

# **State Records Board Grant Application**

## **To Improve Access to Public Information**

Agencies desiring grants from the Nebraska State Records Board for projects to improve access to state government information should complete this application and follow any procedures outlined in this application and any accompanying materials.

### **1. Name of agency applying for grant.**

County of Kearney, Nebraska

Project partners:

City of Minden

Villages of Axtell, Heartwell, Norman, and Wilcox

### **2. Title of project**

Kearney County Enhanced Web Page

### **3. Title or brief description of the project**

The project will expand and enhance services to the citizens, businesses, agencies, county departments, and cities/villages located in Kearney County by expanding web-based functionality for information dissemination, retrieval and public service. Specifically, the new system will provide more detailed information in a web-based format concerning property information, roads information and planning and zoning information.

### **3. Grant request amount**

\$25,000

### **4. Will there be a fee for accessing records associated with this project?**

No

### **5. If yes, provide any statutory reference or authorization for the fee.**

N/A

## **II Grant Detail**

### **1. Please describe the project in detail.**

Currently, Kearney County and its partners store public information concerning property tax assessment, roads and planning/zoning in a variety of digital and paper databases. Gradually, the County is converting these data digitally to make storage, retrieval and analysis more efficient. However, dissemination of this information to the general public, business and other agencies both within and outside the county requires the requestor to either visit the particular county office, or have county staff generate the information and ship it out.

The current state of affairs is rapidly becoming unworkable due to the growth of the county creating a subsequent increased demand for information from the general public. In addition, state and federal agencies are increasingly demanding information concerning the status of the counties variety of programs. This is occurring under the cloud of ever decreasing budgets to provide more and more information services.

Goals:

Provide faster, easier and more cost efficient centralized access to property assessment, roads and planning/zoning information for the general public, businesses, county administration and employees.

Enhance communication between partners and state and federal agencies.

Leverage investment made in GIS technology by the Kearney County Assessor and Kearney County Roads Department.

Activities:

Design and create an enhanced NOL web page that includes Internet Mapping System capability utilizing available GIS data currently housed in separate, unconnected departments.

Integrate existing Kearney County GIS data and any suitable GIS data from other local and state agencies (Tri-Basin Natural Resource District, Nebraska Department of Roads, etc.).

Train county staff, partner staff and general public in the use of the enhanced web site.

Expected outcomes:

All citizens, businesses and agencies in Kearney County will benefit from implementation of this enhanced web site:

Faster, more efficient response to customer information requests concerning property assessment, roads and planning/zoning information.

Better communication between county departments and the public and also between county departments.

**2. Please describe who the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be and projected activity for access or use of the proposed service.**

Beneficiaries will include citizens and businesses of Nebraska as well as other government agencies in the state. Primary access to the system will be via the World Wide Web. Activities will include information retrieval concerning real estate values and assessment, planning/zoning and associated ordinances and roads data.

**3. Timeline for implementation (specific completion date must be provide, grant funds lapse if not expended prior to completion date)**

Implementation and completion by June 2005

**4. Agency contribution to project (labor, equipment etc.)**

Kearney County staff and partner staff will contribute labor to compilation and update of materials and information (this will be an ongoing contribution to maintain currency of the system). County and partner staff will also contribute to the education of the public through public announcements and “open houses”.

Kearney County has already made considerable investment (more than \$75,000) in the base GIS technology in each department.

**5. Is other funding available for this project? (Explain.)**

No. Budget cuts and constraints mean actual dollars are not available, however, Kearney County staff and partner staff will be contributing in-kind funds through labor resources.

**6. Why is the grant money needed for the project, and, if applicable, how will the service be sustained one the grant money is expended?**

This funding will establish the enhanced web page. The system will be designed in such a way that county staff may easily update both tabular, written and GIS data.

**7. Please describe how this project will enhance the delivery of local agency services or access to those services.**

Citizenry, businesses and government agencies will have direct access to up-to-date information via a 24/7 portal. Currently, information from each department may only be

accessed during office hours, necessitating a trip to the county office or a phone call. In addition, county staff must be available during that time to assist in information retrieval.

For example, currently, if one wishes to find out the zoning of a particular parcel, one must first contact the county assessor to find the correct legal description of the parcel, then contact the planning/zoning department to ascertain the correct zoning. More often than not, the planning/zoning administrator must make a trip to the assessor's office to check the real estate GIS system for additional information. With the enhanced web page, the user will be able to directly query the GIS for the correct parcel of land, and immediately view the planning/zoning map in relation to the parcel map online.

**8. Please describe how this project will improve the efficiency of government operations**

This project will significantly reduce both foot and telephone traffic to the county offices by both the general public, and government agencies. A secondary benefit is the reduction of time spent by staff members providing research to customer information requests.

**9. Please describe any collaborative effort among multiple jurisdictions or political subdivisions related to this project**

Kearney County: Assessor; Planning and Zoning; Sheriff; Emergency Management

City of Minden Planning Commission

Axtell's Planning Commission

Villages of Wilcox, Heartwell, and Norman's Planning Office

Tri-Basin NRD

Various State agencies requesting information (e.g., Department of Roads, NEMA, HHS, etc).

**10. Please provide information on who will complete the project**

Kearney County staff, with support from GIS Workshop, Inc., a Lincoln, NE based GIS services company.

**11. Does the project involve the licensing, permitting or regulation of businesses, if yes then explain how the project or service will allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal and the on-stop online business registration system.**

No

### **III Technical Information**

#### **1. Describe the hardware, software, and communications needed for this project and explain why these choices were made.**

No additional hardware is required. Kearney County already utilizes ESRI GIS technology. ESRI GIS is the industry standard GIS software and is in use amongst nearly all Nebraska local, county and state entities. No additional communications capabilities are required.

#### **2. Address any technical issues with the proposed technology including: Conformity with generally accepted industry standards. Projects which interface with state systems (such as distance learning systems) should also address NITC technical standards and guidelines. Compatibility with existing institutional and/or statewide infrastructure. Reliability, security and scalability (future needs for growth or adaptation).**

The enhanced web page GIS will be designed and built with adherence to Nebraska state standards for GIS data. The digital map data has been developed in Nebraska State Plane Coordinate System, NAD83. There are no NITC technical standards and guidelines for GIS currently. GIS technology has been around since the 1970's, and has evolved to a point where the standard desktop software packages are very reliable. There are no security issues, although city administrators may decide to not post fresh water system data on the World Wide Web to guard against bio-terrorism attacks. ESRI Arcview GIS is completely scaleable, and can record data on millions of elements.

#### **3. Describe how technical support will be provided**

Kearney County currently uses GIS support services by GIS Workshop, Inc. The County staff will receive training from ESRI certified instructors on the use of the GIS. The staff will be encouraged to develop relationships within the county departments, and with the Nebraska GIS community as a whole through participation in the Nebraska GIS/LIS Association and Nebraska GIS Steering Committee.

**IV. Contact Information, Signature**

**Contact person for any questions regarding this application**

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Kearney County Nebraska

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Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

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