

PSC DEPARTMENT DIGEST

Nebraska Public Service Commission
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Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program Underway

The first year of the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program is underway. The Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) began accepting applications for grant funding on September 9 ([C-5272](#)). The deadline for submission is October 1.

Created by the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act (LB388), the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program administered by the PSC will provide grants to fund the deployment of broadband networks in unserved and underserved areas of our state.



“This is an exciting time in our state as we work to expand broadband to unserved and underserved Nebraskans,” Cullen Robbins, Director PSC Telecommunications Department.

The act allows public entities and private companies to enter into a partnership to apply for grant funding. Applicants are required to provide matching funds of at least 50% of the total project costs, and the project must provide broadband capable of 100/100 Mbps service. The 2021-2022 Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program schedule and application materials can be found on the [Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program](#) page of the [PSC website](#). To be considered for a grant applicants must comply with all aspects of the application. Applications received will be posted to the Broadband Bridge Act Grant Program page of the PSC website by October 6.

State 911 Department on Track for Next Generation 911 Deployment

After an extensive Request For Proposal (RFP) process, the PSC executed a contract in January 2021, with Lumen (CenturyLink)/Intrado for the construction and maintenance of a statewide Emergency Services Internet Protocol network (ESInet) and Next Generation 911 (NG911) Core Services.

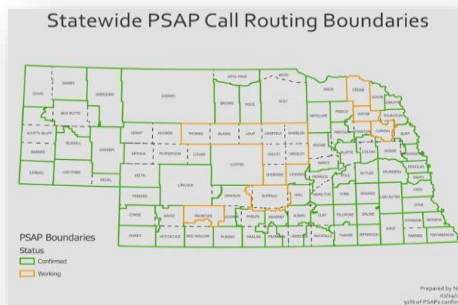
Since that time, great strides have been made building the backbone of the system (ESInet) that once in place will allow Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to locate calls geospatially, improving call routing and making it possible to receive not only voice calls, but text messages, pictures and videos.

State PSAPs will connect to the ESInet through seven regions with the implementation on track to migrate the first PSAP region (South Central/ Panhandle) to the NG911 platform by the end of 2021, with the goal of having all regions connected by the end of 2022.

"As we move closer to the implementation of NG911, the collaborative efforts involving the State 911 Department, the 911 Service System Advisory Committee, and our consultants Mission Critical Partners (MCP) continue to play a key role in the process," said David Sankey, State 911 Director.

Once implemented a statewide NG911 system will provide redundancy and resiliency dramatically improving call routing and location accuracy providing for the free flow of information from citizens in need of emergency services.

For more information on continuing efforts to implement NG911 in Nebraska visit the Next Generation 911 page of the PSC website @ <https://psc.nebraska.gov/state-911/next-generation-911>



Natural Gas Department Reminds Consumer to be Aware of Utility Scams

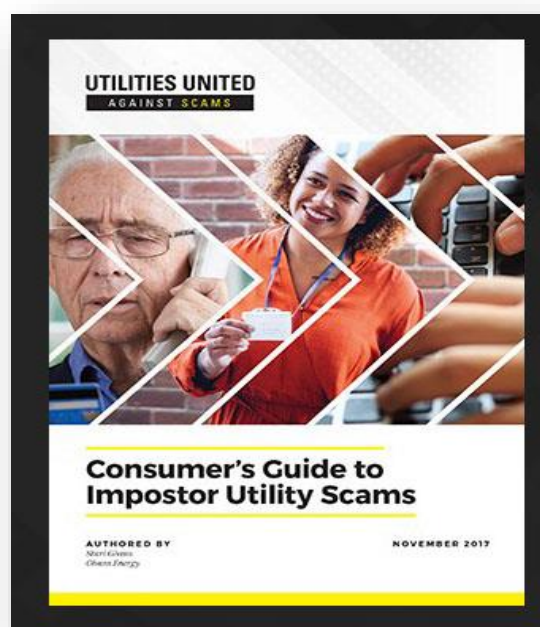
The caller said their service would be disconnected if they didn't immediately pay their bill. The knock at the door, was a person claiming to be with their utility company needing to get into their house to fix a problem with some equipment. These are just a couple of examples of utility scams targeting consumers on a daily basis.

The PSC Natural Gas Department works with its energy partners to help educate consumers and raise awareness about scams.

“Unfortunately the bad actors behind these scams aren't going away anytime soon,” said Nichole Mulcahy, Natural Gas Department Director. “We would encourage consumers to develop a relationship with their utility providers. They will never demand payment over the phone or internet and will never ask for gift cards or cash to pay bills.”

Consumers can visit The [United Utilities Against Scams \(UUAS\) website](#) and view the Consumer Guide For Imposter Utility Scams for valuable information on how to avoid becoming a victim.

They can also checkout the [For Consumers Natural Gas page](#) of the PSC website for helpful links and information.



Grain Department Issues Harvest Reminders for Producers

With the start of harvest season, comes the annual reminder from the PSC to grain producers of the need to be familiar with Nebraska's grain laws.

"We want to help ensure our producers are protecting their assets," said Terri Fritz, PSC Grain Department. "The best way producers can do that, is by knowing what is required of them under the law should a dealer go out of business."

Under the [Grain Dealer Act](#) if a producer/seller wants to ensure their transactions with a grain dealer are covered by the dealer's security posted with the PSC, they must demand payment within 15 days after completion of their contract with the dealer.

Producers/sellers who choose not to demand payment within 15 days after completion of their contract will become unsecured creditors of that dealer and forfeit any protection from the grain dealer's security.

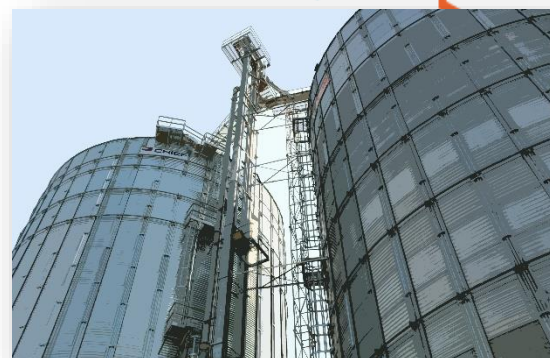
Fritz said, "The law makes it clear the responsibility falls on the producer to demand payment within the set timeframe to ensure they are covered."

Emergency Storage Policy Reminder

Grain warehouse operators needing to store grain on the ground are reminded to review the [PSC's emergency storage policy](#).

An [emergency storage application](#) must be file with and approved by the PSC before grain can be stored on the ground.

Both the emergency storage policy and the emergency storage application can be found on the [Grain Department page](#) of the PSC website.



New License Structure In Place for Household Good Movers

The year 2021, brought big change for household goods movers providing service in Nebraska.

Beginning in July, the PSC Transportation Department transitioned its household goods movers from contract carriers to licensees.

The move follows the passage by the Nebraska legislature of LB 461 in 2020. Under the new statute the PSC will no longer set the rates for intrastate household goods moving services. Carriers should file their rates and charges in writing with the Commission whenever the rates are amended.

To obtain a license to transport household goods in Nebraska a qualified applicant must pay a no-refundable license fee (\$250) and file a completed application. The new licenses are valid for one-year and must be renewed annually prior to the license expiration dates.

There are currently 49 household goods movers licensed by the PSC. For more information visit the [Household Goods Movers page](#) of the PSC website



Isom Named to State Board of Engineers & Architects

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts has reappointed PSC Housing and Recreational Vehicle Department Director Lenora Isom to the [State Board of Engineers and Architects](#).

Isom, a Registered Architect with more than 20 years of experience received a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies and a Master of Architecture from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). Following years of practice in a wide variety of commercial and residential project types, Isom transitioned into a regulatory role.

She joined the Commission in 2020 as a Housing Design Professional, and was named Director in May 2021, replacing Mark Luttich who retired after 45 years of service to the state of Nebraska.

Read more about Isom and her appointment to the state board @ <https://ea.nebraska.gov/board-members/isom>



**Lenora Isom- Director
Housing & Recreational
Vehicle Dept.**

Technological Changes Aid Housing & Recreational Vehicle Dept. During Pandemic

From plant audits to plan reviews, the pandemic created an opportunity for the Housing & Recreational Vehicle Department to update its processes from paper to electronic and online platforms.

“Pre-COVID, Recreational Vehicle plans were still reviewed on paper and mailed back to the client,” said Department Director Lenora Isom. “Now, the plans are scanned into a .pdf, reviewed and then emailed back to the submitting party.”

Efforts continue to streamline the process even further by setting up the incoming plan submission from the manufacturers via .pdf and eliminate the scanning process.

In the modular and manufactured housing programs, which works with the federal Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Department pre-COVID annual audits were done over several days in-person at the PSC and on location at the factory. These same audits are now done via zoom and utilize a phone or tablet camera to provide a visual for the on-site portion of the process which includes record reviews, material storage and production line protocol.

The agency also worked to develop a process that allows for the uploading and sharing of large files with those within the industry.

Isom said, “These new implementations allow for more efficient processes benefiting not only our staff but the industries we regulate, and we look forward to continuing to find ways to streamline our operations.”

PSC Executive Director Mike Hybl Retires

The Nebraska Public Service Commission would like to thank Executive Director Mike Hybl for his leadership, dedication, integrity and friendship upon his retirement.

Hybl who retired September 3, was named Executive Director of the PSC for a second time in July 2017 having previously served the agency in the same capacity from 2007-2012.

A native of Omaha, he served in a number of public and private sector roles throughout his career.

A [search for a new Executive Director](#) is ongoing.





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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