there the kids didn't want to stay in the classroom and everything else. We started looking at it but the real pressure came from the mailings from the companies that were soliciting business. Have you considered and energy audit? Have you considered an energy grant? They are available from the state department, and the companies started calling in my office. And here's a list, we've done 20 schools, we'd like to do yours. That's where the pressure came from. I'm not experiencing that kind of pressure yet in terms of this loan project from the companies that were coming through. I think the ones that really made me aware of it to be honest, well, I was aware of it, but the ones that were wanting, they wanted the business and their pitch was simply this, its not going to cost you anything. We'll save you money and its not costing you anything. They were selling the product, they made the pitch and so at that point, we started taking a look at it, and we knew that we had some teachers complaining in some rooms because of the north wind and the big windows and everything else. And so as these salesmen, I call 'em salesmen, engineers started coming in I said come and look at this area, oh, yeah, definitely you've got a problem here.

(M) And what you needed was a justification for the return on the investment and they were selling....

Yeah, so then we took it to the school board, shall we go ahead with an energy test? The board then got involved and that's probably the first point, I think the board is probably aware that the grant even existed was when they started, that was the process, the board ultimately makes the decision then to go ahead with the grant and eventually do the work.

(M) So that was having maybe more impact on your thinking than the press releases or

Why is that not happening with the loan program?

I got a few on the loan program, maybe four or five.

I got a couple maybe but...

Two or three...

Is it because it's not as lucrative to them, this program? Is that what...

It sounds like going by with what Gary was saying, since they're letting more people get involved in their own analysis, it might be.

And the energy office maybe having an engineer, maybe it is cutting in.

Especially the consultancy end.

(M) I can't answer that and I don't want to infer that's the reason why but the loan program is a newer program and there may not be as much awareness among the engineering and consulting groups either.

I think one thing, engineers and architects, they feel they've taken the cream of the crop of the grant program, so much has already been done, it's a very limited market on the loan.

And it doesn't have the attractiveness of the give-away, it's not like you can write in a letter, boy, you can get \$100,000 for nothing.

There's not very much left for (town) to do, we've done quite a bit and I think that's part of the reason that it slowed down at least in our minds.

The big payoffs are done, the 2, 3, 4, 5, year things are taken care of.

(M) In my mind, the improvements have been made and some of those improvements were large capital expenses but there are still the question really becomes you know, if you had an updated energy management analysis audit, and by updated I mean within the last year or two because what I heard was many of you have not done a comprehensive thing for 3 or 4 years because of the energy shortage that was 4 or 5 years ago, but let's say today, if you had an updated energy management analysis audit done for your school facilities which indicated there would be sufficient savings, how likely would you be to go ahead and apply for a no-interest loan under the Nebraska Energy Efficiency School Loan Program?

(silence) (M) Why not?

I would say if the payback was there and I felt like that payback was correct, I'd certainly be willing to do that.

I agree. I sure think asbestos has a lot to do with where we are because right now that's our main thrust.

And that's all the insulation in your building essentially.

Because we're looking at maybe removal of the whole high school.

We're talking about 15 years payback though, like would you board members, course you already really have said that was a good project for you, then I guess there's something to me that about obligating a board for 15 year...

I don't see that being such a criteria.

You don't really feel that's a bad deal.

I think every decision you make is obligating the board for 15 years whether you're going to build a school, keep a school, there's a million things you did that are going to obligate.

(M) That's a good point.

Our board prefers not to extend themselves over a period of time, even on small items like purchasing copiers over time, they just prefer not to do that, and I think that feeling carries over into this loan thing. I took it to them when the loan thing came out. We talked this last one that we just did, it was a small one, the technical analysis grant and the insulation on the roof and they were not impressed by it. Not interested.

(M) Did you have the analysis?

Yeah, I took the analysis to them when we did this last weather work(?)

(M) Do you feel that the analysis that is done, whether its done by a consulting firm or you get it from the Nebraska Energy Office, do you feel comfortable presenting it? Do you feel its in terms that board members can relate to?

Yeah, the last one I did was very self-explanatory.

(M) O.K. because that was we were wondering, is it too technical or is there something that you feel uncomfortable about when you present this to the board?

I feel the technical talk in there helps. Shows that they've really done a check on things, but we ran into this. I involved myself with two different companies, Clark and Enerson on the first one I got a tremendous job and I went with a state engineer on the second one cause I didn't think there was much to do and we got a terrible job on the audit.

(M) So it sort of depends on who you...

I think you've got to be very particular in who you pick. May cost you a few thousand more but, boy, it's worth it in the long run.

(M) But then so given the ideal scenario that you've done an updated analysis, you've made these improvements, and you come to the board, and say we can still, by doing a little bit more we can get a return on our investment and save dollars. What I'm hearing is that some of you experienced with the board, may be hesitant to go ahead even under that ideal scenario.

You said earlier, the usage of the word "loan", that adopts a conservatism right away. Even in your own self, if you're going to the bank to get a loan, you think about the bottom dollar that you can work with.

Our board would prefer just to figure out a way to pay for it ourselves.

That's exactly the way...the direction we've taken,

On the smaller ones, its o.k. for us, we can handle that, but we've got the biggies done.

Quite often doing things yourself eliminates some of the guidelines and restrictions and you can do them a little bit less expensive, too, if you just do it the way you want to do it.

(M) Have any of the others of you experienced that in terms of after you've done a grant or loan that you do some of the things on your own?

We redid one.

(M) Redid one project? By yourself?

Yes. It was in one of our elementary schools and they had worked with the night setbacks and the dampers and the ventilation and the air flow and all of that and in this one area, one section, it just wasn't working right and so we just brought in our own contractor and said, fix it. He did.

We did the same thing. We were so involved in energy savings that we purchased a particular burner on our boilers that was supposed to be this terrific thing and give you total usage of your oil and everything and the thing was so hard to work on, we spent so much money keeping this thing functioning, that one day I went in there and tore it out. I tore them all out. I said, this has got to go, and I can't be up there at 3:00 in the morning and come in at 7:00 and function. It came to a thing and when the guy came around to see me, I felt bad about it but I kind of voiced my opinion that, hey, we got burned. In more ways than one.

I think we've touched on something else here that when you talk about the board would just as soon go ahead and do it as opposed to go through the loan. As an administrator, I would feel the same way, if it's within our budget. The project is small enough or something that we can afford, why go through the whole process and paperwork if you can go out, whether it's put ceiling fans in the gym, some project like that or maybe add some more storm windows to a building someplace or redo the windows, and if it's within money that you have either in some type of a building fund or something like that, you can go ahead and do it. Why mess with the loan? Now, if you're talking about a major project, \$100,000, that you don't have, then you would go through the loan process. But that, to me it would be kind of redundant to go through the paperwork to get the loan just to do an energy grant when you can do it yourself, or an energy loan.

(M) The market, if you will then, for this type of no-interest loan program is probably a market where there's still some major improvements to be made. That's where there might be consideration to do it.

All you're saving is interest on the money. If you have to pay the loan back.

(M) Theoretically, you have two sources of savings. One is it's no interest and also in the long run, the energy saving so there's theoretically two places, the efficiency of it and then the fact you can finance it, really not finance it, you can capitalize it with no finance charge.

You have to have such an ongoing energy management plan to ever make it work. It has to be consistent and it has to fit together. If you've got people, we've had three different consultants come in, tell us this, tell us this, tell us this. We do one project from this guy, one from this guy, one project from this guy, how do we know that we're not cancelling out the very first project that we did and agree that this one was o.k.? If we don't have one person or one firm that can manage all of these systems together, we're not going to succeed, and that's why the follow-up energy management things where we can get our custodians in there so that they can see that this last thing that was just all messed up and we tried to fix, now operates this way and this is why it operates this way and this is why we need to keep it operating this way.

(M) So you have some continuity in the program even if the people change.

Sure, even if the people change, there's got to be some way that every five years we don't redo everything.

You ought to come down to (town), you'd give me a bigger raise.

This is probably a dumb question and anybody can answer this. If you get that \$2,500 grant to audit, are you obligated to take the loan or anything? Can you do that yourself then? Your own district can go ahead if they decide that's what they want to do?

That's what we did on the last one, Steve, we took the \$2,500, we did the thing, we found out it was only going to cost a few thousand dollars and the board said, we're going to do it anyway on our own.

(M) A number of, even under the grant programs, would do the TA grants, the technical assistance grants, and then they'd never go ahead and apply for the other, and that's fine, they got the information, it was helpful, that's the purpose of the program so the \$2,500 TA grants now, do not require you to go ahead and apply for the loan, it's the idea of helping you get information and make decisions.

That's what I think the school systems need is an avenue to get the information because when I started bringing it up to them and they looked at me like, who is this guy, you know, but when I started bringing them the literature, the paperwork that you're fearful of, you know, and I dislike it too, but it was very professionally done and it was laid out and they looked at it and then they started going, let's do something with this.

(M) There probably aren't that many people that are self-starters like you are though, there needs to be a mechanism to teach people

They aren't schooled in this area. Their experience isn't in this area. That's why they hired me, I guess. But then again, they look at me like I'm a blue collar worker in a sense and they go well, let's see, but yeah, I can take this literature that's been prepared and it's all elaborate and it's color and it's got all these things on it, and I'll have mine written out like this here, and present it to them, they don't really look at it too well. I take the same thing, only real elaborate, and I lay it in front of them, and they're going, wow, this is...that's kind of disheartening but I suppose it's part of the system.

(M) But to do that with ongoing seminars and training programs for schools would probably be very appropriate and one of the issues that we have is how do we inform people, promote this, market it, if you will. And we can go to regional association meetings, we can go to state association meetings, we can use direct mail, there's newspaper, press releases, meetings, annual meetings, but what I hear a lot of you saying is that some ongoing training of the people in the schools would be as helpful as the marketing through direct mail or in the newspaper. Is that...?

We have to rely on these people and the better trained they are, the better our information is and the less time it's going to take us because you know, we work like 40-50 hours a week at another job somewhere, and so this is extra, the school board, and that's where the money would be the best spent, is the people that have to handle it 'cause how do I know how much air is going out of this window, I probably haven't been in that classroom for 2 years. But the guy down there, the principal, the maintenance man, are the ones we have to depend on, and that's what we hire them to do.

Is there such a thing as a Nebraska Energy Expo or something like that, a one-day deal where maybe there are some seminars you could listen to, or something like that that would be pointed toward school administrators, school maintenance people?

(M) If there isn't, there may be one out of groups like this, you know, I think that's the type of thing we're looking for, your ideas. It's a good idea.

You can also, if you're able to get your maintenance people together, part of your time is spent just talking about things they can do in their own building to conserve energy. That's energy conservation as well. We talk about a night setback, but it might be adjustments they can make in the thermostat, things they can do in times the fans run in the building, make them and I know we're all aware of it, but we need to be reminded of the things we can do with our lights, weather strip some doors or something. What little things can they do without energy grant stuff that can help within that building and then while you're in

this group as well, you can also talk about energy loans that are available and other sources of information, where do I as a maintenance person go to get information about night setbacks, about controls and stuff like that, to make them aware of what's new on the market. Things they might be able to put something on if you're still under the old steam heat, on the radiators that saves energy, or you might be able to do this, or you might be able to do that with your heating system and things that they might be able to even do themselves.

One thing I see, Gary, in that area is the budget restrictions in maintenance and custodial areas. Like in help and that type of thing. These people are stretched to get their job done and so they aren't putting a lot of effort into recognizing these things. I think that's a real problem with say custodial versus maintenance you know, and I have problems with both facets of it, my maintenance people don't have their eyes open as much as they should, and neither does the custodial staff because primarily, they're worried about getting their rooms cleaned and maintenance people worry about getting that room painted and getting out of there cause it quarter to 5. So I see it as kind of there's some restrictions in that area but there has to be someone in that middle management area that recognizes these things so they can present it to the principals and superintendents.

It's an awareness, it's a training.

Ask a question here. If we all back off of these loans, do you think we'll ever get back to the grants?

(M) Well, that's not my decision to make, it's something that's worth asking and I think you have. That's one of the things we're going to be curious to hear about is what are people's reactions to the loan programs and maybe down the road there would be some changes, I don't know.

Well, and I think again, it's not as attractive as the grant and again, if its a small project, why, why go through the paperwork? That might be the key issue, in terms of the loans. If we don't have \$100,000, then we're going to go through the process. If we've got \$100,000 for our project, we're going to go ahead and do it anyway and just be done with it.

(M) Even if you have the information that you can get a good return on investment, if it's a small project, you'd probably

Well, I'm going to get the return anyway, either way, whether I borrow the money or just pay it, either way.

What about combination grant loans, things like that, you know grants to a certain area and loans on the huge jobs, some kind of combination maybe, I don't know.

(M) In a way, we have that now with the fact that you can get \$2,500 dollars for the technical assistance so that is a grant from that standpoint.

As administrators, do you feel comfortable taking a loan, even a government loan to your board members and setting up in front of them and say versus doing it with our own, do you feel comfortable in doing it? Like (Name), you've done it,

Not on loans.

You haven't?

No I just feel my board just wouldn't be accepting just doesn't like the word loan. They don't want to...

Then there's the guy sitting out there that's going to put it in the paper, such and such school district is thinking for a loan from the government and it's put in the paper and the taxpayer is reading it, and going, damn, they're borrowing more money. They don't know it's a noninterest loan.

If you loan me \$100,000 at no interest and I don't have to do anything, I'll take it because I'm going to invest it.

(M) That's a good point, but see, the connotation of loan, I guess there has to be more no-interest. It's probably in the semantics or the marketing of it, that no-interest aspect has to be emphasized.

(M) It's 10 after 11 and I promised you 11. I have your honorariums here and this is I know, only going to partially cover the time and travel you've done today but we do appreciate it. We'd like to have you just sign this. This is for my company so that they know I didn't keep all this money. Sign it and leave it

Lincoln Focus Group Participants

Mr. Michael Johnson

Ms. Margene Dahlstedt

Mr. Russ Pedersen

Mr. Gary Fritch

Mr. Steve Dean

Ms. Berniece Murray

Mr. Dennis Phillips

Mr. Larry Meyer

Mr. Robert Bauer

Mr. Daryl Adelson

Mr. Steve Walling