

Economic development issues worked on daily in Legislature

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BISMARCK — According to Sen. Tom Seymour, D-Minot, legislators work with economic development issues on a daily basis.



Seymour

budget bills.

"Early in the session, I sponsored a bill to allocate \$50,000 to the Dakota Defense Alliance, which could help Info Tech in Minot and Minot's Area Development Corporation," Seymour said. "This request was placed in the Department of Commerce bill and hopes to be revived during the conference committee sessions."

That initiative would help the Dakota Defense Alliance to work on bringing lucrative energy and defense contracts to North Dakota companies. \$20 million for the Centers of Excellence was amended into the commerce department budget bill, as well.

The commerce department bill was assigned to a conference committee on Tuesday.

Among the other economic development bills discussed this session was Senate Bill 2199. Besides containing provisions for about \$295 million in property tax relief, the bill in-

cludes \$100 million for state corporate and individual income taxes.

"By reducing local property taxes this gives more dollars to North Dakota citizens so they are able to spend this cash and create an economic stimulus for the local community," Seymour said.

Another bill to watch as the session comes to a close is House Bill 1202. This bill would provide up to \$50,000 in grants for entrepreneurship awards to business incubators that aren't affiliated with colleges or universities. The bill has passed both the House and Senate but hasn't yet been signed into law.

Senate Bill 2390 also addresses business incubators. In its original form, the bill would have provided incentives for certified technology parks, but it was amended and passed as a possible study on those incentives. Gov. Hoenes signed the bill on April 8.

Not all the economic development bills introduced this session did so well. One that failed the Legislature was House Bill 1066. That bill would have provided tax credits for automation, lean manufacturing and innovation.

Two bills regarding extra-territorial zoning issues are being discussed in conference committees. So is a renaissance zone bill that could allow a bubble of extra blocks that aren't connected to current renaissance zones.

Winding through the budget bills and economic development initiatives this session was the federal stimulus money, as well as the Legislature's efforts to deal with disaster issues. Seymour said the total budget, which is about \$7.8 billion of spending in North Dakota also creates economic development.