

PSC DEPARTMENT DIGEST

Nebraska Public Service Commission
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Nebraska Receives \$87.7 Million from U.S. Treasury for Broadband Build out

The state of Nebraska has been awarded \$87.7 million from the American Rescue Plan's Capital Project Fund (CPF) to help provide affordable, reliable high-speed internet services to unserved and underserved areas in the state. Nebraska was one of five states whose CPF plans were approved by the U.S. Treasury Department at the end of August.

The PSC is working with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development on a plan to administer the funds. The state CPF plan calls for the funds to be distributed through grants awarded by the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP).

The NBBP is currently in its second grant cycle utilizing \$20 million in state funds for broadband infrastructure projects in unserved and underserved areas of the state, with grant awards to be made in December 2022.

"This new funding will go a long way in helping to build the infrastructure needed to deliver reliable internet services to areas currently lacking access or those that are underserved," Cullen Robbins, Director PSC Telecom/NUSF Department.

Distribution of the Capital Project Funds was determined by the legislature during the 2022 legislative session with the passage of LB1204 ([Neb. Rev. Statute 81-12,425](#)). Per statute, Congressional Districts one & three will each receive at least \$40 million in funding for broadband expansion.

The PSC will administer the \$87.7 million dollars in a through the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program.

An application window is expected to be opened in 2023.

Read more on the U.S. Treasury announcement [here](#).



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Capital Projects Fund Award Fact Sheet Nebraska

Treasury approves Nebraska's plan to invest \$87.7 million of CPF funding in broadband infrastructure projects that will provide high-speed internet to locations that lack access to adequate service.

Nebraska Capital Projects Fund Program Overview

- **Program Summary:** \$87.7 million for Broadband Infrastructure (68% of CPF allocation)
- **Locations to Be Served:** 21,000 (estimated)
- **Program Description:** The Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program, a competitive grant program, will award grants for broadband infrastructure. The program is designed to reach areas without access to reliable, affordable high-speed internet service, especially the state's rural areas.
As reported by Nebraska, estimates show that investments made using the Capital Projects Fund will serve 23% of locations still lacking high-speed internet access in the state.
- The Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program is designed to provide internet service with speeds of 100/100 Mbps symmetrical to households and businesses upon project completion.
- Each of the internet service providers funded by the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program will participate in the FCC's [Affordable Connectivity Program \(ACP\)](#) – a \$30 per month subsidy for low-income families.
- **Key State Contact:** Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Gans Selected Assistant Director of Telecommunications/NUSF Department

Carrie Gans is the new Assistant Director of the PSC Telecommunications/NUSF Department. Prior to her new role, she worked in the department as a Policy Analyst.

As the assistant director, she will assist in overseeing subprograms of the Telecommunications/NUSF Department, manage various aspects of NUSF and the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP), and work with the Department Director to develop overall program management strategies to support stakeholders, Commissioners, and the public we served.

Before joining the PSC in 2019, Carrie was in the insurance industry for 12 years.

She has an MBA from Nebraska Wesleyan University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration Management from Doane University.



**Carrie Gans, Assistant Director
Telecommunications/NUSF Department**

PSC Welcomes Jacobson to Accounting Team

The PSC welcomes Debbie Jacobson to its accounting team. Debbie comes to the PSC after 26 years with the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.

Raised in Louisville, she and her husband Jeff, have two children, Ashley 21, and Nick 16.

Debbie tells us they live on an acreage near Wilber where they enjoy the country, attending school activities and the small-town life.

She says, gardening, camping, boating, fishing and their pets keep them busy.



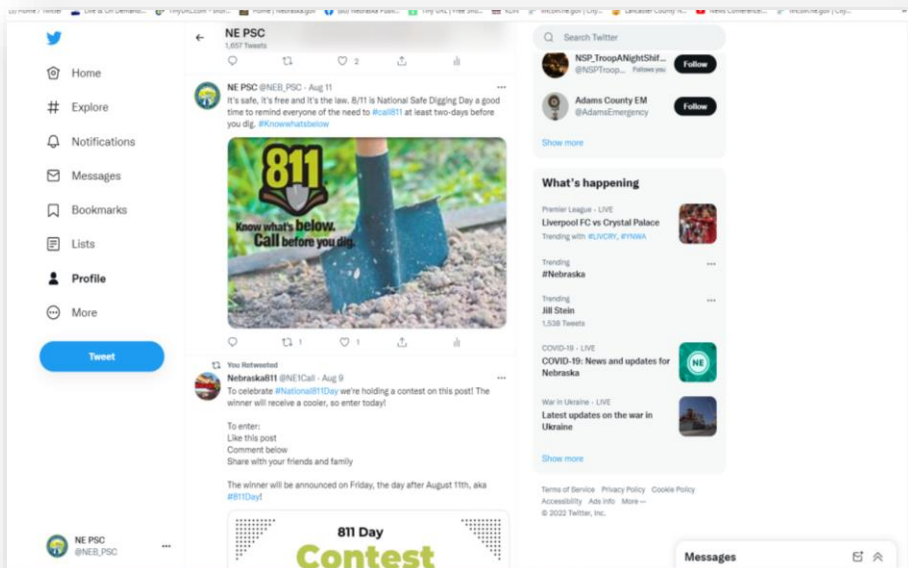
Debbie Jacobson

Safe Digging is a Shared Responsibility

In August, the PSC Natural Gas Department helped to raise awareness of National Safe Digging Day (8/11) through a series of social media posts and retweets. 811 is a free service used to mark underground utilities lines before any excavation (digging) occurs. Failure to access 811 is estimated by the Common Ground Alliance (DIRT Report) to have an annual societal cost of approximately \$30 billion dollars to buried utilities in the United states.

The PSC wants Nebraskans to know what's below before they begin any project that involves excavation. Nebraska law requires anyone who digs to place a locate request at least two full business days (excluding Saturday, Sunday and holidays) prior to digging. Once a request is submitted, utilities will locate and mark their lines. The color-coded chart lets you know what underground utilities are buried in the marked area.

In Nebraska, locate requests can be made online @ www.ne1call.com or by calling 811 (800-331-5666). Remember, it's free, it's easy and it's the law.



Grain Department Hosts Booth at Husker Harvest Days

The Grain Department took center stage at the Public Service Commission's booth during Husker Harvest Days (Sept. 13-15.)

"This was a great opportunity to get out and share information with grain producers/seller and grain dealers about the importance of knowing how state law and PSC regulation applies them," said Terri Fritz, Director PSC Grain Department.

Grain department administrative and field staff handed out lanyards containing important information on the state's Grain Dealer Act as well as brochures with information about the services provided by the Public Service Commission.

Fritz said, "We enjoyed talking to everyone who stopped by the PSC booth and encourage those who didn't get the chance, to log onto the [Grain Department](#) page of the [PSC website](#)."

Held in September, Husker Harvest Days is the world's largest totally irrigated working farm show with more than 300 acres of field demonstrations and more.



Next Generation 911 Migration Continues

The migration of the state's Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) regions to the 911 Service System continues.

The South Central/Panhandle region of PSAPs was the first region to migrate to the Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet), the backbone of the NG911 platform. Currently, upgrades continue to be made and soon the region will be receiving text messages and implementing geospatial call routing through the ESInet.

The state 911 department reports that the Lumen/Intrado team continues its work with telecommunication providers to build the necessary circuits to connect the remaining regions. The Metro region will be next to join the ESInet. Pre-migration testing is currently underway with completion expected this fall.

Pre-migration work is also underway in the MidEast, Northeast and East-Central regions with migration expected before the end of the year. The remaining two regions, North-Central and Southeast are scheduled for early 2023.



Rail Safety Week Highlights Need to #StopTrackTragedies



Since 2017 Rail Safety Week (RSW) has helped to save lives by educating and empowering the public to make safe decisions around trains and tracks.

The week of September 19-25 provided the PSC Transportation Department an opportunity to help spread the RSW message through a series of social media post.

"When you see tracks, think train, it's that simple," said Dillon Keiffer-Johnson, Director PSC Transportation Department. "Taking that little bit of extra time could just save your life."

In Nebraska there are 4,813 railroad crossings, with 2,856 public and 1,973 private. Of the public crossings 718 have gates, 165 have activated warnings and 1,973 are passive (no lights/gates). Data shows that nearly 50% of all collisions occur at crossings equipped with active warning devices.

According to the most recent statistics from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in 2021 there were 42 collisions at railroad crossings in the state. Six of which resulted in fatalities and 16 led to injuries.

To find out more on how you can help #STOPTrackTragedies visit the Nebraska Operation Lifesaver website @ <http://nebraskaol.org/>

Twitter

Tweets from @NEB_PSC

NE PSC @NEB_PSC · Sep 15
It's #LifetimeAwarenessWeek a program that helps to make affordable voice & broadband services available to eligible citizens. Checkout this short video to learn if you or someone you know could benefit from the Lifeline Program.
lifelinesupport.org/video/communit...

Facebook

Nebraska Public Service Commission

Join us in congratulating Commissioner Mary Ridder as she was honored by the state's Rural Broadband Task Force. A strong advocate for rural broadband, Commissioner Ridder has served on the task force since its inception. She was recognized for her contributions to the task force's reports and for her efforts to advance rural broadband in Nebraska. #proud

Calendar

19 SEP	B-1901.01 Mike's Handy Van, LLC/Safe & Reliable Transportation Services Location: Commission Hearing Room 9:00am
27 SEP	Commission Meeting Location: Commission Hearing Room 10:00am
27 SEP	MANF-15, MODF-16 & RVF-16 Annual Fees Hearing Location: Commission Hearing Room 11:00am
27 SEP	B-1798.03 Triumph Transportation, Inc. Location: Commission Hearing Room 1:00pm

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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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