



STATE OF NEBRASKA

NEWS FROM THE NITC NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION

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NITC meets March 3

- 2 The next meeting of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission will be held on March 3 at 1:30 PM CT in the Executive Building, 521 South 14th Street in Lincoln, Nebraska. The agenda for the meeting will be posted on the NITC website (www.nitc.ne.gov).

Nebraska launches web streaming

- 4 Citizens now have expanded access to hearings and events happening at the State Capitol via an expanded menu of web streaming options. The new coverage allows citizens to view online cases argued before the Nebraska Supreme Court and Court of Appeals and Governor's news conferences from the State Capitol. Equipment for streaming legislative floor debate and committee hearings has also been upgraded to provide improved streaming quality.

Links to live coverage from the State Capitol and schedules for upcoming events can be found on the state web portal, www.Nebraska.gov, as well as the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) website at www.netNebraska.org/capitol. The Supreme Court and Court of Appeals begin live web streaming in February.

New cameras installed in the State Capitol provide a broadcast quality digital image and audio. DSL or cable-modem users can access a high bandwidth feed, and low bandwidth and audio only feeds are available for those using dial-up modems.

"This is a major step forward in government transparency," Gov. Dave Heineman said. "Providing live coverage will allow Nebraskans and anyone with an Internet connection to know what's going on at the seat of our government. It provides a new level of

accountability to our citizens. I appreciate the work of everyone involved in the successful completion of this project.”

The Nebraska Legislature was one of the first in the nation to offer live web streaming of floor debate, and Nebraska was the first to create a closed circuit system for state offices. Nebraska’s web streaming project is believed to be one of the most comprehensive in U.S. statehouses, thanks to the collaboration that allows three branches of state government to use one system.

Partners include the Office of the Chief Information Officer, NET and the Office of the Capitol Commission. Initial planning started in 2006, with the installation of cameras, wiring and other equipment beginning last August. Funding for the web streaming project was accomplished within existing agency budgets. No new funding was appropriated to complete the project.

Communities

Stimulus plan includes funding for broadband, health IT

The economic stimulus plan includes funding for broadband and health IT. Governor Heineman and the Policy Research Office are monitoring the status of any stimulus funding that may be received by the State of Nebraska and will take the lead in determining its use.

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant program opens

USDA Rural Development is accepting applications for grants through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program to provide access to education, training and healthcare resources in rural areas. Funding for the program is subject to Congressional appropriations.

DLT grants increase the range of educational opportunities available to students in rural communities and improve access to healthcare for countless numbers of rural Americans. The DLT program provides increased economic opportunity by expanding telecommunications, educational resources and computer networks throughout rural America. In 2008, USDA Rural Development provided grants totaling \$28.2 million under the program to 105 recipients in 41 states.

Complete applications must be received by March 24. For further details about eligibility rules and application procedures, see the December 24, 2008, *Federal Register*, page 79041. Materials including an application guide and full details about the program can also be obtained at www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/dlt/dlt.htm or by calling the DLT program at 202-720-0413. In Nebraska you can contact Andre Boening at Andre.Boening@wdc.usda.gov or (402) 543-2129 for additional information on the program.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested nearly \$111 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 2 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA’s website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

Internet, broadband use grows

A recent Pew Internet report finds that Internet use is highest for Americans younger than 50. Ninety-three percent of twelve to 17-year-olds are online. Between 80-89% of adults from 18-49 years old are online. Although older adults are less likely to use the Internet than younger adults, older adults are the fastest growing group. Forty-five percent of those 70-75 years old are now online, compared to 26% in 2005. Broadband use at home has grown since 2005. Between 66-71% of adults from 18-49 years old have broadband at home. Those over 50 are less likely to have broadband at home, ranging from 60% of those from 50-54 years old to 16% of those 76 years old or older.

Additional research by Pew Internet and American Life Project finds that approximately one-third of American adults do not have broadband. Nine percent use dial up and 25 percent are not online. About one-third of those without broadband cite cost and availability as reasons for not having broadband. The other remaining two-thirds cite factors related to relevance and usability.

Both reports are available at www.pewinternet.org.

eHealth

NeHII prepares for pilot implementation

Many activities continue as NeHII prepares for the pilot implementation. Participation agreements have been executed, implementation meetings are occurring and demographic information has been sent to create the Master Patient Index (MPI). Once the MPI is created, facilities will send laboratory, radiology and clinical documentation to complete the patient information. In addition, insurance eligibility information will be sent creating an overall patient summary.

The Privacy and Security workgroup has developed the security and privacy policies to govern the exchange. These documents have been approved and will be continually used to ensure accurate and authorized use of the data.

In accordance with the NeHII Bylaws, the Marketing Committee has been renamed to the Consumer Advisory Council. This committee is focusing on communicating with and educating the consumer. The Consumer Advisory Council is chaired by Sandy Johnson and its members include Anne Byers, Harris Frankel MD, Rick Sheehy, George Sullivan and Delane Wycoff MD. Another new committee, the HIE Advisory Council, is designed to represent the interest of other health information exchanges in Nebraska and other areas served by the corporation. The HIE Advisory Council is chaired by Dan Griess and its members include Lisa Bewley, Robert Bowen MD, Ken Foster, Kim Galt, Cheryl Tira, Roger Van Epps, and Michael Westcott MD.

On January 12, NeHII continues its national exposure as featured presenter on the eHI Connecting Communities presentation. This is in addition to the presentation NeHII made during the HIMSS Chapter RHIO Liaison Roundtable on December 18. Locally, NeHII also participated in the Nebraska Hospital Association call on January 12. Deb Bass and Chris Henkenius would like to present information on NeHII to any interested groups and/or individuals. More information on NeHII is available at www.nehii.org.

eHealth Council forms Public Health Work Group

The NITC's eHealth Council is forming a Public Health Work Group. The Work Group is charged with:

- Developing a shared vision for the integrated and secure exchange of public health data among public health entities, health information exchanges, personal health record systems, and private providers.
- Gaining a better understanding of public health information systems and health information exchanges in Nebraska, personal health record systems, electronic medical record systems, and how these systems could interact.
- Identifying and prioritizing opportunities for exchanging public health data among public health entities, health information exchanges, personal health record systems, and private providers.
- Identifying and prioritizing barriers to the exchange of public health information.
- Recommending next steps for achieving the integrated and secure exchange of public health data among public health entities, health information exchanges, personal health record systems, and private providers.
- Recommending a process for continuing development of the integrated and secure exchange of public health data among public health entities, health information exchanges, personal health record systems, and private providers.

If you would like to participate in this group, please contact Anne Byers (anne.byers@nebraska.gov).

Legislation addresses eHealth barriers

Two legal barriers to the exchange of health information were identified by the Health Information Security and Privacy Committee (HISPC) Legal Work Group, eHealth Council, and the e-Prescribing Work Group. Nebraska law currently places a 180 day limit on authorizations to release health information. Brenda Decker, on behalf of the NITC, proposed an amendment to LB288 which addressed the 180 day provision at a hearing before the Health and Human Services Committee.

Another barrier identified by the eHealth Council and the E-Prescribing Work Group is a requirement for pharmacists to maintain paper records of prescriptions. LB220 includes a provision addressing this.

Upcoming Meetings

- **E-Prescribing Work Group**, Feb. 18, 4:00-6:00, Mahoney State Park
- **PHR Work Group**, Feb. 25, 3:00, phone conference
- **eHealth Council**, March 16, 9:30, NET, 1800 N. 33rd St., Lincoln

Education

Network Nebraska poised for Phase III upgrades

After a second straight year of double round bidding, the number of education entities to begin network upgrades during the summer of 2009 is taking shape. Joining the statewide network will be 25 K-12 sites in the ESU 13 Panhandle area, 16 sites in the ESU 9 Hastings area, Lincoln Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, ESU 3 Office in LaVista, three eastern Nebraska community colleges, Peru State College, and some additional miscellaneous sites. Three segments of the backbone infrastructure will be upgraded to carry the extra traffic and Internet access. The K-12 Internet access will more than double from 780Mbps to 1.7Gbps and the community/state college Internet bandwidth will increase by 50% from 310 Mbps to 460 Mbps. The remaining educational entities (e.g. Southeast Nebraska schools and ESUs, nonpublic K-12, and higher education institutions) will be extended another invitation to join the network in the summer of 2010.

Stimulus package benefits educational technology

The House and the Senate have both passed their first versions of the Economic Stimulus Package as encouraged by the Obama administration. Although each version differs, there are some similarities in the broad funding that may be aimed at K-12 education. The House bill would provide \$14 billion in formula block grant funding to states for K-12 School Modernization, Repair and Renovation, with allowable uses of funding including education technology infrastructure upgrades. The Senate bill provides \$16 billion. Both the House and the Senate indicated \$1 billion in new funding for the Enhancing Education through Technology program (Title II, Part D) of the No Child Left Behind Act. Community colleges and public libraries may benefit with up to \$250 million for public access computer labs. While the House bill, as many had hoped, did not contain money only for school broadband upgrades, it did include \$6 billion for broadband and wireless services in underserved areas and rural areas. K-12 education may benefit from some of this funding.

LB1208 Distance Education Unit funding estimated

The preliminary estimates of the LB1208 Distance Education Unit (DEU) funding is predicted to total \$1,174,000 of lottery funds for the 2008-09 school year. This amount comprises all the send and receive units for synchronous video courses being exchanged by schools in the ESUs 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17 regions for August 2008 through May 2009. ESUs 9, 13, 18 and 19 schools will join this Phase I-II peer group in vying for distance education unit incentives beginning in August 2009.

State Government

Online renewal for vehicle registration launched

In December, the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) [launched](#) a new service providing [online vehicle registration renewals](#). To renew a car or truck registration online, users need only the information on their current vehicle registration slip or the renewal postcard sent by their county treasurer's office, along with bank account information or a MasterCard or Visa credit card. The online renewal process automatically checks the Motor Vehicle Insurance Database to verify vehicle insurance. The online renewal process can be completed in minutes.

Legislature redesigns website

With the beginning of the 101st Legislature on January 7, the Unicameral unveiled a new website. Site enhancements include:

- Redesigned [Bill Search](#) and [Law Search](#)
- [Senators' web pages](#)
- [Interactive map to Find Your Senator](#)
- Printer friendly formatting
- Content organized specifically for [citizens](#), [agencies and lobbyists](#), [students and teachers](#) and [journalists](#)
- Answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Geographic Information Systems

Nebraska Geospatial Data Sharing and Web Services Network launched

After several unsuccessful efforts to hire a project manager to lead an intergovernmental effort to develop an enterprise-level Geospatial Data Sharing and Web Services Network, Dan Pfeffer has now been hired to lead this project. Dan will be working with James Merchant, Center for Advanced Land Management Information Technology (CALMIT), University of Nebraska-Lincoln under a contract with the Office of the CIO, State of Nebraska. The focus of this effort is to develop a geospatial (GIS) web portal that will ultimately provide central access to a wide variety of GIS data related to the geographic area of Nebraska. The portal design will utilize current technology to provide access to web mapping and data services provided by multiple state, local and federal agencies. For those agencies that do not currently have the ability to provide online access to their geospatial data, the project design will also provide for storage and online access to those datasets. An interagency Partners Committee is being developed to provide interagency advise and oversight of this project as its moves towards implementation. The active participation of additional agencies and/or entities in this project is welcome. For anyone interested in this project, contact Dan Pfeffer, UNL-CALMIT GIS Portal Project Manager, dpfeffer2@unlnotes.unl.edu, or Larry Zink, GIS Coordinator, larry.zink@nebraska.gov.

Nebraska surface water features remapped, applications planned

Nebraska has completed the initial development of a high resolution National Hydrography Dataset (NHD), a remapping of Nebraska surface water features. This interagency effort was initiated by the Nebraska GIS Council and lead by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, with cooperation and support from several agencies, including the USGS. This 12,000 scale statewide dataset includes the centerlines of all streams and rivers, scale-dependent banks of rivers and lakes, and also built-in intelligent design elements such as a logical stream network that enables down and upstream flow analysis, and an integrated addressing schema that enables the referencing of locations along stream segments. It is hoped that this new updated, statewide dataset will provide a foundation for helping to integrate and analyze surface water data across state, local and federal agencies. Now that the initial development of this dataset has been completed, a strategic planning effort is now being initiated to look at how the potential of this dataset might be best realized. This effort will look at how best to facilitate potential applications, and needed dataset enhancements, software tools, and training. Anyone interested in participating in this strategic planning effort should contact Josh Lear, Dept. of Natural Resources, josh.lear@nebraska.gov or Larry Zink, GIS Coordinator OCIO, larry.zink@nebraska.gov.

Planning for high-resolution imagery collaborative project begins

Local, state, and federal agencies have begun planning another collaborative project that is focused on the acquisition of high-resolution (probably 1-foot and 6-inch) aerial imagery in 2010. This project will build on an earlier successful collaborative effort to acquire updated high-resolution imagery in 2007 and which acquired imagery for over 8,500 sq. mi., including 10 Nebraska counties, 2 Iowa counties, higher resolution imagery for 5 Nebraska cities. The collaborative effort enables substantial cost saving due to a polling of demand and resources and also a sharing of technical expertise. The foci of the collaborative effort is the Omaha and Lincoln metro areas, but the 2007 effort included areas as far west as Kearney and Buffalo County. The core leadership for this collaborative effort has come from Omaha/Douglas County and the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency. Anyone interested in further information regarding the current planning for a similar effort in 2010 should contact Mike Schonlau, Omaha/Douglas County GIS Coordinator, MSchonlau@ci.omaha.ne.us or Larry Zink, GIS Coordinator OCIO, larry.zink@nebraska.gov.

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