

PSC DEPARTMENT DIGEST

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PSC Receives BEAD Grant Program Planning Funds

The PSC has been awarded nearly five million dollars in initial planning funds from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) enabling it to begin the planning and pre-deployment process which includes hiring additional staff for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) grant program.

BEAD is a formal grant program that provides support to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment, and adoption programs in all 50 states.

The initial planning funds will be utilized to generate a state broadband map, set up statewide outreach activities to stakeholders and enable the PSC to increase staffing to meet the needs of the program.

"We are excited to administer the BEAD program as we continue to build on efforts already underway to expand broadband access to all Nebraskans," Cullen Robbins, Director PSC Telecommunications/NUSF Department.

The PSC has begun recruiting for a number of position in connection with the BEAD grant program. Recruitment is currently underway for a [Grant Accountant](#) and two [Grant Auditors](#). Additional positions that will be opening soon, will likely include:

- Policy Analyst
- IT Support Specialist
- Accountant
- Administrative Assistant

Visit the [Career Opportunities](#) page of the PSC website for more information.

For more information on the BEAD Program and the steps that will be taken to bring broadband to unserved and underserved areas of our state, checkout the initial BEAD Webinar presented by the PSC in conjunction with the Connect Nebraska Working Group on the PSC YouTube Channel @ <https://youtu.be/KxKc14cJUj0>



PSC Holds Hearing on Telephone Service Quality Issues

The South Campus of Metro Community College was the site for the PSC's October hearing on telephone service quality issues([C-5303/PI-240](#)).

During the five-and-a-half hour hearing the Commission took testimony from citizens who had experienced a telephone service outage or other service quality issues involving the carriers, CenturyLink, Windstream and Frontier. Representatives from the three carriers also attended the hearing and took questions from the Commission.

Citizens who were unable to provide in-person testimony were given the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Commission.

"The hearing and submitted comments allow the Commission to hear more about how these issues have directly affected the lives of citizens who have struggled to deal with them, often over extended periods of time," Cullen Robbins, Director Telecommunications/NUSF Department.

The Commission will take the information presented during the proceeding and determine its next steps.



Robbins, Rowan, 2022 PSC Excellence in Leadership Award Recipients

The Nebraska Public Service Commission is pleased to honor Cullen Robbins and Maria Rowan as its 2022 State of Nebraska Excellence in Leadership Award recipients.

Coordinated by the Administrative Services State Personnel Division on behalf of the Governor's Office, the Team Nebraska excellence in Recognition award focus on both exceptional performance and career tenure of state employees.

A successful leader Robbins is the director of the agency's Telecommunications/NUSF Department. As a director, he invests in his staff, developing and enabling his team to achieve greatness. Robbins displays a keen ability to make decisions and problem solve under challenging and complex conditions and is held in high regard for his solid character, seasoned expertise and authentic presence.

A relative newcomer to the Commission Maria Rowan has made her presence known. An invaluable human resource professional, she strives for continuous improvements in HR policies, and practices. Rowan receives consistent praise regarding her professionalism, character, personality and expertise.



Cullen Robbins
Director Telecom-NUSF Dept.



Maria Rowan
Human Resources Specialist



Four current PSC employees were honored with Excellence in State Service Awards.

30 years of service:

Suzie Hinzman, Deputy Director of Finance & HR

Five years of service:

Tina Bartlett, State 911 Dept. Administrative Coordinator



Victor Kapustin, Economic & Data Analyst

Maria Rowan, Human Resources Specialist

Telecom & Grain Departments Welcome New Employees

Justin Williamson is the PSC's newest Policy Analyst in the Telecommunications/NUSF Department. Justin comes to the PSC after five years at ALLO Communications in Lincoln. He holds two business degrees from Chadron State College (BA 2020, MBA 2022), where he is also a trustee for the Chadron State Foundation. He also holds several leadership positions with various organizations in Lincoln and Omaha.

Raised in the Texas Hill Country, Justin and his wife, Rachel, now live in Lincoln with their daughter Marlys, 5. He also has a 13-year-old son, John. He enjoys spending time with family, their two rabbits, being outdoors, and reading.

Jordan Fuller joins the PSC's Grain Department as its new Administrative Program Officer. Jordan comes to the PSC after nine years in the banking industry.

Raised in Lincoln, she and her husband Nick have two dogs, a Shiba Inu, Radio (14), and a Siberian Husky, Morbo (5). They live in the Highlands where they enjoy visiting with family and finding fun things to do at home. She says off-roading, camping, concerts and their pets keep them busy.



**Justin Williamson-Policy Analyst
Telecom/NUSF Department**



**Jordan Fuller- Administrative
Program Officer Grain Department**

State 911 Department Updates Legislative Committee

In December, the director of the state 911 department provided the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Nebraska Legislature an update on the Next Generation 911 (NG911) Service System.

Director Dave Sankey told the committee that the migration of the state's Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) regions to the Emergency Service Internet Protocol Network (ESInet) was progressing, and that if everything continues as scheduled, all seven PSAP regions should be connected to the NG911 Service System by the end of the 2nd quarter of the new year.

What this essentially means is, the state is six-months away from achieving the vision from 2016, when the legislature passed LB938 creating the Service System Act and the development of a 911 Service System Implementation plan.

"We wouldn't be at this point today, without the devotion and hard work of the PSAPs, 911 Service System Advisory Committee (911SSAC), the 911 Wireless Advisory Board, consultants Mission Critical Partners, the State 911 Department staff and vendors Lumen & Intrado," Sankey said. "By working together, we are poised to bring NG911 technology to all who live, work or travel within the borders of our great state."

Natural Gas Department Offer Tips to Help Prevent



It's called the silent killer and according to the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) and Prevention](#) accidental Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning claims the lives of at least 430 people in the U.S. every year with some 50,000 people visiting emergency rooms each year.

Falling temperatures mean our home heating systems are turned on increasing the risks of CO poisoning. A colorless, odorless and tasteless gas, carbon monoxide can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. It is found in fumes produced by furnaces, kerosene heaters, vehicle exhausts, stoves, lanterns and gas ranges, portable generators or by burning charcoal or wood.

CO poisoning can mimic flu symptoms but comes on faster and affects everyone in the home. The most common symptoms are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms.

The following tips can help prevent CO poisoning:

- Install CO detectors in the hallways of living spaces and bedrooms on each floor of your home. Change the batteries every six months if your CO detector doesn't have a battery backup.
- Have your home heating system inspected each year by a qualified technician.
- Keep vents and flues free debris
- Never leave a motor vehicle running in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer or any gasoline powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent or camper.
- If you suspect CO poisoning, call 911 right away.

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING



CAN'T BE
SEEN



CAN'T BE
SMELLED



CAN'T BE
HEARD



CAN BE
STOPPED

Transportation Department Opens Docket to Amend Railroad Rules & Regs

In November, the Commission opened a docket (Rule and Regulation No. 209) to amend [Title 291, Chapter 4](#), Railroad Rules and Regulations.

“There have been changes to both state and federal law which requires a thorough review of these regulations,” said Dillon Keiffer-Johnson, Director PSC Transportation Department. “We would expect to revise these rules in their entirety.”

Comments for the first set of proposed rules on amendments to Chapter 4 which removes certain rules, updates language, and renumbers sections were due to the Commission on December 9.

The Commission will now review the comments and determine its next steps. Information and comments on the process can be found on the [Proposed Rules & Regs](#) page of the PSC website

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Grain Department Participates in Annual AGRO Conference

Members of the PSC Grain Department traveled to Savannah, Georgia in November for the 2022 Annual Association of Grain Regulatory Officials (AGRO) conference.

Grain department director Terri Fritz was re-elected Treasurer of the service organization, a position she has held for the past six-years.

AGRO is a clearing house for the collection and dissemination of information regarding present and proposed legislation affecting agricultural and commodities dealer laws and their administration. It is the purposed of the Association to promote an attain more uniformity between regulatory agencies.



Isom Presents at SSA/PIA National Meeting

Housing and Recreational Vehicle Department Director Lenora Isom recently shared her experience as a new State level State Administrative Agency Leader (SAA) during the State Administrative Agency (SAA) & Primary Inspection Agency (PIA) National Meeting held in Virginia.

Isom spoke on the collaborative process between the HUD Office of Manufactured Housing Programs, their contractor (IBTS) and the State program.

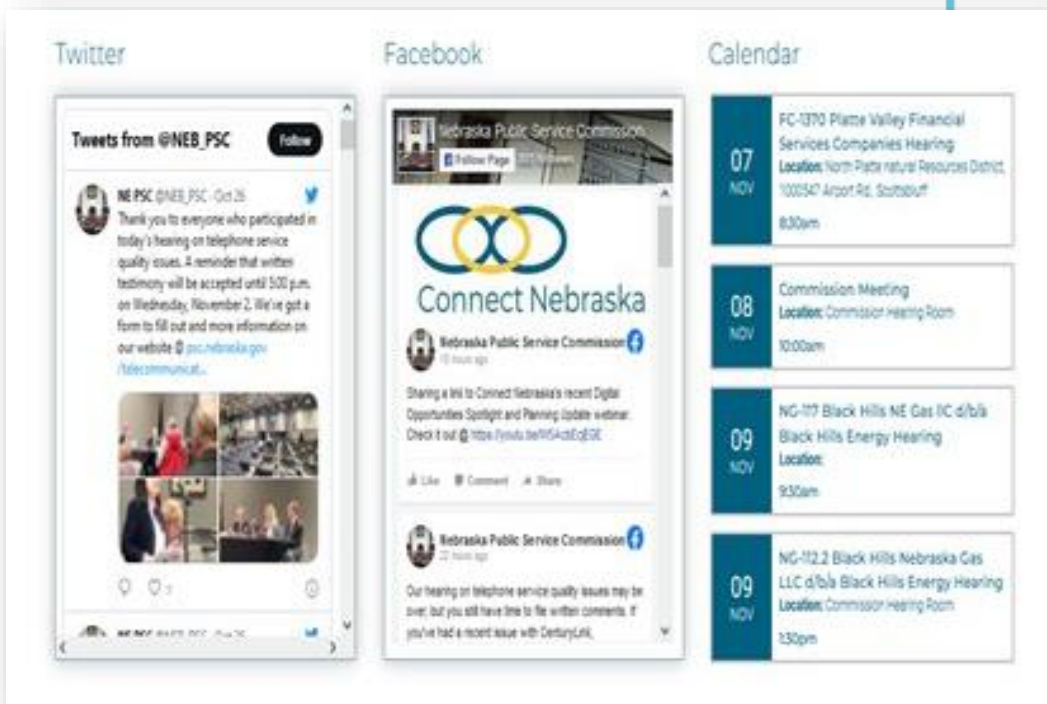
Isom said, "There has been a great deal of transition within the regulatory agencies. About one-half of the state leaders are new, so the meeting provided an opportunity to network with each other, as well as make connections with federal agency staff."

Those in attendance also heard updates on the technical standards of construction and the manufactured home installation process from Julia Gordon, the Assistant Secretary of Housing- Federal Housing Commissioner.



PSC Executive Director Tom Golden, Housing Department Director Lenora Issom and Housing Inspector Steve Kelso get a behind the scenes look at BonnaVilla Manufacturing plant in Aurora.





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Happy Holidays from the Nebraska Public Service Commission



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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