

# Community Council Accomplishments (1998-2007)

## Statewide Technology Plan

With input from the Community Council and other advisory groups, the Nebraska Information Technology Commission has published seven editions of the Statewide Technology Plan. Preparation for the first plan began in 1999. The NITC and the Councils identified needs, developed mission statements, and determined goals as part of the planning process. The first plan was published in 2000. In 2004, the NITC included strategic initiatives in the Statewide Technology Plan to emphasize initiatives of strategic importance to the state. Two initiatives closely related to the interests of the Community Council—Telehealth and IT Planning and Development—were included as strategic initiatives. In 2007, the Telehealth Strategic Initiative was broadened to eHealth and a new eHealth Council was created. The 2007 Statewide Technology Plan is available at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/stp/stp.pdf>.

## Community Outreach and Training

**Technologies Across Nebraska (2002-present).** Technologies Across Nebraska is an initiative led by University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension and the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) to create awareness and provide education to help local communities, decision makers and citizens as they make decisions regarding their future use of technology as a tool to sustain the viability of their communities. The initiative provides a network of expertise to assist communities in locating current information on infrastructure, policy, education and training issues and opportunities.

- **Building Information Age Communities Conference (2002).** The NITC Community Council and Technologies Across Nebraska organized the conference held on April 12, 2002 in Aurora.
- **IT Planning and Mini Grants (2002-2005).** Technologies Across Nebraska worked with 21 communities and regional groups from 2002 to 2005 to develop technology plans. The impact of the program was significant. Four communities received grants to implement their plans. A new business has started in a third community. Several communities now have broadband services available. Other communities are focusing on the technology needs of small businesses, offering e-commerce and technology training. One community has developed a video conferencing center available to local businesses and residents. One community is exploring the creation of an online mall. Another focused on making the county Web site more accessible and user-friendly.

- **TANgents (2003-present).** *TANgents*, a quarterly electronic newsletter from Technologies Across Nebraska, focuses on the use of technology to enhance community and economic development. *TANgents* was developed through the cooperation of University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, the Nebraska Information Technology Commission, state agencies, and community partners. A survey of community technology committees revealed that a newsletter was their preferred method of receiving information on technology-related development.
- **Podcasting Across Nebraska (2006-2007).** Podcasting Across Nebraska is a collaborative effort to help Nebraska communities or regional groups develop podcasts which promote tourism, events, recreation, historic sites, and other activities. Through the program, the City of South Sioux City and South Sioux City Public Schools, the Highway 14 Association, the North Platte/Lincoln County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Panhandle Public Health District and Panhandle Podcasting Partners have received hardware and software as well as training on how to create and produce podcasts. Project partners include the NITC Community Council, University of Nebraska, Network Nebraska, Department of Economic Development, Division of Tourism, Network Nebraska, Technologies Across Nebraska, and Nebraska Lied Main Street program. To date approximately 20 podcasts have been produced. More information is available at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/cc/podcasting/podcasting.html> or [technologiesacrossnebraska.unl.edu](http://technologiesacrossnebraska.unl.edu).
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## Telehealth

**Nebraska Statewide Telehealth Network (1998-2002 laying the groundwork, 2002-2006 phase I planning and implementation, 2006-present continuing implementation and management).** The Nebraska Statewide Telehealth Network connects nearly all of Nebraska's hospitals and public health departments. The Nebraska Statewide Telehealth Network was created to address the shortage of health specialists—especially mental health professionals—in rural areas of the state and to expand continuing education opportunities for health professionals.

The Nebraska Statewide Telehealth Network is a collaborative effort of the Nebraska Hospital Association, Nebraska hospitals, the State of Nebraska (including the Nebraska Information Technology Commission, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Nebraska Public Service Commission, and Health and Human Services System), the University of Nebraska, area health education centers, and the Nebraska Medical Association. Technical assistance was provided by the University of Nebraska and the State of Nebraska.

The Nebraska Statewide Telehealth Network builds upon existing telehealth networks and resources in the state, connecting them into a unified network. In 2001, a telehealth needs assessment conducted by the UNMC Nebraska Center for Rural Health Research found that monthly telecommunications costs were the primary barrier to the adoption of telehealth in Nebraska. Efforts to obtain support for telehealth from the Nebraska Universal Service Fund began in 2002. On Sept. 8, 2004, the Nebraska Public Service Commission approved an initial plan for the telehealth network. The network has been implemented in phases. By January 2005, sufficient connections between hub hospitals were in place to begin the initial phase of network operations. By January, 2006, nearly all of the state's hospitals and public health departments were connected to the network. The network is used for patient

consultations, teleradiology, trauma and emergency room care, continuing medical education, emergency communications and bioterrorism preparedness training, video medical interpreting services, and administrative meetings.

## Competitive Grants

**Community Technology Fund (1998-2002).** Since September 1998, 40 projects have been awarded a total of \$834,700 from the Nebraska Information Technology Commission's Community Technology Fund. The projects funded demonstrate how information technology is being used to improve efficiency and enhance economic development. Projects funded through the 2002 Community Technology Fund range from the development of a municipal wireless network used to improve the delivery of local government services to the placement of computers in local learning centers to expand access to educational opportunities in rural areas. After 2002, the amount available for the Community Technology was reduced to \$20,000 annually. The fund has been used for special projects or competitive mini grants since 2002.

### Community Technology Fund Grants

#### 1998-2002

Year	Recipient	Project	Award
2002	City of Ashland	Ashland Digital City Hall	\$7,629
2002	Sarpy County	GIS Base Map Interlocal Agreement	\$25,000
2002	LaVista Public Library	Basic Scanning Classes	\$3,612.06
2002	Cherry County Hospital	Interactive Video/Distance Learning Network	\$11,136
2002	Valley County Hospital	Interactive Video/Distance Learning Network	\$19,623
2002	Omaha Public Library	Connect IT Omaha	\$25,000
2002	City of Aurora	Utilities GIS	\$25,000
2002	Central Community College	Sink or Swim--Educating the Rural Labor Pool	\$18,518
2002	University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension	Building Information Age Communities Planning Mini Grants	\$20,000
2002	Franklin County Memorial Hospital	Electronic Archiving of Medical Records	\$22,292
2002	City of South Sioux City	Wireless Municipal Area Network	\$13,250
2001	City of Aurora	Aurora Technology Center	\$25,000
2001	Lower Platte North NRD	Common Framework for Integrating Surface Water Data	\$24,800
2001	Bruun Memorial Public Library, Humboldt Public School Library, Table Rock-Steinauer School Library	Taking Resources and Information Online (TRIO)	\$18,600
2001	Southeast Community College	Technology-Based Education for Health Occupations	\$18,195
2001	Beatrice Public Library	Senior Connection	\$22,932
2001	Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing	Telehealth	\$25,000
2001	Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	Omaha Tribe Online Information Technology Plan	\$25,000
2001	Village of Brainard	Brainard Community Technology Center	\$18,495
2001	Kimball County Hospital Clinic	Integrated Practice Mgmt & Electronic Medical Record Proj.	\$25,000
2001	Village of Greeley	Greeley Learning and Technology Center	\$23,500
2001	City of Lincoln	City of Lincoln Technology Infrastructure Audit	\$23,500

2001	Central Community College	From Plowshares to PCs: Creating a Learning Community	\$23,500
2000	Norfolk Public Library	ONE Library	\$25,000
	Columbus Public Library		
	Northeast Nebraska Community College Library		
2000	Kearney Public Library	Public Internet Access Enhancement	\$19,380
2000	Public Library System, Holdrege	Public Library System Web Catalog	\$9,218
	University of Nebraska Cooperative		
2000	Extension	Connecting Nebraska E-Business Project	\$52,000
	Center for Rural Community		
	Revitalization		
	AIM Institute		
2000	Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools	Web Parent Teacher Project	\$22,270
1999	University of Nebraska	Nebraska Electronic Main Street Program	\$9,990
		NRICHN (NE Nebraska Regional Information	
		Clearinghouse)	\$2,000
1999	City of Wayne		\$2,000
1998	Dakota City Public Library	Dakota City Teleliteracy: Train the Trainers	\$3,600
1998	City of South Sioux City	South Sioux City E-Commerce Initiative	8,340
1998	City of Lincoln/Lancaster County	Project Interlinc	\$23,520
1998	University of Nebraska	Roving Computer Lab and Training for NE Nebraska	\$28,000
1998	Lincoln Area Agency on Aging	GOAL Computer Center	\$4,000
1998	Partnership for Rural Nebraska	Nebraska Teleliteracy and Electronic Commerce Initiative	\$85,000
1998	Chase County	Chase County Video Development	\$8,095
	Southeast Nebraska Development		
1998	District	Teletraining for Emergency Responders	\$22,000
	Panhandle Area Development		
1998	District	Capacity Building, Communication & Cooperation	\$6,225
1998	City of Superior	Business Incubator/Technology Project	\$41,480
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$834,700</b>

**TIGER Mini Grants (2005).** In December 2005, Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy announced grants totaling more than \$16,000 in funding as part of the Technology Innovation Grants for Economic Revitalization (TIGER) program. Projects receiving TIGER funding include:

- The Atkinson Public Library received a \$2,880 grant to offer classes to encourage new businesses development and help existing businesses examine ways to expand.
- The City of Aurora received a \$5,000 grant to determine the information technology needs of local businesses and to recruit technology-based businesses to the area.
- The Hartington Public Library received a \$2,120 grant to expand continuing education opportunities to local residents, including training in new technology. The effort is the result of partnerships with University of Nebraska Extension in Cedar County, Hartington Economic Development, and Hartington's Community Information Technology Committee.
- UNL Extension in Burt County received a \$5,000 grant to build a Web portal for home-based and small businesses to use for marketing goods and services produced in the Oakland area.
- The Wayne Public Library received a \$1,680 grant to develop and host several technology courses, which will be free and open to the public.

All projects were completed successfully.