

Hearings Held in Unicameral on Watermeier Bills

(KTNC) -- First District State Senator Dan Watermeier comments on the status of some of the bills he's introduced this year in his weekly update. Hearings were held on five of the bills he introduced.

One bill, LB-1033, seeks \$2.1 million for deferred maintenance at Arbor Lodge State Park in Nebraska City – including making the facility handicap accessible. The intent is to transfer operation and maintenance from the state to a local partnership. The state appropriation would cover costs of the projects that would make the transfer feasible.

Watermeier says transferring the park to the local group would result in increased usage of the facility, which is the home of J. Sterling Morton, the founder of Arbor Day. Watermeier says several people from Nebraska City traveled to Lincoln for a hearing on the bill, despite a snowstorm last week.

Another of Watermeier's bills, LB-850, had a hearing before the Revenue Committee. The bill would expand the homestead exemption to people with developmental disabilities.

The exemption is currently available to those over age 65, people with certain permanent physical disabilities, and disabled veterans. Watermeier says it should be extended to developmentally disabled homeowners who meet certain requirements. It's not known how many people would be covered by the expanded exemption, though several live in southeast Nebraska.

A bill that won first round approval last week deals with the state aid formula for K-12 schools. Specifically, Watermeier says it pertains to what's called the "Local Effort Rate."

In addition to the five bills he introduced that had hearings last week, Watermeier also introduced two bills on behalf of the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, of which he is the vice-chair.