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## **COMMISSION ELECTS JERRY VAP AS CHAIR**

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Public Service Commission elected Fifth District Commissioner Jerry Vap of McCook as Chair for 2010 at a meeting January 5<sup>th</sup> in Lincoln.

Third District Commissioner Tim Schram of Gretna was elected Vice-Chair.

Vap was appointed to the Public Service Commission in August of 2001 by Governor Mike Johanns and was subsequently elected to a full six-year term beginning in 2005.

The Commission chair identified several issues that will come before the Commission during the ensuing year. One will be the completion of the deployment of the wireless Phase II E911 service throughout the State of Nebraska and to prepare for the next generation of E911. “That will be a high priority,” Vap said. The Commission was recently awarded a grant from the federal government in the amount of \$484,000 to assist in upgrading 911 equipment in seven counties.

Other issues cited by Vap included:

- The continued conservation of the numbers for the 308 area code in western Nebraska and the preparation for the implementation of the new 531 area code which will overlay the 402 area code in eastern Nebraska.
- The deployment of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) has drawn the attention of the Public Service Commission. “While the new technology can provide benefits for consumers, we ought to be very careful how it affects the state’s telecommunications providers from both a regulatory and revenue perspective,” Vap said.
- The Commission will continue to protect agricultural producers with its grain warehouse and grain dealer oversight responsibilities.
- The Commission will continue to provide support to the statewide Tele-Health network.
- As the Governors’ designated state agency, the Commission will oversee the development of the statewide broadband mapping initiative using a federal stimulus grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

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