

FY 2001-03 Information Technology Project  
Proposals

Education Council  
of the  
Nebraska Information Technology Commission

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- A) Spreadsheet list of prioritized projects 1-12
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- D) Non-project summary sheets, pages 1-15



**Education Council**  
**FY 2001-03 Technology Project Recommendations**  
as ranked by the Education Council

Rank	Project #	Education Agency	Project Title	FY 2002	FY 2003	Technical Review Score
1	47-05	NETC	Remote Control Software	\$75,000		43
2	83-01	Nebraska Community College System	Serving the Needs of Rural Nebraska	\$516,899	\$508,999	42
3	47-11	NETC	Add DS-3, 45MB circuit connection at Grand Island and Kearney	\$187,272	\$167,272	41
4	47-12	NETC	Add additional DS-3, 45MB circuit connection into NET	\$40,800	\$34,500	41
5	47-13	NETC	Extend DS-3, 45MB to Scottsbluff	\$64,232	\$62,232	38
6	47-14	NETC	Add third CODEC at North Platte	\$58,000		43
7	47-15	NETC	Add additional fiber optic channels between UNO & UNL/NET	\$70,656	\$64,656	42
8	47-16	NETC	Install NEB*SAT Network 3 Uplink dish at Valentine	\$88,000		48
9	47-17	NETC	Install NEB*SAT Network 3 Uplink dish at WNCC	\$88,000		48
10	47-18	NETC	Add second CODEC at Columbus	\$40,000		50
11	47-19	NETC	Add DS-3, 45 MB circuit connection at Wesleyan		\$40,800	35
12	83-02	Mid-Plains Community College Area	MPCCA Distance Learning Outreach & Classrooms	\$129,000	\$243,000	26
Total				\$1,357,859	\$1,121,459	

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
Biennial Budget - FY2001-03

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-05**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Remote Control Software	\$ 75,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

Within the Satellite Transmission Center (STC) at the NETC there are numerous control systems. Until recently, all were old DOS based systems with limited capability. As a part of LB1217 a remote control system has been purchased to control all the distance learning sites using Network 3, and the distance learning systems in STC. This project would expand that remote control system to include control of the satellite transmission facility at the Air Park. All of the NEB\*SAT services are transmitted from the Air Park facility. This project would allow additional workstations and the ability to control all of the distance learning facilities (remote and at NETC) from a single redundant platform. The system uses cutting edge LAN and server technology to control and monitor any system from any workstation.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	FY2002	FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware	\$9,000		\$9,000
Software	\$66,000		\$66,000
Total Project Costs	\$75,000		\$75,000

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	5	10	8.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	10	5	10	8.3	10
Section VI: Implementation	10	7	8	8.3	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	7	10	9.0	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	8	4	4	5.3	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	4	4	4.0	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Can the contractor produce?
- There are "if's" with the sole source vendor that raise questions.

Reviewer #2:

- This is a matter of fact area with significant brevity. The case is made, but it is very brief and would suggest that it is a simple matter need. Not sure how high this is on NETV priority list, but it seems like they are making an attempt to extend Net3 for a significant period of time. Not sure this is a good direction.
- The area of impact is seriously limited to little or no documentation of future benefits. Integration is the key here. Little or no documentation is presented relating how this kind of purchase has affected others utilizing this technology in similar systems.
- Implementation is a very vague area.
- Technical impact is a gray area. Nebraska is one of a very few states using this type of telecommunications to reach its population. There are few benchmarks to determine if this is even a feasible way to proceed. It seems that we are purchasing more of the same and do not have an ear to newer technologies. NETV needs to take a bigger picture look.
- This is a good place for the state to save \$75,000. Little benefit identified.

Reviewer #3:

- Request is very poorly done.

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

The NET Assistant General Manager for Engineering was able to respond to concerns that arose during the technical review: "The software would simply allow a single system to control both the remote sites and the Lincoln transmit facility. Likewise, the STC operators could preprogram events to happen simultaneously. This would speed up the conference setup time. There was also concern as to whether the vendor could accomplish the intended goals. The software selected is in place in other facilities around the country controlling the exact same equipment that this project will address."

The Education Council members expressed a desire to have the priority order of the NETC users group be reflected in the final priority order of the project proposals themselves. The agency 47 projects were submitted with the lower project numbers being their highest priority.

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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 83-01**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NE Community College System	Serving the Needs of Rural Nebraska	\$ 516,899	\$ 508,999

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST (Executive Summary from the Proposal)**

This initiative will permit the Nebraska Community College System (NCCS) to make available in rural communities a wide variety of education and training programs that meet the needs of rural hospitals, agriculture, public safety, as well as manufacturers. To accomplish this task, the community colleges need the ability to effectively inter-connect several locations giving students the ability to totally interact with their peers and instructor(s) using a digital switched network. Through academic planning, the greater Nebraska community colleges will increase income efficiency, reduce cost, and unnecessary duplication by expanding collaborative instructional program offerings through the appropriate utilization of technology. The collaborative program offerings proposed and lead institutions for each program are as follows:

**Agriculture** - Northeast Community College (Norfolk)

**Criminal Justice** – Central Community College, MidPlains Community College, Northeast Community College, Western Nebraska

Community College

**Electronics** – MidPlains Community College (McCook, North Platte)

**Health Information Management Services** - Western Nebraska Community College (Scottsbluff, Sidney and Alliance) and Central

Community College

**Paralegal** - Central Community College (Grand Island, Hastings, Columbus)

**Paramedic Training and Electronics** - MidPlains Community College

**Quality Control** – Central Community College

**Surgical Technology and Radiology** - Southeast Community College (Beatrice, Lincoln)

Nebraska is known nationally for its superb accomplishments within distance education with over 250 interactive distance learning sites in Nebraska, yet, many rural Nebraskans have limited access to information technology in education, health care, economic development, and every level of government service. Further, most of the currently established distance learning sites are limited by: (1) the number of locations that can connect, (2) the geographical region connections, and (3) capacity to offer additional education and training programs. This project seeks to remedy this situation by linking regional areas to a statewide infrastructure and providing twelve locations across the state with the capacity to originate and receive the ten instructional programs listed above. This is an ambitious project, but the Nebraska Community College System is confident that the objectives can be accomplished in a reasonable amount of time.

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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

**Section IX: Detail Financial Analysis and Budget**

**1 Financial Information by Category**

New or Additional State Funding Request FY 2001 - 03 Biennial Budget	Request for FY2002 (Year 1)	Request for FY2003 (Year 2)	Request for FY2004 (Year 3)	Request for FY2005 (Year 4)	Future* (Years 5-8)	Total Years 1-4	
1. Personnel Costs						\$ -	
2. Contractual Services							
2.1 Design - Initial Cost	\$ 42,000	\$ 10,000				\$ 52,000	
2.2 Programming						-	
2.3 Project Management						-	
2.4 Other						-	
3. Supplies and Materials						-	
4. Telecommunications(a)	110,616	168,676	168,676	168,676		616,644	
5. Training	30,000	30,000	20,000	10,000		90,000	
6. Travel						-	
7. Other Operating Costs						-	
7.1 Eval / Assessment	12,200.0	12,200.0	12,200.0	12,200.0		48,800	
8. Capital Expenditures (b)						-	
8.1 Hardware	\$ 302,083	\$ 268,123				570,206	
8.2 Software	12,500	12,500	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,500		50,000	
8.3 Network						-	
8.4 Other - Ref Materials	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500		30,000	
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	\$ -	\$ 516,899	\$ 508,999	\$ 220,876	\$ 210,876	\$ -	<b>\$ 1,025,898</b>
General Funds-Program 99	\$ 516,899	\$ 508,999	\$ 220,876	\$ 210,876			\$ 1,025,898
Cash Funds							\$ -
Federal Funds							\$ -
Revolving Funds							\$ -
Other Funds							\$ -
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	\$ -	\$ 516,899	\$ 508,999	\$ 220,876	\$ 210,876	\$ -	<b>\$ 1,025,898</b>

**NOTES:**

(a) Telecommunications cost include line charges to connect each location to the nearest video switch. Costs to Interconnect between the video switches will be assumed by NET.

(b) An itemized equipment list is part of the Detailed Budget Report by Region.

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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	9	7	10	8.7	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	10	7	9	8.7	10
Section VI: Implementation	7	7	9	7.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	8	5	7.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	7	5	4	5.3	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	4	4	4.3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>42</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #2:

- Outcomes are not specific or measurable and didn't correlate with the measurement and assessment methods.
- Project justification-- I would have liked some figures comparing the cost of traditional vs. interactive video as well as an estimate of the number of students who would be served by this system.
- Technical impact-- I am not totally convinced that two-way interactive video truly best meets the needs of the user.
- Risk assessment-- I think that the biggest risk is that desktop to desktop and asynchronous learning delivery methods may within the next several years become more widely available and cost-effective and make this kind of distance learning obsolete.

Reviewer #3:

- Technical impact--This is a good project, but it has a few too many assumptions. The technology is there, but the uplinks in a broader sense are not there yet. Some are, but not many. The DS-3 connectivity is called for through NETV internal funding. There is no supporting document to indicate that is coming. It is doubted that this technology would have been chosen if the telecommunications costs were not free to the insititutions. The project has great merit.
- Risk assessment--The impact of this grant would be significant. It would take time to bring to fruition.

**EDUCATION COUNCIL COMMENTS**

The success of the Community College System project 83-01 directly depends upon NETC projects 47-11, 47-12, and 47-13. Therefore, it is the intent of the Education Council that Projects 83-01, 47-11, 47-12, and 47-13 be funded as a related package.



NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-11**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Add DS-3, 45MB circuit connection at Grand Island and Kearney	\$ 187,272	\$ 167,272

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

This project will allow DS 3 (45 MB) access in Grand Island and Kearney into the existing state (DOC, UNL and NETC) terrestrial circuit. Grand Island and Kearney are very active distance learning sites in the state. They also offer K-12 Pod connectivity. Connecting Grand Island and Kearney into the state DS 3 will offer a path for distance learning within the state of Nebraska. In particular, it will permit an increase of inter-pod connectivity.

The existing DS 3 passes from Lincoln to North Platte and Lincoln to Norfolk. This would allow the towns along the North Platte leg to access the DS 3. This is Phase 2 of the original "back bone" planned and started in the previous biennium. The funding will include installation cost and an annual recurring circuit charge.

It is intended that this project will later be incorporated into any contract that results from the TINA process.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Installation	\$20,000		\$20,000
Annual Operating	\$167,272	\$167,272	\$334,544
Total Project Costs	\$187,272	\$167,272	\$354,544

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	9	9	7	8.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	6	7	5	6.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	8	9	9	8.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	8	9	9	8.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	6	4	5	5.0	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	5	4	4.3	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>41</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Outcomes do not identify any current unmet need definitively. It is implied that a greater number of classes will be held and that more students will be educated, however, this would have been better defined by the number of classes that currently cannot be scheduled, etc.
- Without a clear picture of the problem we are trying to solve, i.e., the number of classes that can not be scheduled or students that cannot be served, it is difficult to know if there is a positive impact to anyone other than the NET schedules.
- The milestones have been detailed, however no timeline was identified to give a measurement of achievability. The roles were vaguely defined, however, there was no listing of responsibility for the project outside of the three individuals in NET engineering. There are clearly roles outside of engineering such as with the vendor, the users, the schedulers, etc.
- This project supports a technology that, in the opinion of this reviewer, is not technically appropriate. The use of DS-3 for distance learning is wasteful but is the technology currently in place. Therefore, given the reality that this is the technology that must currently be supported, I have rated this area based on that criteria.
- There are some risks that are not identified in this project that I believe are applicable. The first and foremost is the risk that as the state continues to provide these facilities at no cost to the customers, there will continue to be a request for more. If it is free, I want lots of it. Another risk is that the technical panel of the NITC or the educational community would set a video standard that is not compatible with DS-3.

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

Reviewer #2:

- The proposal indicates that a "greater number" of students will have the opportunity to continue educational experiences. It would be nice to have some estimate of what a "greater number" really means.
- I assume that the DS3 costs are based on actual quotes from the vendor, but they do seem considerably higher than I would expect. It would be nice to have an estimate of the number of customers this implementation will affect. The contract needs to make sure it addresses the TINA plan which could be in place just over a year from now.
- Project should identify the stakeholders and members of the NEB\*SAT user group.
- There are no risks identified that would be associated with the customers that will be using these services.
- I think this is a good project, but it is difficult to identify the potential customers and the number of customers that would use this service. The current systems in the state are based on these DS3 connections. At some point we need to evaluate other ways of providing this same service and making more efficient use of the DS3 lines.

Reviewer #3:

- Scope and outcomes-- No documentation was provided to demonstrate that there is a need for "... a greater interaction of classes from other parts of the state". How many students would be served by the installation of these DS-3 circuits? Is the annual project cost worth this investment? How many classes can be taught across the DS-3 at the same time? While NEB\*SAT can track the number of students taught in a class, are mechanisms in place to terminate the service if class size is too small (and what is "too small")? Would DS-3 multi-year contracts prevent the project from being terminated or scaled back because of penalties? Is a DS-3 the ONLY option - there is no available satellite transponder space? Would not additional transponder space be made available through the conversion of analog to digital signals as I have understood would occur in the not-too-distant future? Is there not a fiber circuit already in existence between College Park in Grand Island and UNK that could be used as an alternative? If the State's proposed state-wide "network" is built based upon the assumption that the "network" transports TCP/IP based traffic (an idea being discussed), would the proposed DS-3 fit into that plan (I doubt it based upon my understanding of how these codec's work)? This connection will extend the video backbone to Kearney and Grand Island - is there enough capacity in the existing backbone to allow these new extensions to be properly utilized, or will these new links create undocumented bottlenecks? If this DS-3 connection is not projected to be completely used, can a portion of the line be allocated to carry computer network traffic (say a T1 or greater amount of capacity)? If so, that is an additional benefit of this project that was not discussed in the document.
- Project impact--The application does not directly address how this project will affect the existing staffing, costs, or funding, even though other portions of the document briefly touch on these issues.
- Project preferability--suggests that no other alternatives are available "other than those already in place" (not a direct quote) - that statement alone suggests alternatives do in fact exist to this DS-3 request. For example, I know that an existing video connection between ESU's exists from College Park in Grand Island to UNK - is this path full? Is purchasing additional capacity over this route more expensive than the DS-3 option? Will the DS-3 proposal provide more capabilities than this existing fiber connection? Nothing is provided to convince me that other alternatives were considered and were discarded for valid reasons.
- Mandates--I may be too harsh, but while various Nebraska Statutes are listed, I would have to review each of them myself to ensure that they were in fact related to this request, and would be served by moving forward with this request. It would have been nice to see a brief excerpt of the statutes highlighting the supporting portions in them.
- Project sponsor--While I did not reduce the score for this item, I would have liked to see some supporting statements of need by the participating institutions in the NEB\*SAT user group - did a significant majority of users participate in this user group, and did the significant majority express a need for increased capacity?
- Timelines--no timeline estimates were provided, but the Project Proposal Form may not have been clear on this point.
- Proposed hardware--This item suggests that the codec and misc. items are included in the "up front installation charges". However, it is not clear to me that costs for a codec were included in the spreadsheet in section IX.
- Technology appropriateness--while there may be alternatives worth considering, the proposed DS-3 solution is certainly appropriate for addressing the specified needs.
- Risk assessment--Another risk is that the additional classes or students taught through the use of this DS-3 will not meet expectations, and the return on investment will be low. Another risk is that alternatives to this proposal that might cost less were not discovered before the investment is made.
- Specific risks--The codec's involved in this project will need to be replaced at some future time. If no source of charge-back mechanism exists to specifically fund equipment upgrades, additional funding will likely be needed in the future (assuming that this project is successful). If in fact no codec's are to be purchased through this funding request (perhaps they already exist), then this comment is invalid.
- Impact significance--Other portions of the document suggest that this DS-3 is simply an additional connection to allow additional classes to be taught. While not funding the DS-3 proposal would obviously not expand the current system, that impact is not as significant compared to not being able to offer any distance education efforts at all - unless the proposed DS-3 connection offers capabilities not currently available, but that is not discussed. No supporting materials relating to the direct impact on students is provided. "Inter-pod communications with these sites will continue to be severely limited" - further investigation is needed to determine why the existing fiber connection between College Park in Grand Island and UNK is not sufficient for continued distance education efforts between these sites. Perhaps the locations are not the same, perhaps no additional capacity exists, but this information is not provided.
- Financial analysis-- ERROR - The installation total column of the spreadsheet should be \$40,000 - not \$20,000 (\$10,000 at each site + \$20,000). Therefore, the total funding requested should be \$374,544. As stated earlier, there is a chance that needed codec(s) were not included in the initial hardware costs.

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

- GENERAL COMMENTS - The documentation supplied to justify the project seems to me to be "barely acceptable". No doubt the submitter thought that the need for this type of network expansion is obvious to everyone "because the current system is so busy" (my words), but no documentation supporting this claim exists. I would recommend an additional review of these issues before funding for the project should be granted.

**EDUCATION COUNCIL COMMENTS**

The success of the Community College System project 83-01 directly depends upon NETC projects 47-11, 47-12, and 47-13. Therefore, it is the intent of the Education Council that Projects 83-01, 47-11, 47-12, and 47-13 be funded as a related package.

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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-12**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Add additional DS-3, 45MB circuit connection into NET	\$ 40,800	\$ 34,500

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

This project will allow an additional DS 3 (45 MB) connection between NET and the Lincoln telephony data switch. This will provide NET a second access into the state DS 3 circuit. NET is the main access to distance learning in the state. There is currently only one connection between NET and the DS-3 system. This means that only one connection at a time can be made between the DS-3 and the other networks of the state. NET is the gateway for Nebraska Department of Education, the Division of Communications, and NEB\*SAT. Users of all these systems have expressed great interest regarding access into the DS-3.

The funding will include installation cost and the first two years of recurring cost.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware & Installation	\$6,300		\$6,300
Annual Operating	\$34,500	\$34,500	\$69,000
Total Project Costs	\$40,800	\$34,500	\$75,300

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	9	8	8	8.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	6	8	7	7.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	8	7	9	8.0	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	8	9	8	8.3	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	6	5	6	5.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	5	3	4.0	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>41</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Outcomes do not identify any current unmet need definitively. It is implied that a greater number of classes will be held and that more students will be educated, however, this would have been better defined by the number of classes that currently cannot be scheduled, etc.
- Without a clear picture of the problem we are trying to solve, i.e., the number of classes that can not be scheduled or students that cannot be served, it is difficult to know if there is a positive impact to anyone other than the NET schedules.
- The milestones have been detailed, however no timeline was identified to give a measurement of achievability. The roles were vaguely defined, however, there was no listing of responsibility for the project outside of the three individuals in NET engineering. There are clearly roles outside of engineering such as with the vendor, the users, the schedulers, etc.
- This project supports a technology that, in the opinion of this reviewer, is not technically appropriate. The use of DS-3 for distance learning is wasteful but is the technology currently in place. Therefore, given the reality that this is the technology that must currently be supported, I have rated this area based on that criteria.
- There are some risks that are not identified in this project that I believe are applicable. The first and foremost is the risk that as the state continues to provide these facilities at no cost to the customers, there will continue to be a request for more. If it is free, I want lots of it. Another risk is that the technical panel of the NITC or the educational community would set a video standard that is not compatible with DS-3.

Reviewer #2:

- The beneficiaries are defined, but it is not clear exactly what the needs are other than a "greater number" of students will be able to use this service.
- Identifying an estimated number of customers/classes would help determine the return on investment.

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

- The plan indicates that Qwest is the intended vendor for DS-3 connections in Lincoln. Identification of stakeholders and NEB\*SAT user group would be beneficial.

▪

Reviewer #2 (continued):

- At some point, the state (and education) need to evaluate a more efficient use of these DS3 connections. For now, this is the standard for many of the schools in Nebraska.
- All risks are associated with the funding request. No risks are identified regarding the actual use of the service.

**EDUCATION COUNCIL COMMENTS**

The success of the Community College System project 83-01 directly depends upon NETC projects 47-11, 47-12, and 47-13. Therefore, it is the intent of the Education Council that Projects 83-01, 47-11, 47-12, and 47-13 be funded as a related package.

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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-13**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Extend DS-3, 45MB circuit to Scottsbluff	\$ 64,232	\$ 62,232

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST (Executive Summary from the Proposal)**

This project will allow DS 3 (45 MB) access in Scottsbluff into the existing state (DOC, UNL and NETC) terrestrial circuit. Scottsbluff is a very active distance learning site in the state. They also offer K-12 Pod connectivity. Connecting Scottsbluff into the state DS 3 will offer a path for distance learning within the state of Nebraska. In particular, it will permit an increase of inter-pod connectivity.

The existing DS 3 passes from Lincoln to North Platte and Lincoln to Norfolk. This would extend the North Platte leg to Scottsbluff. This is Phase 3 of the original "back bone" planned and started in the previous biennium. The funding will include installation cost and an annual recurring circuit charge. It is intended that this project will later be incorporated into any contract that results from the TINA process.

These costs were based on NETC purchasing alone. It may change in that the University of Nebraska currently as a T-1 from North Platte to Scottsbluff. They have indicated that they would co-negotiate this contract to allow them to expand their current circuit to Scottsbluff. This aggregation of demand is already in effect on the current DS-3 system which is a joint contract with NETC, University of Nebraska and DOC.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware & Installation	\$2,000		\$2,000
Annual Operating	\$62,232	\$62,232	\$124,464
Total Project Costs	\$64,232	\$62,232	\$126,464

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	6	7	10	7.7	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	2	5	6	4.3	10
Section VI: Implementation	9	9	9	9.0	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	7	9	10	8.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	2	5	6	4.3	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	3	4	4	3.7	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>38</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Describing this approach as the most "prominent" technical solution strikes me as counter-innovation. If we always pursue the most widely used approach, we'd still be using slate tablets.
- The proposal ignores technologies that are available and would provide a more flexible network. Specifically implementing an IP based network and building appropriate gateways to the existing, outdated network.
- Although the proposal is compatible with existing equipment and networks, it is time that the State of Nebraska moved on to more useful technologies. All forms of communications can be carried on IP based networks but the proposed technologies cannot be used to carry needed data connections.
- There is no data in the proposal regarding the risk of "not" completing the project. Listing lack of funding as a major risk does not generate confidence.
- If the goal is to continue spending more and more money on outdated technologies, this is a safe way to do so. I do not believe that is in the best interest of the citizens of Nebraska.

Reviewer #2:

- No documentation was provided to demonstrate that there is a need for ".. a greater interaction of classes from other parts of the state".

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

Reviewer #2 (continued):

- How many students would be served by the installation of this DS-3 to Scottsbluff? Is the annual project cost worth this investment? How many classes can be taught across the DS-3 at the same time?
- While NEB\*SAT can track the number of students taught in a class, are mechanisms in place to terminate the service if class size is too small (and what is "too small")? Would DS-3 multi-year contracts prevent the project from being canceled or scaled back because of penalties?
- Is a DS-3 the ONLY option - there is no available satellite transponder space? Would not additional transponder space be made available through the conversion of analog to digital signals as I have understood would occur in the not-too-distant future?
- If the State's proposed state-wide "network" is built based upon the assumption that the "network" transports TCP/IP based traffic (an idea being discussed), would the proposed DS-3 fit into that plan (I doubt it based upon my understanding of how these codecs work)?
- This connection will extend the video backbone from North Platte to Scottsbluff - is there enough capacity in the Lincoln to North Platte backbone to allow the Scottsbluff segment to be properly utilized, or will the Scottsbluff link create undocumented bottlenecks?
- If this DS-3 connection is not projected to be completely used, can a portion of the line be allocated to carry computer network traffic between Scottsbluff and North Platte (say a T1 or greater amount of capacity)? If so, that is an additional benefit of this project that was not discussed in the document. There is a brief mention of a T1 line existing between these two locations elsewhere in the document, but it is not clear if this is another video line that could be eliminated, or if this reference is to a data circuit.
- Project's impact does not directly address how this project will affect the existing staffing, costs, or funding, even though other portions of the document briefly touch on these issues.
- Project's preferability suggests that no other alternatives are available. However, NETC also indicates that this request simply provides additional capacity between NET and Scottsbluff and related sites. Therefore, my assumption is that satellite possibilities do in fact exist (they must be in use now). Is Satellite not suitable any longer because of technical limitations? Are satellite costs more expensive than this DS-3 proposal? Are there no other fiber providers in the state that can provide the desired circuit? Nothing is provided to convince me that other alternatives were considered and were discarded for valid reasons.
- State and Federal mandates-- I may be too harsh, but while various Nebraska Statutes are listed, I would have to review each of them myself to ensure that they were in fact related to this request, and would be served by moving forward with this request. It would have been nice to see a brief excerpt of the statutes highlighting the supporting portions in them.
- Project sponsor and stakeholder analysis--While I did not reduce the score for this item, I would have liked to see some supporting statements of need by the participating institutions in the NEB\*SAT user group - did a significant majority of users participate in this user group, and did the significant majority express a need for increased capacity?
- Milestones and deliverables--no timeline estimates were provided, but the Project Proposal Form may not have been clear on this point.
- Hardware and software--This item suggests that the codec and misc. items are included in the "up front installation charges". However, the provided "Hardware and Installation Costs" are only \$2,000 - hardly adequate for a codec. Either an existing unit exists and this section is in error, or the purchase costs of this equipment was omitted.
- Technology appropriateness--while there may be alternatives worth considering, the proposed DS-3 solution is certainly appropriate for addressing the specified needs.
- Risk assessment--another risk is that the additional classes or students taught through the use of this DS-3 will not meet expectations, and the return on investment will be low.
- Impact significance--Other portions of the document suggest that this DS-3 is simply an additional connection to allow additional classes to be taught. While not funding the DS-3 proposal would obviously not expand the current system, that impact is not as significant compared to not being able to offer any distance education efforts at all - unless the proposed DS-3 connection offers capabilities not currently available, but that is not discussed. No supporting materials relating to the direct impact on students is provided.
- As stated earlier, there is a chance that a needed codec was not included in the initial hardware costs. The codec's involved in this project will need to be replaced at some future time. If no source of charge-back mechanism exists to specifically fund equipment upgrades, additional funding will likely be needed in the future (assuming that this project is successful). If in fact no codec's are to be purchased through this funding request (perhaps they already exist), then this comment is invalid.
- GENERAL COMMENTS - overall, I am generally supportive of this project. However, the documentation supplied to justify the project seems to me to be "barely acceptable". No doubt the submitter thought that the need for this type of network expansion is obvious to everyone "because the current system is so busy" (my words), but no documentation supporting this claim exists. I would recommend an additional review of these issues before funding for the project should be granted.

Reviewer #3:

- Project justification-- Proof of Co-Negotiation with NU and proof of need????

**EDUCATION COUNCIL COMMENTS**

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

The success of the Community College System project 83-01 directly depends upon NETC projects 47-11, 47-12, and 47-13. Therefore, it is the intent of the Education Council that Projects 83-01, 47-11, 47-12, and 47-13 be funded as a related package.



NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-14**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Add third CODEC at North Platte	\$ 58,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

In addition to Mid Plains Community College, North Platte is a major distribution hub for the University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center, ESU 15 and ESU 16. By adding another CODEC and associated hardware at this site, we are adding another Network 3 satellite channel to the site. The third CODEC at Mid Plains Community College is necessary on existing and projected NEB\*SAT Network 3 distance learning class scheduling. All of the above institutions provide distance learning classes to other educational institutions throughout the state. Because of this, there is currently a severe bottleneck at this site.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware	\$58,000		\$58,000
Installation			
Other			
Total Project Costs	\$58,000		\$58,000

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	7	10	10	9.0	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	6	10	8	8.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	9	10	10	9.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	3	10	10	7.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	0	8	7	5.0	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	2	5	4	3.7	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>43</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Project justification-- Outcomes and impact are certainly stated in general, but unfortunately not well defined for this particular distance learning implementation, as if this implementation were the only solution to the problem.
- Implementation-- As technology continues to change rapidly it becomes rather obvious that significant State resources in terms of personnel and capital will have to be expended to keep up to date. This project seems to perpetuate an existing system without a great deal of thought for alternatives. Perhaps in areas where there is a sufficient vendor presence the State should be utilizing the R&D and maintenance facilities of those companies by contracting services rather than supporting them directly with State staffing.
- An analysis of the cost effectiveness, reliability and broadcast quality of NEB\*SAT delivery in comparison to other methods should certainly be entertained as a part of this process. Obviously the end user cost of NEB\*SAT delivery is attractive as the system utilizes NETV bandwidth, but significant State dollars are in fact expended in support of that system. Perhaps State dollars could be more effectively used in the long run by augmenting other (more effective) delivery methods in areas where they are viable and there by relieving the NEB\*SAT system of some of its load and relieving the congestion problem, leaving it to serve those areas not easily served by other methods. I am by no means advocating diminished support for the broadcast television role of NETV, but rather a frank analysis of all State expenditures for distance learning in an effort to maximize distance learning offerings in the state.
- Risk assessment-- It seems to be a broad assumption in this document that there are no other avenues to solve these problems. This seems to me to be an incredible planning risk.

Reviewer #3:

- Project justification-- What about terrestrial delivery??

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-15**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Add additional fiber optic channels between UNO & UNL/NET	\$ 70,656	\$ 64,656

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

There are currently six fiber optic connections between UNO and NET (three each direction). This project is to install six additional fiber optic channels between UNO and UNL / NET. It will provide for three each direction. The current system is operating at maximum capacity during peak times.

The installation of six (6) additional video and audio fiber optic channels allows UNO, UNL and NET to provide an increased capacity of distance learning classes to educational institutions throughout the state.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware			
Installation	\$6,000		\$6,000
Annual Operating	\$64,656	\$64,656	\$129,312
Total Project Costs	\$70,656	\$64,656	\$135,312

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	8	6	8.0	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	10	6	6	7.3	10
Section VI: Implementation	10	10	9	9.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	7	9	8.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	8	1	3	4.0	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	4	4	4.3	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>42</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #2:

- Scope & outcomes--There is significant fiber already in place. Why not use the additional fiber to support transmission protocols that provide more flexibility, IP?.
- Project justification-- The proposal ignores technologies that are available and would provide a more flexible network. Specifically implementing an IP based network and building appropriate gateways to the existing, outdated network.
- Technical impact-- Although the proposal is compatible with existing equipment and networks, it is time that the State of Nebraska moved on to more useful technologies. All forms of communications can be carried on IP based networks but the proposed technologies cannot be used to carry needed data connections.
- Risk assessment-- There is no data in the proposal regarding the risk of "not" completing the project.
- Budget-- If the goal is to continue spending more and more money on outdated technologies, this is a safe way to do so. I do not believe that is in the best interest of the citizens of Nebraska.

Reviewer #3:

- Scope and outcomes-- A capacity analysis is needed, otherwise there is a risk of budgeting for too much capacity. The proposal should address the degree of risk that free capacity to users will stimulate demand beyond capacity.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-16**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Install NEB*SAT Network 3 Uplink dish at Valentine	\$ 88,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

The Valentine NEB\*SAT Network 3 Dish placement is necessary because the lack of existing teleconferencing systems in the north central part of the state. The only connectivity in that area is the NVCN system. This makes availability limited to the two connections between NETC and the NVCN system.

The Valentine NEB\*SAT Network 3 Dish placement allows north central part of the state the capability of NEB\*SAT Network 3 distance learning classes. This installation will enhance the opportunities for this region regarding distance learning classes.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Consulting	\$6,645		\$6,645
Dish Installation	\$6,000		\$6,000
Hardware	\$75,355		\$75,355
Annual Operating			
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>\$88,000</b>		<b>\$88,000</b>

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	10	5	8.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	10	10	7	9.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	10	10	10	10.0	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	10	10	10.0	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	8	6	5	6.3	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	5	4	4.3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>48</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Impact-- Justification is acceptable and if project is not completed, impact on access to learning would be significant.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-17**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Install NEB*SAT Network 3 Uplink dish at WNCC	\$ 88,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

The Western Nebraska Community College NEB\*SAT Network 3 Dish placement is necessary because of the scheduling conflicts among the Panhandle Station, Scottsbluff UNMC, WNCC and ESU 13. Currently all of these locations share one antenna through a router. WNCC is an active user of the network.

The Western Nebraska Community College NEB\*SAT Network 3 Dish placement allows WNCC and ESU 13 the capability of NEB\*SAT Network 3 distance learning classes. This installation will enhance the opportunities for this region regarding distance learning classes.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Consulting	\$6,645		\$6,645
Dish Installation	\$6,000		\$6,000
Hardware	\$75,355		\$75,355
Annual Operating			
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>\$88,000</b>		<b>\$88,000</b>

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	8	9	9.0	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	10	8	10	9.3	10
Section VI: Implementation	10	9	10	9.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	9	10	9.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	6	6	5	5.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	5	3	4.3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>48</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Scope and outcomes--Use of NEB\*SAT technology in this case as an uplink/downlink point of entry to the ESU13 pod and WNCC seems to be a rather reasonable solution. The evidence of analysis of other options and the openness to consider them in the future is a very positive feature of this request.
- Technical impact-- Delivery of distance learning technology is a significantly challenging problem in this area of the state. This is exactly the kind of application that really lets NEB\*SAT shine and use State dollars effectively.

Reviewer #2:

- Project justification-- The proposal mentions current bottlenecks, but does not clarify the severity of the bottlenecks (i.e. how many courses have been turned down because of a lack of resources).
- Implementation-- Project does not indicate timeline for actual usage of the service. Does not address whether there will be additional training requirements at the remote site. Not sure why this dish is being sent to Valentine instead of Scottsbluff.
- Risk assessment-- Customer risk, if any, is not mentioned.
- General comments-- This proposal would be better if it contained the information related to how bad the current bottleneck is and whether this solution will be able to solve that problem.

Reviewer #3:

- Scope and outcomes-- They'll still have a scheduling problem.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-18**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Add second CODEC at Columbus	\$ 40,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

In addition to Central Community College, Columbus is a distribution hub for the schools that connect to ESU 7. By adding another CODEC and associated hardware at this site, we are adding another Network 3 satellite channel to the site. The second CODEC at Central Community College is necessary on existing and projected NEB\*SAT Network 3 distance learning class scheduling. The above institutions provide distance learning classes to other educational institutions throughout the state. Because of this, there is currently a severe bottleneck at this site.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware	\$40,000		\$40,000
Installation			
Other			
Total Project Costs	\$40,000		\$40,000

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	8	10	9	9.0	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	8	10	9	9.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	9	10	10	9.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	10	10	10.0	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	8	8	7	7.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	5	5	5.0	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>50</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Scope and outcomes-- An estimate of the number of customers and more detail on the "bottleneck" would have been good information to include in the proposal.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-19**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Add DS-3, 45MB circuit connection at Wesleyan		\$ 40,800

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

This project will allow DS 3 (45 MB) access at Wesleyan into the State (D.O.C., U.N.L. and N.E.T.) DS 3 circuit. Wesleyan is not currently connected to the Distance Learning in the State. Connecting Wesleyan into the State DS 3 will offer an additional path for Distance Learning within the State of Nebraska.

The funding will include installation costs and one year recurring costs. After the first year, Nebraska Wesleyan will fund the ongoing expenses associated with this project.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Installation		\$2,000	\$2,000
Annual Operating		\$38,800	\$38,800
Total Project Costs		\$40,800	\$40,800

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	6	7	5	6.0	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	2	5	8	5.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	10	7	10	9.0	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	7	6	10	7.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	2	4	4	3.3	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	3	5	4.0	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>35</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Project scope--Describing this approach as the most "prominent" technical solution strikes me as counter-innovation. If we always pursue the most widely used approach, we'd still be using slate tablets.
- Project justification-- The proposal ignores technologies that are available and would provide a more flexible network. Specifically implementing an IP based network and building appropriate gateways to the existing, outdated network.
- Technical impact-- Although the proposal is compatible with existing equipment and networks, it is time that the State of Nebraska moved on to more useful technologies. All forms of communications can be carried on IP based networks but the proposed technologies cannot be used to carry needed data connections.
- Risk assessment--There is no data in the proposal regarding the risk of "not" completing the project. What happens if Nebraska Wesleyan doesn't have access?
- General comments-- If the goal is to continue spending more and more money on outdated technologies, this is a safe way to do so. I do not believe that is in the best interest of the citizens of Nebraska.

Reviewer #3:

- Project justification--Need for new system at Wesleyan is not well documented. Benefit to other institutions is implied, but not supported.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
Biennial Budget - FY2001-03

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 83-02**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
Mid-Plains Community College Area	MPCCA Distance Learning Outreach and Classrooms	\$ 129,000	\$ 243,000

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST (Executive Summary from the Proposal)**

The MPCCA Distance Learning Outreach and Classroom Project provides a mechanism to link through technology the three campuses (McDonald-Belton, Voc-Tech, and McCook) of the MPCCA. The linkage would be multi-delivery (T1, DS3, satellite) allowing for more flexibility in scheduling both originating and receiving classes. The three campuses in return would be linked to classrooms at the four Outreach Centers at Ogallala, Broken Bow, Valentine and Imperial through T1 lines.

The fiber connect between the three campuses of MPCCA will also allow for connectivity to future distance learning systems including the state backbone system. Adding and upgrading classrooms on the three campuses will improve opportunities to deliver and receive classes. Thus, the MPCCA campuses and Outreach Centers will have interconnectivity and will have accessibility to other distance learning systems as opportunities occur.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

	Estimated Prior Expended	Request for FY2002 (Year 1)	Request for FY2003 (Year 2)	Request for FY2004 (Year 3)	Request for FY2005 (Year 4)	Future	Total
1. Personnel Costs (a)		\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00				\$ 70,000.00
<b>2. Contractual Services</b>							
2.1 Design							\$ -
2.2 Programming							\$ -
2.3 Project Management							\$ -
2.4 Other							\$ -
3. Supplies and Materials							\$ -
4. Telecommunications		\$ 2,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	connect charges			\$ 6,000.00
5. Training							\$ -
6. Travel							\$ -
7. Other Operating Costs		\$ 17,000.00	\$ 34,000.00	line charges			\$ 51,000.00
<b>8. Capital Expenditures (b)</b>							
8.1 Hardware		\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	codecs for T1			\$ 40,000.00
8.2 Software							\$ -
8.3 Network							\$ -
8.4 Other		\$ 55,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	classrooms			\$ 205,000.00
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	\$ -	\$ 129,000.00	\$ 243,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 372,000.00
General Funds		\$ 52,000.00	\$ 69,000.00				\$ 121,000.00
Cash Funds							\$ -
Federal Funds							\$ -
Revolving Funds							\$ -
Other Funds		\$ 77,000.00	\$ 174,000.00				\$ 251,000.00
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	\$ -	\$ 129,000.00	\$ 243,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 372,000.00

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	5	5	6.7	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	8	4	5	5.7	10
Section VI: Implementation	6	0	5	3.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	1	5	5.3	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	5	0	1	2.0	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	1	3	3.0	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>26</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #2:

- Scope and outcomes-- The sharing of a limited number of teaching professionals in the State to provide instruction in specific vocational areas is obviously vital for the State, it seems to me that other technical resources for delivery may exist in a broader context than these classes specifically. Those options do not appear to have been seriously considered and the lack of those resources is an assumption that the State cannot afford to overlook.
- Technical impact-- The State of Nebraska can ill afford to have independent entities building private distance learning networks in wide spread geographic areas. Distance learning initiatives in the State outside the immediate area of a campus should be undertaken with the cooperation and assistance of those State agencies most skilled in delivery, including the Division of Communication and NETV. I see no evidence of plans to integrate this widespread initiative with either current efforts of those entities or consideration of their future technology plans. In particular in this case the extension of a private network to areas already serviced by other distance learning methods without a consideration to consolidation of financial resources by improving those existing systems cannot be supported without significant evidence to support the plan.
- Risk assessment-- The risk of building a complex system without integration with other State resources presents a considerable risk that cannot be ignored.

Reviewer #3:

- Scope and outcomes-- This is a vague area. It is very sketchy and does not go into any detail.
- Project justification-- Distance Learning is a great tool. It does appear that this proposal creates yet another Distance Learning method in the state. It appears that collaborative processes should be used.
- Implementation-- This is very vague again. Not clearly spelled out.
- Technical impact-- The entire state needs to be focusing on connectivity across the state. It does not appear that NETV or DOC were brought in to support this project. It has merit, but the costs are high and connectivity issues do not seemingly go away.
- Risk assessment-- This area is really void of any consideration.
- Financial analysis-- The project may have merit, but clearly, for the resources requested, needs to have much better supporting information.



**Nebraska Information Technology Commission**  
**FY 2001-03 Education "Non-Projects"**

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Education Agency</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>Technical Review Score</b>
47-01	NETC/Omaha Production and Origination Center (KYNE)	UNO Equipment Increase	\$145,000		44
47-02	NETC	DTV Operating Costs	\$281,161	\$904,192	43
47-03	NETC	KUON-TV NTSC Replacement Transmitter	\$300,000		47
47-04	NETC	KPNE-TV NTSC Replacement Transmitter		\$325,000	47
47-06	NETC	Replacement, Fiber Transport System UNL to NET	\$79,000		40
47-07	NETC	Upgrade UNMC's NEB*SAT Operations Center (Router)	\$40,000		40
47-08	NETC	Move Network 3 Dish in Hastings	\$45,000		50
47-09	NETC	Upgrade Sandhills Technology Education Project (STEP) Broken Bow		\$300,000	47
47-10	NETC	Upgrade North Platte Microwave Video and Audio Transport		\$10,000	50
51-01	University of Nebraska	Public Service/Engagement	\$300,000	\$300,000	32
51-02	University of Nebraska	Extended/Distance Education	\$1,975,000	\$1,975,000	31
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$3,165,161</b>	<b>\$3,814,192</b>	

The Education Council did not rank the above requests because they did not meet the definition of "project" and were therefore outside the scope of the ranking process. This fact should not reflect negatively on the merits or value of such proposals.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-01**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC/KYNE	UNO Equipment Increase	\$145,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

The Omaha Production and Origination Center currently uses analog videotape and a disk based playback system (built from a non-linear editor with software written in-house) to originate programming on KYNE-TV. The Video Server will replace all or part of these. The Video Server is broadcast equipment that includes information technology only as an embedded hardware/software system invisible to the user.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**                      **FY 2002**

Hardware & Installation              \$145,000

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	8	9	8	8.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	8	10	5	7.7	10
Section VI: Implementation	7	10	9	8.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	10	10	10.0	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	4	6	6	5.3	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	5	3	4.3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>44</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- I would like to see more specificity in the projected outcomes and assessment methods.
- Please indicate target dates in milestones.
- More specifics need to flesh out strategies in the risk assessment section.

Reviewer #3:

- Needs: How large is the active, daily viewership of KYNE-TV? Is present video quality unacceptable to viewers?
- Assumptions: One assumption made but stated later in this document is that replacement of the video equipment will bring about uninterrupted service from the Omaha Production Center. Are there no other technical difficulties that bring about interruption of service?
- Economic impact: Would newer equipment provide cost savings in avoided repair costs or personnel repair savings?
- Project preferability: No explanation was provided.
- Mandates: Does the present analog equipment fail to comply with FCC technical requirements, thereby necessitating an immediate changeover?

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-02**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	DTV Operating Costs	\$ 281,161	\$ 904,192

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

This project provides funding for increased operating costs related to digital television (DTV).

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has mandated that all television broadcast licensees begin transmitting a DTV signal no later than May 1, 2003. The NITC previously addressed the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission's DTV project. Thanks to funding provided by the legislature and governor the last biennium, NETC is adequately funded for equipment needed to meet the May 1, 2003 DTV broadcast deadline. (Some shortfall remains for production equipment funding).

The FCC mandate requires that broadcast of the analog, NTSC (current) signal be maintained through 2006 or until at least 85% of the area market is equipped with digital receivers, whichever occurs later. As a result, NET will incur utilities, maintenance and other operating costs directly related to the FCC mandate, without achieving savings that would be available if the NTSC broadcasts were eliminated immediately.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

DTV OPERATING SUMMARY	FY 2002	FY 2003
Insurance Premiums	\$ 8,686	\$ 11,568
Transmission Communications:	\$ -	\$ 30,300
Transmission Electrical	\$ 164,903	\$416,298
Transmission Mat'l/Maintenance	\$ 62,572	\$176,732
Partnership Operating Lease	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Retransmission Maintenance	\$ -	\$149,793
Production Maintenance	\$ -	\$ 72,500
DTV Travel & Training	\$ 20,000	\$ 22,000
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$ 281,161</b>	<b>\$904,192</b>
<b>FUNDING SOURCE:</b>		
Cash Fund	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
General Fund	\$ 256,161	\$879,192
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>\$ 281,161</b>	<b>\$904,192</b>

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	9	10	7	8.7	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	9	10	6	8.3	10
Section VI: Implementation	8	8	6	7.3	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	9	9	9.3	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	5	4	3	4.0	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	7	3	5.0	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Which sites require new tower construction and why if this is an operations fund request?

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

Reviewer #1 (continued):

- Please be more specific on plans for staff development and maintenance.
- Be more specific on risk assessment section.
- I guess philosophically I believe operations and maintenance costs should come from general funds and grant funds should provide new or upgraded equipment as was provided to the NETC the previous round.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-03**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	KUON-TV NTSC Replacement Transmitter	\$ 300,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

This project will replace the existing KUON-TV transmitter near Lincoln, NE. The replacement is necessary for Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission (NETC) to continue to provide public educational television programming to Lincoln, and the eastern part of Nebraska. The current transmitter is 20 years old and approaching the end of its useful life. The transmitter uses costly tubes needing periodic replacement. A new solid state transmitter will use transistors, eliminating the costly tube replacements. Parts for the current transmitter are becoming difficult to obtain on a timely basis, and are very costly. As the transmitter ages, the need for replacement parts increases.

When the NETC eliminates NTSC transmissions in favor of DTV in the Lincoln area per FCC regulations, the new transmitter will easily convert to digital. This is expected to occur sometime after 2006. The current transmitter is becoming problematic, and will not convert to digital at all.

The Commission anticipates funding for 50% of the equipment cost from the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	PTFP FUNDS	NETC FY2002	TOTALS
Transmitter	\$260,000.00	\$260,000.00	\$520,000.00
Installation	15,000.00	15,000.00	30,000.00
Electrical System	10,000.00	10,000.00	20,000.00
Cooling System	15,000.00	15,000.00	30,000.00
 Total Project Costs	 \$300,000.00	 \$300,000.00	 \$600,000.00

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	10	9	9.7	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	9	10	8	9.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	9	8	8	8.3	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	9	10	10	9.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	6	7	4	5.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	5	4	4.7	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- On milestones and deliverables, please show dates when milestones are expected to be achieved.
- The proposed technology described was vague.

Reviewer #3:

- Project justification-- Are there no alternatives?

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-04**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	KPNE-TV NTSC Replacement Transmitter	\$ 325,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

This project will replace the existing KPNE-TV transmitter near North Platte, NE. The replacement is necessary for Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission (NETC) to continue to provide public educational television programming to North Platte, and the west central part of Nebraska. The current transmitter is 20 years old and approaching the end of its useful life. The transmitter uses costly tubes needing periodic replacement. A new solid state transmitter will use transistors, eliminating the costly tube replacements. Parts for the current transmitter are becoming difficult to obtain on a timely basis, and are very costly. As the transmitter ages, the need for replacement parts increases.

When the NETC eliminates NTSC transmissions in favor of DTV only in the North Platte area per FCC regulations, the new transmitter will easily convert to digital. This is expected to occur sometime after 2006. The current transmitter is becoming problematic, and will not convert to digital at all.

The Commission anticipates funding for 50% of the equipment cost from the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	PTFP FUNDS	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Transmitter	\$280,500.00	\$280,500.00	\$561,000.00
Installation	15,000.00	15,000.00	30,000.00
Electrical System	12,000.00	12,000.00	24,000.00
Cooling System	17,500.00	17,500.00	35,000.00
 Total Project Costs	 \$325,000.00	 \$325,000.00	 \$650,000.00

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	10	9	9.7	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	9	10	8	9.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	9	8	8	8.3	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	9	10	10	9.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	6	7	4	5.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	5	4	4.7	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Be more specific on project impact. Why is the North Platte job costlier than the one in Lincoln?
- Include projected dates with milestones.

Reviewer #3:

- Project impact-- Are there no alternatives?

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-06**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Replacement of fiber transport system, UNL to NET	\$ 79,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

The current Fiber Transport system from the UNL city campus to the Terry Carpenter building on the UNL east campus carries distance learning classes and television programming. Although the fiber optic cable infrastructure itself is fine, the terminal equipment at each end of the cables is not. Fiber optic transmitters and receivers in the system are no longer supported by the manufacturer. Parts are almost impossible to obtain, and expansion is limited due to no new units available. If one of the units breaks, that classroom would be unavailable for days or weeks since no backup units are available. The part would have to be shipped to the manufacturer for repair.

Replacement allows NETC to continue to provide the distance learning classes from UNL to other institutions and businesses, and allows the Nebraska ETV Network to televise cultural and sporting events from the Lied Center, the Coliseum, Memorial stadium, and the Devaney Center.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware	\$79,000		\$79,000
Total Project Costs	\$79,000		\$79,000

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	9	5	10	8.0	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	7	6	7	6.7	10
Section VI: Implementation	9	5	9	7.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	6	9	8.3	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	5	4	7	5.3	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	4	4	4.0	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>40</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- With new technology normally comes new functionality. The outcomes area appeared to be a little weak in that I believe that the new equipment would most probably give NET some capabilities they currently do not have.
- New equipment always has an economic impact on an entity in the form of a learning curve that is not identified here. There is a positive economic impact on the state in the form of the newer equipment not having the long-term down times. In the other solutions portion of this area (question 4) expandability is mentioned for the first time. What is that expandability and what does that "buy" the state?
- There is no timeline on the milestones. The other areas are explained to a satisfactory degree.

Reviewer #2:

- This request probably should have some input by UNL. It is understood that NETV is part of UNL from time to time, but it would help for UNL to have endorsed this.
- It is hard to imagine a vibrant technology in today's world with a life of 10 years or more. Reasonable expectations are not identified.
- Very minimal support material describing implementation.
- Perhaps NETV and UNL should look at other models for this type of delivery that will promote broader connectivity.
- NETV needs to make a move to a higher level of technology and broadcast. This proposal suggests more of the same. Given today's technology that is not acceptable.

Reviewer #3:

- Scope and outcomes--Project request appears to be a natural progression on the need for increased bandwidth and access.

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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-07**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Upgrade UNMC's NEB*SAT Operations Center (Router)	\$ 40,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST (Executive Summary from the Proposal)**

This project will upgrade the existing router system at UNMC. The distance learning control center at UNMC is the main switching location for all Omaha distance learning traffic. The upgrade of the UNMC's NEB\*SAT Operations Center Router is necessary because of the existing equipment age and the complexity of UNMC's NEB\*SAT Operations Center. The current system has been supplemented and patched for several years.

The upgrade allows UNMC to continue to provide distance learning classes to other educational institutions throughout the state, and UNMC's NEB\*SAT Operations Center Network to expand their capabilities.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Router	\$40,000		\$40,000
Installation			
Other			
Total Project Costs	\$40,000		\$40,000

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	8	7	8	7.7	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	9	4	8	7.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	7	10	9	8.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	8	8	9	8.3	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	4	3	7	4.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	3	3	3.3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>40</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- This project suggests broader advantage to K12, NDE, etc, but does not cite any examples. It really appears to be a UNMC issue. This is important, but not adequately nor appropriately supported in the documentation.
- This is more of the same technology only with broader capacity.

Reviewer #2:

- The project should include a capacity analysis to insure the proper size of router and to determine the risk of exceeding capacity. How likely is it that this piece of equipment will become obsolete before the end of its 10 year life cycle?



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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-08**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Move Network 3 Dish in Hastings	\$ 45,000	

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

The project would move the satellite dish from Hastings College to Central Community College. The current system is installed at Hastings College. The primary user of the system is Central Community College located four (4) miles away. There are microwave and fiber transmission systems between them. The fiber link has been cut several times in the past, and has caused numerous outages. In addition to the fiber failures, the distance from NET technical personnel at Central Community College requires significant additional time for simple operational adjustments.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware	\$26,847		\$26,847
Installation	\$18,153		\$18,153
Annual Operating			
Total Project Costs	\$45,000		\$45,000

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	10	7	9.0	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	10	10	8	9.3	10
Section VI: Implementation	10	10	10	10.0	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	10	10	10.0	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	8	8	4	6.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	5	5	4.7	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>50</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Risk assessment-- Justification is acceptable and if project is not completed, impact on learning could be moderate to significant.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-09**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Upgrade Sandhills Technology Education Project (STEP) Broken Bow		\$ 300,000

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

The upgrade of the Sandhills Technology Education Project (STEP) system is keeping current the original 'POD' that NEB\*SAT and NETC funded to demonstrate the feasibility to of establishing an interactive distance learning system between schools. This original 'Pod' was installed as an analog pod and the uplink in Broken Bow allows the STEP Pod to interconnect with the state network via NEB\*SAT. This STEP Pod needs to replace equipment. The manufacturer no long manufactures nor supports the equipment. The technology in use is unlike any of the other K-12 consortia around the state. This upgrade would give them the same technology as all the other digital pods. The original STEP Pod was five schools, but 4 more schools were added in 1997 for a total of nine schools.

NETC is recommending a digital replacement. The current system is an analog island and the Broken Bow uplink is the single gateway to the state distance learning system. The telephone company leases fiber optic circuits to the schools. The fiber equipment was installed by NETC for the STEP pod. An NETC employee maintains the equipment with support from the schools in the STEP Pod.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware		\$300,000	\$300,000
Installation			
Other			
Total Project Costs		\$300,000	\$300,000

Detail:	DV6000 Chassis (x 10)	\$142,115
	10 Bit Encoder / Decoder (x 20)	\$ 53,000
	1310/1550 Wave Division Mux (x 20)	\$ 20,000
	Optelcom Fiber Transmitter (x 20)	\$ 59,000
	Optelcom Fiber Receiver (x 20)	\$ 24,600
	Power Supply (x 20)	\$ 800
	Cable & Connectors	\$ 485

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	10	8	9.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	9	10	8	9.0	10
Section VI: Implementation	10	10	8	9.3	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	6	10	8	8.0	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	7	8	6	7.0	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	4	5	5	4.7	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Making the move to make the STEP pod compatible with other state pods is certainly laudible and in fact vital. It is also critical, however that a project entered into this long after the installation of the other pods not only take into account the technology currently in use in those pods but also the next generation of technologies that may come into play after the life cycle of the existing pods has passed. This project should be designed with one foot in the existing compatible technology camp and the other ready to step into whatever technologies the state adopts for distance learning as a result of the TINA project and the State Network Architecture committee discussions. I would think that the Division of Communications would be an excellent resource for guidance in this process.

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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 47-10**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
NETC	Upgrade North Platte Microwave Audio and Video Transport		\$ 10,000

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST (Executive Summary from the Proposal)**

The upgrade of the North Platte Microwave Video and Audio Transport is necessary because of the existing equipment technical quality. The current system uses analog television frequency modulation and demodulation. The new system would use digital delivery via fiber optic cable to eliminate terrestrial interference and degradation of signal due to weather.

The upgrade allows North Platte to continue to provide distance learning classes to other educational institutions throughout the state. This will also allow North Platte NEB\*SAT Operations Center Network to increase the quality and reliability of their signal.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

ITEM	NETC FUNDS FY2002	NETC FUNDS FY2003	TOTALS
Hardware		\$10,000	\$10,000
Installation			
Other			
Total Project Costs		\$10,000	\$10,000
Detail:			
Optelecom 5057TT Fiber Optic Transmitter (X2)		\$5,900	
Optelecom 505RR Fiber Optic Receiver (X2)		\$2,460	
Optelecom 9015PS Power Supply (X2)		\$ 80	
Cable Conduit		\$ 360	
FODSTC Fiber Optic Cable		\$1,200	

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	10	10	8	9.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	10	10	9	9.7	10
Section VI: Implementation	10	10	10	10.0	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	10	10	10	10.0	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	8	5	4	5.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	5	5	5	5.0	5
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	53

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Any time we move from high maintenance, high vulnerability (in terms of weather in this case) to low maintenance, long life cycle solutions it is certainly in the best interest of the State to expend reasonable resources to do so.

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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 51-01**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
University of Nebraska	Public Service/Engagement	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

A total of \$1.5 million, requested in the operating budget at a level of \$750,000 in each year of the biennium, will improve the University's service to and engagement with Nebraska citizens. A portion (\$300,000 per year) of this request is being brought forward as a technology request because it proposes a stronger partnership among the agencies and educational entities or organizations that play important roles in daily lives of the citizens of the State of Nebraska. Significant portions of these roles involve utilization of or interaction via emerging digital technologies.

Citizens, businesses, and communities are still seeking solutions and resources to keep current on the rapidly changing Information Technologies (IT). The *Technologies Across Nebraska Initiative* (in response to Legislative Resolution 330) provides additional focus in addressing technology access equitably and increases reliable educational resources. The University will provide one of the leadership roles (with about 40 other involved entities). NU has the knowledge and track record to help reduce the digital divide among Nebraska citizens and the desire to work with all the partners. Much work has already been done by many. But citizen feedback continues to indicate that enough is not yet being done. Communities are feeling left behind, businesses still are seeking IT knowledge especially in marketing, IT strategies and positioning in the digital world. The emphasis of this project is on providing information to our citizens so that they can effectively incorporate technology into building community, business and personal opportunities. This request is not for equipment, but for *creating an environment for learning about what all this equipment and wiring and networks and web sites are all about.*

The NITC Community Council has identified fifteen areas that are in need of significant attention by the various IT supporters, educators, vendors and organizations. These include community leadership development and IT planning, economic development, E-commerce, agriculture, access to IT, education, libraries, health care, IT training, IT infrastructure choices, E-government, law enforcement and funding strategies. This proposal acknowledges those needs and introduces a partnership initiative focused upon meeting them.

The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources will play a leadership role in developing collaborative opportunities throughout the NU system and among the Initiative partners. This grass-roots connected organization possesses the critical resources and experience needed to continually interact and receive feedback from those served, to ensure that programs are addressing the needs and issues of Nebraska citizens.

For this project, we've defined two areas -- **Entrepreneurship through Connectivity** and **A Focus on Economic Viability** -- as the two complementary programmatic areas in need of additional support. They comprise the foundations of this project request, shaping the thrust around two vital business and community needs. While listed as two components, their integration and mutual development is essential.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

		FY 2002	FY 2003
Research/Coop Ext. Faculty	4.0	\$211,000	5.0 \$229,500
Retirement		12,554	13,655
OASDI		16,022	17,407
Life Ins.		120	150
Health Ins.		14,000	17,500

Operating expenses are needed for materials and basic operations:

Operating	\$ 46,304	\$ 21,788
TOTAL	\$300,000	\$300,000

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	3	7	9	6.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	5	5	7	5.7	10
Section VI: Implementation	3	3	3	3.0	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	6	10	4	6.7	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	4	8	8	6.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	2	4	4	3.3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>32</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- This proposal identifies several NITC initiatives relating to planning for the strategic use of Information Technology to foster and promote community development and economic viability. Specifically, the project seeks to develop and deliver educational content and consulting services to assist localities and individuals in the identification of opportunities and to develop technology initiatives to respond to these opportunities. Two components of the project have been identified. The Entrepreneurship Through Connectivity to assist communities to make informed IT decisions and the delivery of educational programs to assess information technology needs. A Focus on Rural Economic Viability targets efforts to increase the economic viability of small and medium size agricultural enterprises and other community businesses.
- The annual project budget is projected at \$750,000, with \$300,000 of that total is "brought forward as a technology request." The \$300,000 is dedicated to the support of FTE positions.
- To achieve these broad goals, the project contemplates developing and delivering educational curricula detailing the planning and use of IT initiatives for community consumption. It proposes developing and deploying planning and consulting expertise in five regions throughout the state. It describes a broad coalition of educational organizations coming together to produce, deliver, and support the program goals. And, it describes a process to expand the scope of IT services for use in the private sector in agricultural, rural, and economically disadvantaged areas of the state. Stated risks to the project: the University and it's Initiative Partners chose not to cooperate; the lack of knowledgeable IT in the area of community IT planning; the deployment of these individuals across the state; and the inability to estimate the staffing requirements to meet a fully operational program. Several other risks may be inherent in the proposal. Although the project speaks of the development of, and access to, educational program content, this process is not detailed in the request. The implementation plan addresses only the hiring new staff, training these staff in IT and community/business development. The narrative does not provide a business plan for the development of the educational content; it does not contemplate a governance structure between the University and it's Initiative Partners to protect against the non-cooperative risk; it does not propose a source of continued and on-going funding; nor does it describe the requirements necessary to deliver the course content which is to be developed. This reviewer agrees to the necessity to address the issues raised in the program narrative, but is uncomfortable with the how the proposal will meet the stated concerns and objectives. Since this narrative supports only part of the University initiative, perhaps these topics are addressed elsewhere. If so, full supporting documentation should be made available to the NITC as part of a Project Proposal.
- Technical impact-- The proposal does not call for the development or installation of IT infrastructure. If successful, the project would provide a benefit for community technical infrastructure decisions.
- The risk of this project rests in the lack of specificity, governance, and roles and responsibilities. From the narrative, it is unclear if there is a group of partners that have committed to the project, what the scope of their participation might be, and how the group plans to govern itself. No estimates are given of the duration or scope of the program content to be delivered under either the Entrepreneurship Through Connectivity, nor the Focus on Rural Economic Viability. The project seems to indicate the placement of five individuals across the state to deliver program content, serve as IT consultants to communities, and otherwise assist communities. Without the content, what skills will these individuals be required to possess? If the individuals are to develop program content, who is to deliver the content? What is the role, and what is the commitment of the partnering agencies? Finally, how is the program to be sustained?
- Financial analysis-- For the biennium, a total budget of \$1.5 million is being requested, of which \$600,000 is identified as technology. This \$600,000 is targeted to 4 and then 5 FTE positions. The use of the remaining \$900,000 is not covered in the technical documentation. The project proposal would have been much stronger if the entire program would have been presented. Without an understanding of the scope of the project, some estimate of the deliverables, and some estimate of content, it is impossible to determine if the budget is sufficient to fund the program. The narrative states that educators skilled in IT are in demand, and may not be available. Program content may help define the staffing requirements: whether it is individuals skilled as educators, individuals skilled in IT, or educators skilled in IT. The range of services which might be available in the two focus areas, Rural Economic Viability and Connectivity, could overwhelm the 2 and 3 people assigned to each area.

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

- Final Comment--This reviewer agrees that the issues raised in the project proposal must be addressed. At the same time, I am concerned that the narrative identifies too great a task to be developed and delivered by the resources identified in the proposal. Again, if a full description of the University's proposal had been documented, I might feel more comfortable. Finally,

Reviewer #1 (continued):

- I am left wondering about the roles and responsibilities of the partners referenced in the project. Who are they? Are they willing to participate? Will they commit funding and or resources? How is this confederacy organized? How is it governed? How will decisions be made? What expertise to they bring to the project?

Reviewer #2:

- Scope and outcomes--Beneficiaries and their needs should be better defined. Expected outcomes as written are not specific and measurable. Because the outcomes are not well-defined the measurement and assessment methods are necessarily vague.
- Project justification-- Although I believe that there is a real need for community IT training, the case is not made in this proposal. Which organizations make up the Technologies Across Nebraska partnership? It is hard to judge the potential effectiveness of such a partnership without even a list of partnering organizations. How this will impact staffing at the University of Nebraska is not addressed in the narrative. One has to turn to the budget page to determine that additional positions would be added. No other alternatives were explored. How much of this project could be accomplished through reallocation?
- Implementation--Is this an implementation plan? I realize that it may be hard to make a detailed plan without needed staff on board, but you can certainly include a general timeline for hiring staff, training staff, developing curriculum, piloting programs, etc.
- Technical impact-- Not a technical project--all not applicable.
- Risk assessment-- Not a technical project. Not applicable.
- General comments-- I really feel strongly that community IT training is needed. So while I strongly support the overall goals of this project, I have some reservations about its implementation as presented in this proposal. This may be a case where the project may be better than the proposal.

Reviewer #3:

- Scope and outcomes--There could have been more specific information about who would be targeted for this proposal.
- Project justification-- There is a lack of detail in the narrative concerning the justification for this particular strategy.
- Implementation-- The implementation section does not address many of the issues outlined on the scoring criteria.
- Technical impact-- Details are sketchy in terms of the technical impact this proposal will have. There were no justifications provided for issues not addressed.
- Final comments-- It is not clear what the research/cooperative extension faculty are going to do.

NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION  
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**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

**Project # 51-02**

Agency	Project	FY2002	FY2003
University of Nebraska	Extended/Distance Education	\$ 1,975,000	\$ 1,975,000

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST** (Executive Summary from the Proposal)

The University of Nebraska requests \$1,975,000 in each year of the 2001-2003 biennium to build distance education courses. The request is adequate only to deliver a limited number of courses annually. The University is building distance education courses now, and has identified needs that far exceed this request. However, this request would boost activity.

Recent surveys indicate that there is demand for and interest in distance education in Nebraska and beyond our borders. Our vision is one of delivering programs and providing opportunities to the citizens of Nebraska as well as others, regardless of location. We are building on areas of academic strength and using the latest available, cost-effective technology to deliver high quality distance learning courses so that learners can attain degrees, enhance careers or achieve professional development. The activities and needs outlined in this request are all essential to the success of distance education course development and delivery.

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

		FY 2002		FY 2003
Faculty (Grants)		\$250,000		\$250,000
Managerial/Professional 5.0	3.0	250,000		150,000
Retirement		29,750		23,800
OASDI		38,100		30,225
Life Ins.		150		375
Health Insurance		<u>17,500</u>		<u>10,500</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>\$585,500</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>\$464,900</b>
Travel for Faculty Development		\$ 45,961		\$ 50,000
Operating and Capital Outlay requests include:				
Capital Outlay		\$ 371,039		\$ 371,039
Operating		\$ 972,500		\$ 1,089,061

**PROJECT SCORE**

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Section IV: Scope and Projected Outcomes	6	7	6	6.3	10
Section V: Project Justification / Business Case	3	6	4	4.3	10
Section VI: Implementation	3	4	4	3.7	10
Section VII: Technical Impact	7	10	7	8.0	10
Section VIII: Risk Assessment	6	10	4	6.7	8
Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget	1	4	1	2.0	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>31</b>	<b>53</b>

**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Reviewer #1:

- Scope and outcomes--This section is vague and marginally defined.
- The project could have a real impact in Nebraska, but the business case for this project was poorly presented and was unacceptable. This proposal lacked specifics to convince the reader that the business case was very well thought out.
- Implementation--I question if the experience is present to implement a project of this size. Specifics and milestones are really needed. At \$1.9 million, I believe that the people of Nebraska deserve more detail than it seems the University is willing to give.

**Project Proposal - Summary Sheet**

- Technical impact--The software cost for Blackboard is under \$10,000! There is no real discussion of merit on servers or for that matter, anything of substance.
- Risk assessment--The risk section is done well, but would there be an impact if it were not funded? Institutions in Nebraska are moving ahead regardless of legislative funding. There will be zero negative impact if this project is not funded.

Reviewer #1 (continued):

- Financial analysis-- This is a significant project that is a major outlay of resources for Nebraska. Distance learning needs support but not a check for \$1.9 million with few specifics. There is really very little technology in the proposal and what there is, lacks an in-depth explanation. I was also looking for specifics on the faculty grants and was wondering why they should be funded, when most institutions in this state have been funding stipends through existing resources. The travel budget is excessive and it makes me wonder if they are aware of the financial outlook in Nebraska. The state colleges and community colleges would be grateful to receive the travel budget alone to enhance their existing distance online programs. I was also looking for some detail on programs, beyond the sparse detail that was provided.
- Final comments-- There are a lot of things that can be done for the place bound learner in Nebraska; however this project is not one of them. The overall cost is excessive and lacks credibility. Funding this project as stated, would be disappointing and as a taxpayer I would really wonder why the process had failed. If this project was more forthcoming with the detail that is clearly lacking, I possibly could look on this project with favor and support.

Reviewer #2:

- The need is intuitive but there is a lack of detail concerning what are the needs and how they will be addressed by this proposal.
- The project description indicates that there will be a potential impact on procedures, staffing costs, and funding as faculty will be expected to create distance education courses and certain standards need to be met to ensure the courses meet academic standards.
- Implementation-- The oversight team is clearly defined as are their duties but there is no detail concerning what the deliverables would be or what the timelines would be. It is indicated elsewhere that there will be a need for faculty support and training but it wasn't addressed in this section.

Reviewer #3:

- How does this request fit with the following initiative approved by the NU Board of Regents? "The University of Nebraska Board of Regents voted to invest \$421,000 in the Midwest Higher Education Consortium's (MHEC) Distributed Learning Workshop, a collaborative effort to develop modules of computer-mediated instructional materials that can be shared among multiple university partners." --StatePaper.com