

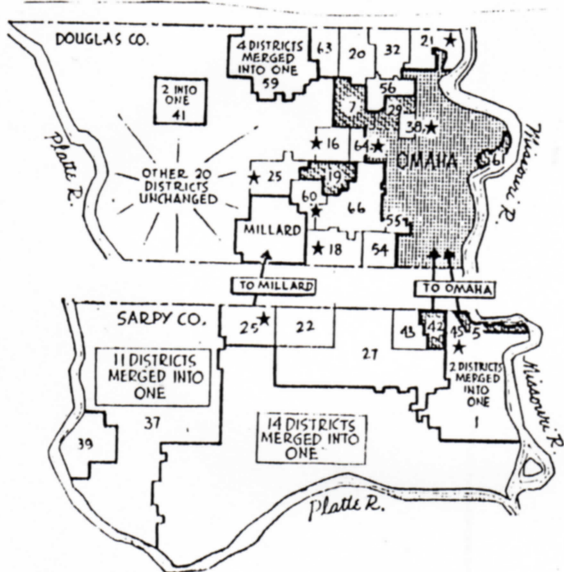
—World-Herald Photo.

Here Comes L Street

The camera, looking east, shows the L Street extension (arrow) as it goes over the hill south of the Western Electric Plant (left) and approaches One Hundred Thirty-second Street (foreground) on the northern

outskirts of Millard. The concrete road ultimately will carry L Street west from Eighty-fourth Street past Millard and the Western Electric Plant, then northwest to join State Highway 38 (Center Street). The construction is

temporarily blocking north-south traffic into and out of Millard on One Hundred Thirty-second Street, residents said. Easiest route into Millard during the construction is Highway 31 or West Q Street.



Reorganization talked . . . In starred districts. Map shows changes of past three years in Douglas County, past 18 months in Sarpy County.

41 Mergers Slice Costs

School Redistricting Is Common Here

By Thomas Moore

The seldom-used path to school district reorganization is becoming a well-traveled highway in Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

In just 18 months the number of Sarpy districts has dwindled from 39 to 10.

In three years, 50 districts in Douglas have been pared to 38.

Come spring, rural school boards in both counties are expected to begin actions aimed at further whittling those totals.

18 Mergers

The greatest single stride in reorganization came last month when 18 districts in the two counties completed mergers.

Seventeen of these were in Sarpy. Two districts elected to join Omaha, residents of another joined with Bellevue and voters in 14 others balloted in favor of banding into a single high school district.

Another Sarpy district is in the process of jumping the county line to join Millard. Faced with an increase in school taxes, residents of several "orphan" districts in Sarpy may hit the merger trail next year.

'Sure Progress'

Commenting on the 12 mergers that have taken place since he took office, Douglas School Supt. Leon O. Smith said:

"We're very definitely making progress, not too fast but surely."

Rising costs of education and a booming pupil population in what once were sparsely populated rural areas are significant factors.

Free high school tuition levies for independents in both counties have climbed appreciably as the number of districts is reduced.

Levies Go Up

In Douglas this year the levy rose from \$6.72 to \$9.77. In Sarpy it climbed to \$9.90, an increase of \$2.90. Next

year it will go even higher in areas with no high school, Mr. Smith predicted.

Lack of merger interest in the western half of the county, Mr. Smith said, is partly because the larger towns have higher levies than surrounding districts.

Valley's school levy is \$65.54, the highest in Douglas. The Waterloo levy is \$35.18.

Favorable Comparison

On the other hand Omaha's school levy of \$26.50 compares favorably with its neighbors. Since January Districts 19, 7, 29 and 61 have favored Omaha over independence and greater educational burdens.

Mr. Smith thinks it possible other districts will follow suit or join Millard where the levy is \$16.26.