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Nebraska Lawmakers Struggling With Budget Priorities

Nebraska's recovery from the recession is making it tougher for lawmakers to set budget priorities than in years when money was tighter.

Lawmakers entered this year's legislative session hoping that a small surplus would allow them to restore funding to programs that have experienced cuts. But the combined proposals have created a logjam in the Legislature, and many bills have been scaled back.

Appropriations Committee Chairman Lavon Heidemann says lawmakers in past years have accepted that they needed to sacrifice to make it through the recession. But he says the slow recovery has created a pent-up demand to replenish state programs and offer tax relief.

Speaker of the Legislature Mike Flood also notes that many lawmakers assumed that the state's February revenue forecast would come out higher than it did.

Associated Press