

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Business and Labor Committee
May 17, 2007

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Business and Labor met at 12:15 p.m. on Thursday, May 17, 2007, in Room 2102 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing regarding gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: Abbie Cornett, Chairperson; Kent Rogert, Vice Chairperson; Ernie Chambers; Steve Lathrop; Amanda McGill; Norman Wallman; and Tom White. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR CORNETT: Good afternoon and welcome to the confirmation hearing of the Business and Labor Committee. I'd like to introduce the members of the committee. Senator Wallman, on my left; Senator White; committee clerk, Tessa Warner, couldn't remember your name for a second; Lori Thomas; Senator Kent Rogert; and Senator McGill. And our page is somebody new today.

KARIM MAKKAWY: Karim.

SENATOR CORNETT: Karim. What we're going to do is start in alphabetical order and calling people up to introduce yourselves. When you come up, please state your name for the record and spell that also for the record. And then you've got your sheets to sign in. Why don't we go ahead and start the hearing. And let's see, the first person would be Robert Hill.

ROBERT HILL: My name is Robert Hill, H-i-l-l. I'm general manager of C.G. Johnson Boiler Company. I've served on the state boiler advisory board for five years as representing the repair industry. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Did you have anything else you'd like to say? [CONFIRMATION]

ROBERT HILL: Well, again, I've been in the boiler repair business for 40 years now. I started at C.G. Johnson in...actually over 40 years, 1965 as a boilermaker. Now I run the company. So I saw it evolve through the ages, going from no codes at all to the codes we have in force today. And that's why I serve on the board, because I feel that I have some input to add to the... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Thank you, Mr. Hill. Do the committee members have any questions for Mr. Hill? Seeing no questions, thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

ROBERT HILL: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WALLMAN: Thanks for coming. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Thank you very much, yes. And then let's move on to Mr. Hix. [CONFIRMATION]

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THOMAS HIX: Good afternoon. My name is Thomas J. Hix, H-i-x. I live in Omaha. Been 34 years with the Omaha Public Power District. I'm a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in mechanical engineering. I'm a registered professional mechanical engineer in the state of Nebraska. My resume includes 15 years at North Omaha Power Station, where I supervised all maintenance activities. And then, subsequent to that, I was plant manager for about eight years. Since that time I've been promoted to division manager in charge of engineering and modification activities as it applies to all the fossil production facilities at the Omaha Public Power District. I believe I've served on this board for over ten years. Early in my tenure on the board was...fairly contentious activities were transpiring where we advised the Governor's staff on a number of different issues. We had hobby boilers that were being introduced into the state that were of questionable integrity. And we advised the Governor's staff on some regulations for that. I participated in a rewrite of the rules for the state of Nebraska. And we also had some other contentious hearings where industry was bringing in a lot of pressure vessels and boilers that were not necessarily constructed in the United States under the codes that we're familiar with. So we also advised the staff on some criteria that could be applied to those types of equipment as they entered the state of Nebraska. All in keeping with the, I believe, the intent of the board is to advise the Governor's staff on safety-related activities and safety-related criteria as it applies to fired pressure vessels and unfired pressure vessels in the state of Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Thank you, Mr. Hix. Any questions from the committee? Senator Wallman. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WALLMAN: Yes. How do you determine if it is safe or not, a new boiler? [CONFIRMATION]

THOMAS HIX: A new boiler? Typically, you use...first of all, you determine the criteria under which it's been manufactured or fabricated. If that is satisfactory, then you also have the opportunity to apply a series of different types of tests, not the least of which would be a hydrostatic test, where you raise the pressure of the unit to a specified value, either at full working pressure or sometimes 1.5 times working pressure. Typically, that's what is done. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WALLMAN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Senator Rogert, did you have a question? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ROBERT: No, I'm fine. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Hix. Mr. Yates? [CONFIRMATION]

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WILLIAM YATES: My name is William Yates, Y-a-t-e-s. I'm a reappointment to the board. I've been on the board, I believe, this is my third appointment. My background is I started out in construction as a journeyman, became a master steam fitter. The last 15 years, I was the chief mechanical inspector for the city of Omaha. I also hold a commission as a national board certified inspector. After my 40 years, I retired and said I'll play awhile. Thanks. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Any questions from the committee? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WALLMAN: Madam Chair, I got one. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: You go right ahead. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WALLMAN: Do you also inspect steam engines? You know, for like these parades and stuff? [CONFIRMATION]

WILLIAM YATES: No, sir. We do not. Those are part of the hobby boiler situation, and they've been exempted. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WALLMAN: Okay. Thank you. That's all. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

WILLIAM YATES: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CORNETT: Any further testifiers? Okay, that closes the hearing and I thank you, gentlemen, very much for coming today. [CONFIRMATION]

Chairperson

Committee Clerk