

PSC DEPARTMENT DIGEST

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PSC Resolves Complaint Approves Remediation Plan for Windstream

The Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) has entered into a stipulated agreement with Windstream and dismissed the department complaint ([911-078/DC-104/C-5596](#)) against the telecommunications carrier concerning three separate 911 outages/disruptions.

Through the stipulated agreement approved by a unanimous vote of the Commission in October, Windstream will invest more than one million dollars into its network reliability and diversity. In the included 911 Remediation Plan, Windstream agreed, among other improvements to:

- Enhance its backup systems to address power outages.
- Provide an additional layer of reliability and protection against outages by adding a new network path. This third path has the capacity to carry all of Windstream's traffic in Nebraska should the other two paths go down and repairs need to be made.
- Engage a third-party auditor to complete a system reliability and engineering review of its Nebraska network.

The agreement also provides for civil penalties if Windstream does not complete the agreed upon enhancements and improvements by the end of 2025.

"Windstream has agreed to make more than a million dollars of improvements to its network," said State 911 Director Dave Sankey. "These improvements will positively impact public safety communications in Nebraska."

The stipulated agreement follows an investigation involving three separate Windstream service disruptions which occurred on September 2 & 3, November 28, 2023, and January 13, 2024. As part of its investigation the Commission conducted data requests, held a public hearing, and sought analysis from outside experts on network infrastructure specifically in the area of 911 network requirements. As a result of the investigation a complaint was filed by the State 911 department. The department complaint resulted in the stipulated agreement and the remediation plan approved by the Commission.

View the Orders approved by the Commission as well as the Remediation Plan on the PSC website @ <https://psc.nebraska.gov/state-911/windstream-911-outage-investigation>

Windstream Nebraska, Inc.

9-1-1 Service Remediation Plan

October 15, 2024

PSC Holds Hearing on Lumen 911 Investigations

In early November, the PSC held a hearing for telecommunications carrier Lumen, concerning three separate service outages/disruptions affecting 911. The three separate outage/disruptions occurred on August 31, 2023, April 17 & July 9, 2024, and impacted 911 service over a wide area of Lumen's network.

An initial hearing regarding the August 31, 2023, Lumen outage was held in January. As the Commission expanded its investigation to include the 2024 disruptions it conducted additional data requests and sought analysis from outside experts on network infrastructure specifically in the area of 911 network requirements < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/lumen-affiliates-911-outage-investigation> >.

Commissioners will now deliberate the testimony and information presented at the hearing before issuing an Order regarding the outcome and potential action regarding the investigations.

Mulcahy & Dietrich PSC Excellence in Leadership Honorees



The Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) is proud to honor Nichole Mulcahy, Director PSC Natural Gas Department and Sallie Dietrich, PSC Senior Legal Counsel, as its 2024 State of Nebraska Excellence in Leadership Award Recipients.

Providing exceptional service to the State of Nebraska for more than 20 years, Mulcahy is recognized as a leader among both Commission and State colleagues. Director of the PSC Natural Gas Department since 2017, she has handled several extremely complex and technical cases including rate cases and a major oil pipeline siting which were affirmed on judicial review. A proactive manager, Mulcahy works daily to protect the interest of Nebraska ratepayers.

"Nichole leads by example," said PSC Executive Director Thomas Golden. "An effective communicator, she has the respect of not only her staff, and colleagues but the industry as well."

As Senior Legal Counsel Dietrich is an instrumental member of the Commission's legal team. Joining the Commission in 2018, her expertise in telecommunications law and policy has proven essential for Commissioners as they navigate the changing landscape of broadband infrastructure development. A team player, she provides insightful comments and sharp legal analysis as she works to assist Commission attorneys.

Golden said, "Sallie's willingness to take on extra projects, fill in for other departments or provide thoughtful assistance to her PSC colleagues is the personification of a true teammate."

The Excellence in Leadership Award is designed to recognize and celebrate the professional achievements of those whose performance and customer service exceeds all expectations.



Nichole Mulcahy
Dir. Natural Gas Dept.

Sallie Dietrich
Senior Legal Counsel



Mulcahy, Tom Golden, PSC Ex. Dir., Dietrich

PSC Employees Recognized for Years of Service

With a combined 85 years of service to the citizens of Nebraska, four PSC employees were honored for their years of service in October as the state celebrated employee recognition month.

Deena Ackerman, the Administrative Assistant in the PSC Natural Gas Department was recognized for 35 years of service to the state.

Administrative Assistant for the PSC Housing and Recreational Vehicle Department, Lisa Polivka was honored for 25 years of service.

PSC General Counsel, Greg Walkin, accepted his challenge coin for his 15 years of service and Terri Fritz, Director of the PSC Grain Department received recognition for her 10 years of state service.

Executive Director Thomas Golden said, "The PSC is blessed with a wealth of knowledge and experience. We congratulate our years of service honorees on their accomplishments and look forward to many more years to come."



Deena Ackerman
35 Years of Service



Lisa Polivka
25 Years of Service



Greg Walkin
15 Years of Service



Terri Fritz
10 Years of Service

Pro-Ag Grant Application Released

Applications for the 2024-2025 Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant (PRO-AG) program are now being accepted. The process opened on December 13 with applications due on or before January 17, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. (CT).

With more than one million dollars in funding available, the PRO-AG program paves the way for awarding grants to accelerate rural economic development by helping to provide connectivity and supporting technology in rural areas of Nebraska.

The PRO-AG program is divided into two distinct subprogram; Connectivity and Devices and Technology with the available amount divided equally among the two subprogram. Application materials and a detailed program guide can be found on the [Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Program \(PRO-AG\)](#) page of the PSC website. Grants will be awarded by the end of April.



Tours Update Commission on Black Hills Energy Projects

Commissioners and staff were given a firsthand look by Black Hills Energy (BHE) of some of its current project sites. Several opportunities were provided by BHE for the PSC to visit the At-Risk Meter Relocation (ARMR) project and the Lincoln Town Border Station (TBS).

Through its ARMR project, BHE is relocating natural gas meters in certain Lincoln neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods natural gas meters are typically located inside a structure such as a basement or garage. The project consists of moving the meters outside the structure. Meter relocation from inside a structure to outside involves installing a new underground service line connecting to the natural gas main, which then brings service to a new meter at or near the structures.

As technology has advanced, industry standards now endorse relocating meters outside of a structure, mainly for safety reasons including accessibility in emergency situations. In addition to Lincoln, through its multi-year ARMR project BHE is also relocating meters in Neligh, McCook, and Gering.



Seal Fees Set for Housing/RV Department

Commissioners in October approved an Order setting the fees for the Manufactured Homes, Modular Homes, and Recreational Vehicle Programs for 2025.

Following its annual fee hearing, the Commission determined that the fees would remain the same for the upcoming year.

- Manufactured Homes (ManF-17) Seal Fee \$400
- Modular Homes(MODF-18) Seal Fee 19¢ per square foot, New Manufacturer plan approval \$1,800
- Recreational Vehicle (RVF-18) Seal Fee \$20 & plan review fees \$ 20.00

The fees are necessary to carry out the provisions of the Uniform Standard Code for each program. Want more information ? Visit the Housing/RV page of the PSC website at

<https://psc.nebraska.gov/housing>



Champion Homes Tour Provides Behind the Scenes Look

What goes into to the construction of a manufactured or modular home? District 4, Commissioner Eric Kamler, and PSC staff were given a firsthand look when they joined PSC Housing and RV Director Steve Kelso for a tour of Champion Homes in York.

Led by longtime Champion employees Randy and Carl the behind the scenes tour encompassed all facets of the manufacturing process.

The PSC Housing and Recreational Vehicle Department is responsible for the oversight of the production of manufactured and modular housing units that are constructed and or sold in Nebraska. As part of its responsibilities site inspections are performed by PSC staff at the factory to assure the structures are built in accordance with the approved documents, adopted building codes and all applicable State statutes and regulations.

A big thank to the management and staff of Champion Homes for their hospitality.



Commission Approves 911/988 Standards

The Nebraska Public Service Commission acting on the recommendation of the 911 Service System Advisory Committee (911SSAC) adopted statewide uniform standards that will allow Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) on the 911 service system to communicate, coordinate, and engage with the 988 Suicide Crisis Lifeline (988).

Required by state statute (Neb. Rev. Stat. §86-1025), the uniform standards were developed over several months through the hard work of an ad-hoc 911SSAC working group, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services, representatives of Boys Town and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center

The standards provide for the ability of a PSAP to transfer a caller with permission to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and the ability for 988 to transfer calls to a PSAP. The standard also recommends that PSAP telecommunicators have training suitable for carrying out their ability to transfer calls and receive calls from 988.

The [911-988 statewide uniform standards](#) are available on the NG911 Info/911 Service System Advisory Committee page of the PSC website, under PSAP NG911 Resource Materials < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/ng911-information-911-service-system-advisory-committee> >



PSC Hosts Donation Drive for the Lincoln Food Bank



Each year the PSC Social Planning Committee organizes a giving opportunity for staff.

This year our employees showed the spirit of the season as they donated items to the Food Bank of Lincoln.

The Food Bank estimates more than 64,000 people are food insecure in the 16 counties it serves in Southeast Nebraska. Of those more than 20,000 are under the age of 18. Visit the [Food Bank of Lincoln website](#) to learn more about the impact services and programs it provides.





*Happy Holidays from the
Nebraska Public Service Commission*

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The Nebraska Public Service Commission regulates telecommunications carriers, natural gas jurisdictional utilities, major oil pipelines, railroad safety, household goods movers and passenger carriers, grain warehouses and dealers, construction of manufactured and modular homes and recreation vehicles, high voltage electric transmission lines, and private water company rates.

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