



STATE OF NEBRASKA

NEWS FROM THE NITC NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION

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NITC meets November 30

2 The next meeting of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission will be held on November 30 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).

Communities

Public Service Commission applies for Broadband Mapping funding

The Nebraska Public Service Commission has submitted an application to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for broadband mapping. The application includes funding for planning activities. The Public Service Commission invited the Nebraska Information Technology Commission, Nebraska Department of Economic Development and University of Nebraska Extension to develop the planning component.

As part of the proposed planning project, a statewide survey on Internet use and access will be done. Regional information technology committees will be formed to conduct assessments and develop strategic plans. The Community Council will serve as an advisory body to the project. Regional technology plans and a statewide report will be presented to the NITC, Nebraska Public Service Commission, and Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The Broadband Mapping Planning effort will also serve as a vehicle for addressing any broadband issues that may arise in implementing statewide health information exchange.

Red Cloud, Phelps County recognized for outstanding websites

The Websites for Growth Program recognized Red Cloud (www.redcloudguiderock.com) and Phelps County (<http://www.justthelacenebraska.com/>) for their outstanding websites at the NCIP Awards Banquet on Nov. 6. The Website for Growth program has helped 11 Nebraska communities develop more effective websites. Project partners include the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, University of Nebraska Extension, Nebraska Public Power District, AIM Institute, and Nebraska Information Technology Commission Community Council.

NTIA AND RUS consolidate final two funding rounds, seek comments

The USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today announced they are streamlining the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's broadband grant and loan programs by awarding the remaining funding in just one more round, instead of two rounds, to increase efficiency and better accommodate applicants. RUS and NTIA also released a joint Request for Information (RFI) seeking comment on further implementation of the Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) and the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

RUS's Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) and NTIA's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) are intended to expand broadband access and adoption in America, advancing the goals of the Recovery Act by creating jobs and stimulating long-term economic growth and opportunity. The first round of these grant and loan programs produced about 2,200 applications requesting nearly \$28 billion in funding – almost seven times the amount of funding available in that round – for proposed broadband projects reaching all 50 U.S. states, 5 territories, and the District of Columbia. The agencies are currently reviewing these applications and expect to award up to \$4 billion in loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations in this round. The agencies expect to begin announcing funding awards in December 2009. More information is available at www.broadbandusa.gov.

eHealth

eHealth Council develops eHealth plan

The eHealth Council has developed a strategic eHealth plan which lays out the state's vision, goals, strategies, and objectives for developing statewide health information exchange. The plan focuses on the domains of adoption, governance, finance, technical infrastructure, business and technical operations. Key considerations and recommendations are also included. This plan has been designed with explicit recognition that it will be updated frequently in order to be responsive to the dynamic healthcare and HIT environment, consumer health care interests, and emerging improvements in health information management.

The plan builds on the progress made by the private sector in developing health information exchange. The State of Nebraska will partner with the Nebraska Health Information Initiative (NeHII) in implementing statewide health information exchange. NeHII is a fully operational and sustainable health information exchange. As the State Designated Entity for Nebraska, NeHII will serve two functions: (a) as an integrator for health providers, health organizations and health information exchanges requesting facilitation to connect to the National Health Information Network (NHIN) and/or with each other, and (b) as a health information exchange offering services in its own right. NeHII will provide the technical infrastructure for the sharing of health information throughout the state. NeHII will also work with the state's other regional and specialty health information exchanges. Nebraska's regional and specialty health information exchanges are the Southeast Nebraska Health Information Exchange (SENHIE), Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Exchange (SNBHIN), and Western Nebraska Health Information Exchange (WNHIE).

The strategic plan is available at <http://www.nitc.ne.gov/eHc/plan/Strategic%20Plan%20Final%2026%20Oct.pdf>.

Nebraska applies for funding from State HIE Cooperative Agreement Program

The State of Nebraska has applied for approximately \$6 million in funding from the State HIE Cooperative Agreement Program. Funds will be used to implement statewide health information exchange. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission will serve as the fiscal agent for the program and will provide oversight for the program. As the state designated entity, NeHII will oversee project implementation. Funding announcements are expected to be made in December. An operational plan will be developed to guide the implementation of statewide health information exchange through the State HIE Cooperative Agreement program.

Lt. Governor Sheehy named State HIT Coordinator

Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy has been designated as Nebraska's State HIT Coordinator. He will coordinate health information exchange efforts within the State of Nebraska and will work with the eHealth Council to facilitate health information exchange efforts across the state. He will be supported by the NITC's Community and Health IT Manager.

CIMRO of Nebraska applies for Regional Health IT Extension Center funding

The Office of the National Coordinator is funding the development of regional extension centers to provide assistance in adopting electronic medical record systems. A collaborative of Nebraska organizations has submitted a Cycle 1 application to establish a Health Information Technology Extension Center that will serve providers throughout the state. CIMRO of Nebraska, the CMS Quality Improvement Organization, is serving as a lead applicant for the proposed program. The Nebraska Regional Center will

furnish education, outreach, and technical assistance to help Nebraska providers select, successfully implement, and meaningfully use certified EHR technology to improve the quality and value of health care. The Nebraska Regional Center will also help Nebraska providers achieve, through appropriate available infrastructures, exchange of health information in compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements and patient preferences. Pursuant to requirements of the HITECH Act, priority shall be given to providers that are primary-care providers (physicians and/or other health care professionals with prescriptive privileges, such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners) in any of the following settings:

- Individual and small group practices (ten or fewer professionals with prescriptive privileges) primarily focused on primary care;
- Public and Critical Access Hospitals;
- Community Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics; and
- Other settings that predominantly serve uninsured, underinsured, and medically underserved populations

Grants under the Extension Program will be awarded on a rolling basis with an expected 20 grants awarded in the first quarter of FY2010, another 25 in the third quarter and the remaining awards in the fourth quarter of FY2010.

Education

NITC reviews action items for Network Nebraska and Digital Education

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission will be meeting on Monday, November 30 to review and approve the recommended action items for the eight strategic initiatives in the Statewide Technology Plan. Among the eight initiatives are Network Nebraska and Digital Education which forecasts or prescribes statewide development in telecommunications and digital content and management. The action items are linked to the NITC agenda and the meeting will be held by videoconference at several locations: http://nitc.nebraska.gov/nitc/meetings/agenda/nitc_agenda20091130.html.

Network Nebraska—Education is guided by a new advisory group

On July 10, 2009, a new volunteer advisory group began meeting to “assist the State of Nebraska Chief Information Officer in crafting the vision and strategic direction for Network Nebraska”. Chartered by the NITC Education Council and comprised of eight members from K-12 and eight members from higher education, this group’s charge is to provide recommendations and feedback on operating and growing the statewide network. The first three meetings were mainly spent becoming familiar with the inner workings of the network and budget. Future meetings will include discussions of affiliate member criteria and fees, as well as advanced services and support. Meeting notes and the document archive is available from: <http://nitc.nebraska.gov/NNAG/index.html>

Network Nebraska--Education Marketing Survey

This is the second straight year that the NITC Education Council Marketing Task Group has collected data from Network Nebraska—Education members and prospective members. The 2009 online survey asks questions about strengths and weaknesses of the network and its ability to meet its members’ needs. The findings from the 2008 survey led to the formation of the Network Nebraska advisory group, the procurement of a statewide traffic shaping device, and continual cost containment of the Network

Nebraska participation fees and interregional transport costs. The 2008 survey report is located at: http://nitc.nebraska.gov/NNAG/meetings/documents/20090918/NNMarketingSurveyReport_20090123.pdf and the new online survey will be available for completion from December 1-18, 2009.

Nebraska scores well in Wainhouse Report

Wainhouse Research, LLC recently released its report, *The 2009 Update: Taking the Wraps off Videoconferencing in the U.S. Classroom*. Nebraska was ranked 6th among all states in total number of videoconferencing-enabled classrooms, 2nd among all states in percentage penetration of videoconferencing into K-12 classrooms, and 9th fastest growth state in increased number of classrooms with videoconferencing, 2006-09. This development has largely been attributed to the effects of LB 1208 (2006) and its ability to update equipment and interconnect schools and colleges together on a single statewide network with enhanced video distance learning. <http://www.wrplatinum.com/Content.aspx?CID=10122>

FCC gathers comments to change the E-rate program

November 20th marked the deadline for submitted comments for the recent FCC docket, "Broadband Needs in Education, Including Changes to E-Rate Program to Improve Broadband Deployment", on various aspects of the E-rate program. Although the window of submission was only 16 days, the Commission received over 700 submissions. You may search any of the following proceedings (09-47, 09-51, 09-137; 02-6, 05-195) at http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs2/comment_search/input?z=ukr8p. Although comments were many and varied, there was some consensus that the cap of \$2.25 billion per year should be raised and to not dilute the success of the program by broadening the eligible entities or programs beyond which the current funding could support.

State Government

Nebraska: The Next IT Hotspot?

Government Technology magazine interviews Governor Heineman on various aspects of information technology in Nebraska.

Magazine Article: <http://www.govtech.com/gt/727669>

Video: Part [1](#), [2](#), and [3](#)

Governor Activates Phase I of Nebraska's Statewide Radio Network

In September, Gov. Dave Heineman was joined by state officials in launching the first phase of a statewide radio network for emergency response personnel that will be the vehicle for providing interoperable communication to first responders across Nebraska in the coming year. The Governor activated Phase I of the state's radio network during an event held at Scotts Bluff National Monument. The network uses radio towers and upgraded communications equipment at the Nebraska State Patrol's Troop E dispatch center, along with radios installed in first responder vehicles to provide an enhanced radio network for the state's public safety officials in the Nebraska Panhandle. Over the next year, the network will be expanded to include public safety personnel in the central and eastern regions of the state.

http://www.governor.nebraska.gov/news/2009/2009_09/23_statewide_radio_network.html

<http://www.1011now.com/news/headlines/60756647.html>

Awards and Recognition

State Government – A+ rating for Mobile Browsing from Government Technology Magazine: <http://www.govtech.com/dc/619028>

Supreme Court – 2009 NASCIO Recognition Award Finalist: <http://www.nascio.org/awards/>

Nebraska.gov – 2009 Center for Digital Government's Best of the Web: <http://www.centerdigitalgov.com/survey/88/2009>

Geographic Information Systems

Aerial Imagery Updates

Statewide Aerial Imagery Update. This year, the USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) revised its timeline for collecting updated aerial imagery for Nebraska and moved up their scheduled collection of new statewide imagery to the summer of 2009, in advance of their original acquisition schedule of 2010. This National Aerial Imagery Program (NAIP) imagery was collected this summer at 1-meter resolution, full color, and leaf-on. The compressed county mosaic files are currently available through the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, contact Gail Follmer, gfolmer@dnr.ne.gov, (402) 471-3991. These compressed county files have not yet undergone the full FSA QA/QC process. It is expected that the full QA/QC process will not be completed by late winter 2010 (approximately March 2010) and the full uncompressed TIF files will be available in that timeframe.

Through the auspices of the Nebraska GIS Council and the Nebraska Office of the CIO, several state, local and federal agencies pooled their resources and provided the additional funds necessary to also collect and process the 4th-band, near-infrared data along with the 3 full-colors bands of NAIP data. The participating agencies that provided that additional funding were the following: Nebr. Dept. of Natural Resources, Nebr. Dept. of Environmental Quality, Nebr. Forest Service, Nebr. Natural Resource Districts, US Forest Service, and the Natural Resource Conservation Services-USDA.

High-resolution Aerial Imagery Updates. Nebraska urban areas are working together to update their high-resolution orthoimagery. A collaborative effort known as NIROC (Nebraska-Iowa Regional Orthoimagery Consortium) is planning a joint effort to acquire updated 6 and 12-inch orthoimagery in the spring of 2010. NIROC is primarily a local government initiative based Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Washington, Lancaster and Pottawattamie, Iowa Counties. NIROC is organized with the leadership of Michael Schonlau, Douglas County/Omaha GIS Coordinator and the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission. A number of state agencies and the USGS are also participating in this collaborative effort. NIROC has also opened the door to participation to a number of local governments that not in this core urban area and several of these cities and counties are also participating. This high-resolution, leaf-off, color imagery acquisition complements nicely with the FSA 1-meter, leaf-on imagery program.

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.

NebraskaMAP and a Nebraska Road Centerline-Address Data

If all goes according to plan, Nebraska geospatial data users will soon have access to an up-to-date, statewide road centerline-address database. As part of the E911 effort, the Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) has been working with local governments to develop and maintain current road centerline and address data. At this point, PSC has worked with local governments to contract with vendors to develop and maintain this data for all 90 of Nebraska's non-urban counties. The urbanized counties of Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster maintain their own datasets. The initial datasets are now complete for 84 of the 90 non-urban counties. For the Public Service Commission's purposes, these datasets are developed and maintained in county-specific files to support E911 dispatch systems.

These county road centerline-address datasets are now being stitched together as a part of an effort to develop a Nebraska geospatial data sharing portal, known as the NebraskaMAP. The goal of the NebraskaMAP project is to provide an enterprise-level portal for accessing Nebraska-related geospatial data and related web and mapping services. The NebraskaMAP is a project of the Nebraska GIS Council and is still in the development stage. As an initial service to the Nebraska GIS user community, the NebraskaMAP Partners Committee identified the provision of a statewide road centerline-address database and related geocoding services as one of its initial priorities. In addition to the road centerline-address data provided by the PSC, the NebraskaMAP is also integrating data from Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster Counties and the Nebraska Department of Roads. Thanks to all of these entities for their willingness to share their road centerline-address data for this purpose and to the NebraskaMAP Partners for the resources to integrate and serve the data.

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Nebraska Information Technology Commission
Office of the CIO
501 South 14th Street
P.O. Box 95045
Lincoln, NE 68509-5045

www.nitc.ne.gov

