

January 30, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THREE PROJECTS TO RECEIVE INTERNET ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

LINCOLN – Three projects received approval from the Nebraska Public Service Commission on Tuesday to receive about \$237,000 in grants from the Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund (NIEF) to develop infrastructure for the provision of broadband and other advanced telecommunications services.

Successful applicants for the second round of NIEF grants are the Village of Broadwater, Village of Dix, the Village of Huntley and southern Furnas County. The Broadwater and Dix grants will benefit the rural areas surrounding the villages, while the Huntley and southern Furnas County grant is a two-county proposal. Huntley is in east central Harlan County and Furnas County is located to the west. The proposal was submitted by the two counties through an established inter-local agreement. The applying entities must match a minimum of 25 percent of the grant monies.

The Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund was established by the 2001 Legislature. Revenue for the grants comes from a share of the state's proceeds from the lease of dark fiber optic lines owned by public utilities.

NIEF provides financial assistance to communities and rural areas in which the provision of Internet and advanced telecommunications services are particularly costly due to factors that include population scarcity and location remoteness.

The first round of grants in 2004 went to the Box Butte County Commissioners, Cheyenne County Commissioners, City of Chappell, Dawes County Commissioners and the Nemaha County Development Alliance.

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