

# STATE OF NEBRASKA



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
Lori McClurg  
Director

Mike Johanns  
Governor

July 24, 2001

Honorable Governor Johanns  
State Capitol  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509 - 4848

Subject: Status Report, Governor's Business Portal Initiative

Dear Governor Johanns:

This is a report on the progress to date regarding the Governor's Business Portal Initiative. The Business Portal Action Plan, dated March 1, 2001, included both short and long term action items. A copy is available at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/sgc/>.

Nebrask@ Online has taken the lead on several tasks. A detailed status report of their activities is enclosed. In cooperation with the Office of the CIO and all state agencies, NOL assembled an inventory of over 1200 forms that affect businesses. NOL is now in the process of refining that inventory and developing a methodology for rapid automation of those forms. A prototype of a new portal called, "Nebrask@ Online for Business" is nearing completion. That title was chosen because it reinforces the state's existing brand ("Nebrask@ Online") and allows for the addition of other specialized portals in the future, such as "Nebrask@ Online for Health Professionals".

NOL and the Office of the CIO are collaborating on a grant application to the State Records Board. The grant would cover costs relating to conducting focus groups, further work on the forms inventory database, and initial work on automating selected forms.

Several state agencies included projects in the Business Portal Action Plan. Progress on these activities is shown in the updated appendix, which is enclosed. For example, DMV is now accepting electronic filing of IRP renewals and temporary certificates in a pilot test with three trucking companies. The Department of Revenue has a web site for filing motor fuels forms. DNR's online well registrations will be operational by the end of August. The Secretary of State plans to have all rules and regulations of state agencies available in a searchable database on the Internet by the end of this calendar year. The Supreme Court has begun the planning process for several important initiatives, including improving public access to court information and developing an electronic filing and case management system for attorneys. These are just a few of the projects underway at the agency level.

Please let me know, if you would like more information.

Sincerely,

Steven Schafer  
Chief Information Officer

Copies: Lt. Governor Maurstad  
Lauren Hill

Enclosures

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## Appendix

### A. Agency Specific Action Items - Status as of July 2001

#### Short Term

Sponsor	Description	Timeline		Status (Date of Revision is in BOLD)
Insurance	Electronic appointment of agents	Q1	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> In place (through national Producer Information Network)
DAS - Purchasing	Request all agencies to post all RFPs and bid opportunities to a central web site (excluding direct purchase and informal bid opportunities)	Q1	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> DAS can request, but not require agencies to post RFPs for service contracts. <b>July 2001:</b> State Purchasing currently posts all formal bid requests to our website. We also post all RFP's that are bid through our office on the website. At this time, we post RFP's that the agencies are bidding themselves upon their request. This could be expanded further with the implementation of NIS.
Motor Vehicles	Electronic filing of renewal IRP Credentials	Q1	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> See State of Nebraska CVISN Plan. <b>July 2001:</b> The pilot project is complete. Crete Carrier Corp. electronically issued its own IRP renewals in January. Time savings were evident for both the state and the user. Programming is currently being completed to expand the users of this function to other large carrier organizations. It is possible that Werner Trucking and Truck Services will be able to use this function for the next renewal season (Fall 2001).
Roads	Construction Projects Letting System	Q1	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> This feature is operational.
Labor	Implement Work Opportunity Tax Credit Application	Q2	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> This will allow the entire application process to occur online. <b>July 2001:</b> The Department of Labor accomplished delivery of the appropriate forms, as well as implementation of an extensive informational site describing this federally funded program during the second quarter. The informational material is available at DOL's web site.
Motor Vehicles	Electronic Issuance of temporary IRP Credentials	Q2	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> See State of Nebraska CVISN Plan. <b>July 2001:</b> This function is currently available to Crete Carrier Corp., Werner Trucking and Truck Services Inc. This function provides a 24/7 services opportunity for the DMV.
Natural Resources	Online Well Registrations	Q2	2001	<b>July 2001:</b> We have been working with Nebraska Online and HHSS on the well registration project and are getting close to doing some test runs. Our goal is to have the system operational by the end of August.
Revenue	Income Tax Withholdings	Q2	2001	<b>July 2001:</b> Currently we are still working with NOL on the 941N Income Tax

				Withholding form for on-line submission and hope to have it completed and implemented by the fourth quarter of this year.
Revenue	Motor Fuels Forms	Q2	2001	<b>July 2001:</b> We have activated the Motor Fuels EDI filing site at the following address: <a href="https://www.nol.org/FuelTax/FTForm.html">https://www.nol.org/FuelTax/FTForm.html</a> .
Roads	Dynamic Message Signs	Q2	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> To install permanent and mobile message that are networked to receive messages from one or more sites.
Roads	Travel Information / 511 Service	Q2	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> This will provide weather and road condition information that is location specific. It will eventually incorporate Patrol's Road Condition Report.
Roads	RFP Postings	Q2	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> This will be an enhanced version of what is now available from the web site. <b>July 2001:</b> This is in place and can be accessed from the home page.
Workers Comp Court	Employer Insurance Verification	Q2	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> See Agency Comprehensive Information. <b>July 2001:</b> We have run into major data problems from the supplier of the Coverage data that have to be resolved. We have no current projection as to when we can begin getting good data. Project is on hold.
CJIS Advisory Committee	Develop plan for providing public access to selected CJIS databases	Q3	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> Timing and completion are subject to available funds and competing projects. <b>July 2001:</b> Public access to any data maintained on NCJIS, the CJIS data server, is under the authority and scope of the source agencies. To this time there has not been any desire or stipulation by the data source agencies to use NCJIS as a vehicle for dissemination of data to the public.
Insurance	Electronic registration for non-resident insurance agents	Q3	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> Through the national system. <b>July 2001:</b> The nonresident agent license application should be done by Q4 2001. This is only the initial application a new agent must complete. Renewals of nonresident agents licenses will be done sometime after the resident application is done in Q3 2002.
Labor	Investigate feasibility of "One Stop Business Process"	Q3	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> This is a project that will look at the design of a one-stop business process, which focuses on the needs of the employer community. <b>July 2001:</b> The Department of Labor completed a business process reengineering design effort focused on employment services in the one stop system during the first and second quarters. Following design, the Department created detailed requirements, reviewed available products (primarily those in use in other State Labor Departments) and identified software originally developed by the Kansas Department of Labor as providing a 90% plus fit to Nebraska business requirements. Work to begin software customization is

				commencing during the third quarter.
Motor Vehicles	Electronic filing of supplemental IRP Credentials	Q3	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> See State of Nebraska CVISN Plan. <b>July 2001:</b> This project is still on the work list but has been moved to a completion date after electronic IFTA processing.
Roads	Exchange of "Design" Data and Files	Q3	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> This will facilitate the exchange of information with design consultants and construction contractors. <b>July 2001:</b> This is currently being done but only pushing out the department's standards and cell files. Our plan is to develop an FTP site where consultants will have a secure place to exchange the electronic plans and design data files with the department. This is only in the discussion stage and will not have work started until at least the 4th quarter of 2001.
Roads	City and County Maps	Q3	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> This would place the county and city maps maintained by the DOR on the Internet. <b>July 2001:</b> This is in place where you can view the state, county, and city maps and/or download them in adobe format.

Long Term

Sponsor	Description	Timeline		Status (Date of Revision is in BOLD)
Supreme Court	Statewide access to court data			<b>March 2001:</b> Timeline has not been determined. <b>July 2001:</b> The Automation Advisory Committee has approved a governance structure for developing a plan and requirements.
Supreme Court	Automatic notification of court events			<b>March 2001:</b> Timeline has not been determined. <b>July 2001:</b> The Automation Advisory Committee has approved a governance structure for developing a plan and requirements.
Supreme Court	Electronic filings by attorneys			<b>March 2001:</b> Timeline has not been determined. <b>July 2001:</b> The Automation Advisory Committee has approved a governance structure for developing a plan and requirements.
Roads	Weigh-in-motion (automated truck scales)	On-going		<b>March 2001:</b> DOR will incorporate WIM technology when building new or remodeling old weigh scales.
Roads	On-line Construction Manuals	On-going		<b>March 2001:</b> This will include manuals that will be used by contractors and consultants. <b>July 2001:</b> These are currently available from the web site.
DAS - Purchasing	Investigate electronic receipt of bids	Q4	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> Requirements include electronic signature and an electronic "lockbox" until bid opening. <b>July 2001:</b> At this time we do not have the capabilities of doing this. The NIS Project should allow for

				this capability.
PRO	Energy Loan Program	Q4	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> Providing the loan application form online is part of a redesign of the entire loan application process. <b>July 2001:</b> This project has completed the business practices development phase. The prototyping phase is nearly completed. The final development phase has started and final completion is targeted for November 2001.
Secretary of State	Provide Internet access to all state agency rules and regulations	Q4	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> About 2/3 of current regulations are online. Remaining regulations involve formatting issues. <b>July 2001:</b> We still are planning to have all regulations up by the end of the year.
Secretary of State	Develop plan for creating a searchable database of rules and regulations	Q4	2001	<b>March 2001:</b> The plan must resolve several issues. It will require cooperation of all agencies. <b>July 2001:</b> We will develop a plan for a searchable database for regulations by the end of the current calendar year.
DAS - Purchasing	Electronic notifications of bid opportunities	Q1	2002	<b>March 2001:</b> Vendors without access to the Internet would still depend on US Mail. <b>July 2001:</b> At this time we do not have the capabilities of doing this. We have, however, sent e-mail notices to vendors on a couple of RFP's notifying them when the RFP was being released and where to locate the documents on the Purchasing website. With the implementation of NIS this would be expanded further.
Motor Vehicles	Electronic filing of IFTA renewals	Q1	2002	<b>March 2001:</b> See State of Nebraska CVISN Plan. <b>July 2001:</b> Programmers are currently developing the code and edits to make this service available in October of this year.
DAS - Purchasing	Expand electronic ordering	Q2	2002	<b>March 2001:</b> DAS encourages vendors to cooperate. <b>July 2001:</b> Agencies are able to order electronically from Grainger for their small dollar purchases (under \$5,000). Agencies are now able to order computer equipment (from pre-approved list) from contracts under \$10,000. More agencies are utilizing electronic orders from Office Depot. Agencies are now able to order their light bulbs and ballasts on line with the contracted vendor, Voss Electric. This could be expanded further with implementation of NIS.
DAS - Purchasing	Expand electronic billing	Q2	2002	<b>March 2001:</b> DAS encourages vendors to cooperate. <b>July 2001:</b> At this time this has not been implemented. This would be a part of NIS.
DAS - Purchasing	Expand electronic payment	Q2	2002	<b>March 2001:</b> State Treasurer requires electronic payment of all warrants more than \$75,000. <b>July 2001:</b> Accounting is sending letters to vendors who we receive billing from on a regular basis to see if they can be

				set up for electronic payment. There has been an increase in the number of vendors who are being paid electronically. Again, when NIS is implemented this will be expanded further.
DAS – Purchasing	Expand electronic transfer of print jobs	Q2	2002	<p><b>July 2001:</b> The files the agencies send to the print shop are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graphic Files that we image to the image setter or to the computer-to-plate system (production print).</li> <li>2. Mailing list</li> <li>3. VIP (Variable Printing) files for the Docutech.</li> </ol> <p>We are increasing agency use of the ftp site. Our biggest users are DAS Personnel, Energy Office, Library Commission, Secretary of State, and Department of Agriculture.</p>
DAS – Purchasing	Investigate online auctions for surplus	Q2	2002	<p><b>March 2001:</b> Feasible for items requiring sealed bids. <b>July 2001:</b> We continue to investigate opportunities for the utilization of on-line auctions. However at this point in time, we believe to convert to this process would require additional expenditures for increased storage space and it would expose the State to risks that outweigh the potential for increased revenue.</p>
PRO	Develop tracking system for agency rules and regulations	Q2	2002	<p><b>March 2001:</b> Agencies, Attorney General's Office, Policy Research Office, and Secretary of State. <b>July 2001:</b> We no longer plan to pursue this project.</p>
Revenue	Electronic Fund Transfers ( <b>new – July 2001</b> )	Q2	2002	<p><b>July 2001:</b> We are currently in the process of implementing legislation mandating Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for all taxpayers having an annual liability over \$100,000 per tax category and will have this completed by the second quarter 2002.</p>
Workers Comp Court	EDI Filing of Subsequent Reports of Injury (voluntary basis)	Q2	2002	<p><b>March 2001:</b> See Agency Comprehensive Information. <b>July 2001:</b> Q3-Q4 2001 Paper system based upon new form was put in place July 1, 2001. EDI Programming is in progress for initial transaction sets. Pilot tests will begin in Q3 2001 with Production transmissions to begin as each pilot is completed for a Carrier.</p>
Insurance	Electronic registration for resident insurance agents	Q3	2002	<p><b>March 2001:</b> Through the national system. <b>July 2001:</b> The resident agent license application should still be on track for Q3 2002. This is also only the initial application a new agent must complete. Renewals of nonresident agents licenses will be done sometime after the resident application is done in Q3 2002.</p>
Motor Vehicles	Electronic filing of IFTA returns	Q3	2002	<p><b>March 2001:</b> See State of Nebraska CVISN Plan. <b>July 2001:</b> Programmers are currently</p>

				developing the code and edits to make this service available in October of this year.
Roads	Oversize / Overweight Permits	Q3	2002	<b>March 2001:</b> Will automate the application, route checking, and issuance of the travel/trucking permits issued by the department. Will be an Internet application. <b>July 2001:</b> A contract has just been signed and work is just starting. It is anticipated that a prototype of the system will have been developed, reviewed, modified, and accepted by Oct. 2001. It is then estimated that it will be about ten months (August 2002) later that the system will have been developed, tested, training classes done, advertisement/promotional programs accomplished, and the system place into production.
CJIS Advisory Committee	Criminal History Background Check System	Q4	2002	<b>March 2001:</b> Timing and completion are subject to available funds and competing projects. As owner of the data, the State Patrol must approve this project. <b>July 2001:</b> The Nebraska State Patrol is examining a variety of methods and constraints on electronically releasing criminal history information.
Workers Comp Court	EDI Filing of Subsequent Reports of Injury (mandatory basis)	Q3	2002	<b>July 2001:</b> Mandatory electronic filing will begin July 1, 2002.
Workers Comp Court	Electronic Files (7-1-2002 to 6-30-2003)	Q3	2003	<b>July 2001:</b> The Court has implemented a short-term repository for E-Documents integrated with is case management data. One section of the court will go fully paperless in Q3 of 2001. This project will allow the court to public electronic documents that are secure from change and will allow the receiver of the document to verify its authenticity.
Workers Comp Court	EFT/ACH Processing	Q2	2003	<b>March 2001:</b> See Agency Comprehensive Information. <b>July 2001:</b> Electronic payments must be implemented with any eCommerce solutions implemented by the Court.
Workers Comp Court	Internet Access to Court Data	Q2	2003	<b>March 2001:</b> See Agency Comprehensive Information. <b>July 2001:</b> Research and testing to begin Q1-Q2 of 2002, with implementation by Q2 of 2003.
Workers Comp Court	Electronic Filing	Q3	2003	<b>July 2001:</b> The federal courts are mandating electronic filings for 2003.

TO: Steve Schafer, Chief Information Officer

FROM: Rod Armstrong, General Manager  
Nebrask@ Online

DATE: July 3, 2001

SUBJECT: Business Portal Status Report/Plan

Following is a status report regarding Nebrask@ Online's activities in support of the Business Portal Action Plan, Short-Term Action Items. All activities are intended to provide a platform for moving forward on the long-term action items. Current status, next steps and resource requirements are included for each element of the plan.

### **Short Term Action Items, Q1 2001**

#### **A. Conduct an Inventory of Forms for Business**

A complete inventory of forms and applications affecting businesses is the first step in providing full electronic access to information and services. Requirements include:

1. Provide information on what forms are already available online, which will enhance the existing portal.

**Status:** *Of the current inventory listing over 1,200 forms, about one-third (410) are shown as either online for download & print (370) or interactive online (40). Capability is being added to automatically provide a direct link from the inventory to the URL provided by the agency. In the current inventory, some links are general (e.g., directed to an agency home page) our out of date (e.g., former DWR files that are now DNR) and will need to be edited.*

**Next Steps:** *A short report should be compiled to summarize the status of forms online, including number of online forms by agency, annual volume, and other pertinent information. Links should be tested to determine if direct access to the form is provided. Follow-up will be necessary to correct any links that are not directed to the proper location.*

**Resources Required:** *The report should be relatively easy to compile using the search engine on the forms inventory. Checking links and follow-up to correct links not pointing to the proper location will be more labor intensive, perhaps requiring several weeks to complete. NOL may be able to employ part-time staff or interns to assist with this effort should resources be available.*



2. Provide the total picture of what forms exist, to assist in planning future enhancements to the business portal

**Status:** *The current inventory shows more than 1,200 forms, although there are some duplicates and test entries that need to be removed. Also, it is very likely that not all agencies have completed data entry. Current entries are being edited for completeness and consistency by staff from the CIO's office, with some work completed by NOL.*

**Next Steps:** *An effort is currently underway by staff in the CIO's office to edit entries in the inventory for completeness and consistency. Follow-up is necessary to determine if all forms have been entered, and to assist in completing the inventory.*

**Resources Required:** *Remaining time required for completing the inventory edit is currently related to staff availability in the CIO's office. A decision will be needed soon as to the proper approach for follow-up with agencies to complete the inventory, and to acquire additional information necessary for full functionality of the portal (see #A3 below). Resource requirements will depend on the approach selected. Some degree of additional time will be required from agency staff.*

3. Provide a searchable database to improve access to forms.

**Status:** *A search engine has been developed by NOL that allows the inventory to be searched by the various fields in the database such as agency name, volume, online status, etc.*

**Next Steps:** *In order to assure proper functionality for users of the business portal, additional detail is needed in the inventory regarding business types (second-level NAICS Codes). The current level of detail will result in a high volume of forms returned to the user, many of which will not apply. The search functionality can easily be extended to this additional level of detail once it resides in the database.*

**Resources Required:** *One approach to gathering this additional detail is to simply request that agencies go back into the inventory and provide the information. This approach depends almost entirely on agency staff time to conduct the work, which will vary depending on the volume of forms by agency. Results are likely to be inconsistent, based on experience with the first round of data entry.*

*Another, perhaps more effective approach is to conduct brief phone interviews with each contact person to obtain the required information. This will require a centralized staff effort (and additional resources), but less agency staff time. It will also serve to provide initial verification that the contact person is appropriate (this will be an ongoing maintenance concern). This approach should also yield more consistent results and reduce or eliminate the need for further editing. NOL may be able to employ part-time staff or interns to assist with this effort should resources be available.*

4. Determine the feasibility and need for a number system or other method to improve the search function.

**Status:** *Discussions have taken place regarding this idea, with an agency number/form number format appearing to be the most logical*

**Next Steps:** *A determination is yet to be made as to whether this is desirable and will improve search capability. If so, consensus will need to be reached with other entities such as IMS that may be involved in forms automation.*

**Resources Required:** *Once consensus is reached on a numbering format, an automated process for number assignment can be implemented with minimal effort.*

## **B. Recommend Features and Format for Electronic Forms**

**Status:** *A methodology and software tools for generalized, rapid forms automation are nearing completion, with support from the CIO. The foundation of this approach is capturing form specifications and user-entered data in an XML format that readily lends itself to web-based editing, electronic transmission and integration into back-end systems.*

*Data can be entered by the user in one of two ways. First is a generalized HTML data entry screen with option to view the completed form as an XML overlay to a PDF file. Forms processed in this manner can be taken from paper to interactive online very rapidly. The second is an HTML rendering of the form as it appears on paper. This approach requires additional programming but provides the on-screen look and feel of the paper form. In either case, data is captured into a generalized XML format.*

*Work had begun early this year on creating HTML renderings for various forms. Presently about 125-150 forms have been processed and are being upgraded to XHTML format for integration. About 65 forms have been processed from the other direction with the generalized rapid method. We are in the process of compiling this work in common files.*

**Next Steps:** *A demonstration version of the generalized process is in development and should be available by mid-July. Development of all software tools should be complete by the end of July. Implementation of the generalized process will require 1) articulation of a specific strategy pinpointing forms and agencies, and 2) resources to maintain NOL staff currently working on the project.*

**Resources Required:** *Under the leadership of Dave Burchell, NOL Director of Development, financial support from the CIO allowed NOL to retain two part-time staff people (70 hours per week combined) through June to bring the effort to this point. NOL has committed to retaining these two individuals through July in order to complete development and testing of the methodology and software tools. Extension of their effort beyond that point will require additional resources.*

## **Short Term Action Items, Q2 2001**

### **C. Develop a Branding Strategy for the Business Portal**

- 1. Incorporate the state brand (Nebrask@ Online)**
- 2. Accommodate additional specialized portals in the future**
- 3. Allow for marketing and testing**

***Status** The working title for the portal is “Nebrask@ Online for Business.” This approach will allow for the addition of more specialized portals in the future (e.g. “Nebrask@ Online for Health Professionals”). Prototypes for the business portal page are nearing completion and will be available for testing by the CIO’s office and others in early July. Focus groups (see ‘D’ below) will provide a broader audience for marketing and testing.*

***Next Steps:** Upon review and testing of the prototypes, a decision will need to be made regarding the business portal brand, whether “Nebrask@ Online for Business” or some other brand. Review of content architecture and preliminary functionality of the prototypes should be conducted with an eye toward completion of the look, feel, content architecture and brand no later than August 31 and preferably earlier. Focus groups are tentatively planned for September and October. A public relations campaign through the Governor’s Office will presumably need to be developed at some point.*

***Resources Required:** Review and decisions will involve a small time commitment from the CIO and such others as deemed appropriate, possibly including the Business Portal Work Group, the Lt. Governor and Governor’s Office. Publicity and marketing may include press conferences, releases and other initiatives at the discretion of the Governor’s Office, Lt. Governor and CIO. Focus group resource requirements are specified under ‘D’ below.*

### **D. Organize Business Focus Groups**

- 1. Gather ideas that agencies have received from businesses**

***Status:** A list of ideas was compiled in March from several sources, including the Dept. of Economic Development, Nebraska Library Commission, and surveys from other states or national in scope. Ideas were solicited from the Business Portal Work Group.*

***Next Steps:** The content architecture of the business portal is being designed with this input in mind.*

***Resources Required:** Current NOL staff are addressing this topic during portal design.*

## **2. Develop and promote a survey form on the state's web site.**

**Status:** *Survey questions have been completed, and the survey is being converted to electronic format for posting. It should be ready for review by the second week in July and posting on the website shortly after that.*

**Next Steps:** *Once the survey is available online, it should be reviewed by the CIO and others as deemed appropriate. Changes will be made based on feedback, and the survey should be ready for posting and general use by the end of July. Results will assist in ongoing improvement to the business portal.*

**Resources Required:** *Current NOL staff are addressing this topic.*

## **3. Organize focus groups to give advice on specific topics.**

**Status:** *Preliminary contact has been made with several associations, including the Nebraska Insurance Federation, Nebraska Retail Association, Nebraska Diplomats and Nebraska Bankers Association, regarding participation in focus groups. All have expressed a willingness to assist.*

**Next Steps:** *Several additional associations will be approached once timing of the focus groups has been determined. Full functionality of the business portal should not be necessary for effective use of focus groups, but completion of the look & feel, branding strategy, and demo versions of full functionality should be completed prior to convening the groups. Depending on the timing of item 'C' above, focus groups could be scheduled beginning in August through September.*

**Resources Required:** *Conducting effective focus groups requires significant attention to detail in order to obtain useful results with a minimum time commitment from participants. Tasks include recruiting participants (with the assistance of associations and others); designing the agenda; identifying locations and times; conducting the focus groups; compiling results; and revising the portal based on feedback. With the exception of adapting based on feedback (requirements are unknown until feedback is received), and designing the agenda (one time), each focus group can be expected to require 25-30 hours to conduct. Consideration should be given to retaining a professional facilitator to address these tasks should resources be available.*

## **4. Develop means for ongoing reaction and advice.**

**Status:** *The online business survey should provide a sound method of receiving feedback on an ongoing basis. Statewide associations participating in the focus groups can also be asked to keep us apprised of reactions from their membership.*

**Next Steps:** *Implementation of the online survey and conducting focus groups may provide additional ideas for ongoing feedback.*

**Resources Required:** *Unless additional feedback requirements are identified, no additional resources beyond those required for the online survey and focus groups should be required.*

#### **E. Involve local government in planning the business portal.**

- 1. Participation of local government representatives**
- 2. Communicating the purpose and goals of an integrated business portal with local government through their associations.**

**Status:** *No specific efforts have been made by NOL thus far to recruit local government participation.*

**Next Steps:** *We will defer to the CIO for strategy on this. One possible avenue for participation is the Secretary of State's County eGovernment Project and its partnership with NACO.*

**Resource Requirements:** *Dependent upon the strategy selected.*

#### **Short Term Action Items, Q3 2001**

#### **F. Enhance the State's Business Portal**

- 1. Reflect business needs and convenience**

**Status:** *Business needs and convenience will be assessed through the online business survey and focus groups, with the survey as one instrument for long-term feedback generation.*

**Next Steps:** *Completion of the short term action items related to the business survey and focus groups*

**Resources Required:** *As outlined in previous sections . . .*

- 2. Choose a long-range architecture that is flexible and dynamic**

**Status:** *Architecture for the portal is built largely on standard web development tools that allow for addition of content and links to content with ease. The major functionality, i.e. integration with the forms inventory, is designed to be scalable and easily edited, allowing for additional information and editing of existing information with ease.*

**Next Steps:** *Considerable work remains to bring full functionality to the business portal. This work is detailed in earlier sections. One issue that will need to be addressed at some point is how maintenance will be handled. As forms are changed, additional forms adopted by agencies, etc., there needs to be a systematic way for that information to be updated in the forms inventory. Some standardization in approach may be desirable.*

**Resource Requirements:** Ongoing maintenance of the forms inventory will require some ongoing resources, applied in a systematic manner, from agency staff with central coordination.

### **3. Enhance existing efforts to serve businesses, such as DED's Business Toolkit**

**Status:** Known existing resources, such as the Toolkit, will be prominently placed on the portal home page.

**Next Steps:** Feedback from the online survey and business focus groups may provide some additional thoughts on ways to further leverage existing efforts. Existing initiatives that are not part of the business portal (due to our lack of knowledge about their existence) will be added as circumstances require.

**Resource Requirements:** None in addition to current resources at this point.

### **4. Provide links from agency web sites to the business portal and other services such as DED's Business Toolkit**

**Status:** Not implemented, awaiting business portal launch. Links to other existing resources have not been identified but may exist.

**Next Steps:** Once the business portal is activated, some communication will need to take place with agencies requesting that links be posted on their sites. The CIO may wish to consider whether some formal action is desirable from the SGC and/or NITC. The webmasters group should also be briefed on the portal and this request at some point.

**Resource Requirements:** Some agency resources will be required to establish the links on their agency sites.

### **5. Register a URL which is easy to remember and promote**

**Status:** We have applied for the new Nebraska.biz domain name. There is a lottery of sorts, meaning if there is more than one application for a domain name, the more applications you submit the better your chances. We have taken a calculated risk and invested a modest amount in the lottery and should know by late September or early October whether we have been awarded the domain name.

**Next Steps:** Should we succeed in acquiring Nebraska.biz, some due diligence should be conducted to ensure that use for a government site is acceptable. There has been considerable cross-use of domain names (e.g., states using .gov which is supposed to be reserved for the federal government) so it may not be an issue. Should it become an issue, or if we do not succeed in acquiring the domain name, other options will be pursued. This may include negotiating with the entity that does acquire the domain name if that option is feasible.

**Resources Required:** NOL has invested a modest amount in an effort to acquire Nebraska.biz, which includes the two-year cost of the domain name. Should other domain names be necessary, there will be a very modest cost to acquire those.

#### **G. Define the technical architecture for eGovernment**

- 1. Document how the business portal fits into the overall architecture**
- 2. Data sharing opportunities to avoid redundant data entry**
- 3. Providing a means to coordinate changes to URLs so that links on other pages to those sites can be updated.**

**Status:** Numbers 1 & 2 are part of the work being undertaken by the egovernment architecture group and will be coordinated as necessary. Number 3 is a maintenance question that needs to be addressed as part of the overall portal maintenance strategy.

**Next Steps:** Pending further work by the egovernment architecture work group and development of a business portal maintenance strategy.

**Resource Requirements:** To be determined.

#### **H. Provide convenient access to most common forms.**

- 1. Identifying those forms which have the broadest impact.**
- 2. Working with agencies to develop and maintain electronic access.**
- 3. Develop a central web site with links to specific forms**
- 4. Promote enhancements to DED's Toolkit for Business**

**Status:** The forms inventory can be searched by the "annual volume" field, providing a list of the most used forms. It appears some high volume forms such as additional corporate forms from the Secretary of State, are not yet in the database. See Section B for details on NOL's progress on generalized forms automation. Once completed and posted online with the cooperation of agencies, these forms will be accessible through the business portal.

**Next Steps:** Follow-up efforts are needed to ensure that all appropriate forms are included in the inventory. The list of most-used forms can then be compiled and follow-up efforts with the agencies undertaken. Enhancements to the DED Business Toolkit remain to be identified.

**Resource Requirements:** Resources required to follow up with agencies to ensure completeness and accuracy of information in the inventory are included above under A2. Compiling the information will can be accomplished very quickly given the search capability associated with the inventory. Coordinating online deployment with agencies will require NOL marketing resources.

## **I. Automate selected high volume forms**

- 1. Identify high volume forms from the survey**
- 2. Affirm priority with business focus groups**
- 3. Determine feasibility of rapid implementation**
- 4. Promote enhancements to DED's Toolkit for Business**

***Status:** The search engine for the inventory can quickly sort high volume forms, and a list can be developed for review with the business focus groups. Progress on our rapid implementation effort is detailed in Section B.*

***Next Steps:** A strategy should be articulated for taking high volume forms and working with agencies to deploy them online as soon as possible. Methodologies and software tools for rapid implementation should be complete by the end of July and ready to support the strategy.*

***Resources Required:** Work on the rapid implementation, supported through June by the CIO, has progressed well (see Section B). NOL will support the two part-time staff members (combined 70 hours per week) working on this project through at least July, when the methodology and software tools should be completed and tested. Depending on the availability of additional funds, and interest on the part of agencies in utilizing NOL's services in this regard, those resources will continue on staff indefinitely. The volume of work would appear to be substantial and require several months to complete.*

## **J. Provide electronic access to all forms (with exceptions noted)**

- 1. Where feasible, the form should be in a format that allows data entry on the user's PC.**

***Status:** The NOL rapid implementation methodology will provide for a basic user interface that allows online completion of the form and an overlay onto the PDF version of the form that can be printed and mailed. Data will be stored in an XML format that can easily be transmitted electronically. Some additional work is required to develop the form in an XHTML format that approximates the paper form, but will still capture the data in an XML format that can be transmitted electronically. The XML data file is in a format that provides for integration into the agency's back-end system with relative ease.*

***Next Steps:** See I2*

***Resources Required:** See I2*

## **K. Agency Contact Information**

***Status:** This information was requested as part of the forms inventory, but needs to be edited for completeness (e.g. some listed names with no phone number or e-mail address).*



*Next Steps:* See A2

*Resources Required:* See A2

**L. Document the types of information presented with forms**

*Status:* URLs with instructions for forms were requested as part of the forms inventory, but needs to be edited for completeness. Additional details and common presentation methods will require additional work.

*Next Steps:* Inventory editing as described in A2 should identify instances where instructions are available online. Links to statutes, regulations, and common presentation methodology will require a standard approach that is yet to be developed.

*Resource Requirements:* A2 addresses resource requirements for editing current inventory information. Providing the additional information specified in the action plan, including the common presentation methodology, will require discussions and consensus building among agencies, most likely through the business portal work group. There will likely be considerable effort required to implement the common approach, and maintenance requirements will need to be identified and addressed.