

PSC DEPARTMENT DIGEST

Nebraska Public Service Commission

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State Connects First Region To Next Generation 911(NG911) Services



The implementation of Next Generation 911 (NG911) services in Nebraska is underway with the migration of 21 of the 22 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) of the South-Central/Panhandle region to the Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network (ESInet) and Core Services. The remaining PSAP will be connected to the region and the Nebraska NG911 Service System in the coming weeks.

The Public Service Commission in conjunction with the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office held a news conference in February to announce the completion of the first phase of the implementation process. The event was held in Buffalo County, one of two host sites for the South-Central/Panhandle region. PSC Commissioners Tim Schram (Dist.2) and Mary Ridder (Dist. 5) attended the event.

"With the migration of our first region, we have laid the foundation of NG911 in Nebraska," said Dave Sankey, Director State 911 Department. "As we add regions, we will continue to realize the exciting services available through our state's NG911 Service System."

The South-Central/Panhandle region is the first of seven PSAP regions to migrate to NG911. While 911 voice calls are being received in the region via the ESInet, additional NG911 services such as texting, Geospatial Call Routing (GIS), pictures and video will be phased in as the implementation process continues across the state. That process will continue, with the goal of having all seven PSAP regions up and running on the Nebraska NG911 Service System by the end of 2022.



Commission Opens Docket on Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program

With the first-round (2021) of the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP) grants released the Commission has opened a docket ([C-5368](#)) to review the application and challenge process for the 2022 NBBP grant cycle.

Pursuant to the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act., Neb. Rev. Stat. § § 86 13-10-1310, the Commission is tasked with the distribution of \$20 million in grants annually for the purpose of facilitating and funding the development of broadband networks in unserved and underserved areas in Nebraska.

The Order ([C-5368](#)) set forth proposed changes to the NBBP beginning in the 2022 program year. The commission sought comment on various topics including adjustments to the scoring system, whether a tiebreaker should be implemented, the challenge process, speed testing, overbuilding of existing networks and restrictions on data plans and usage caps.

Cullen Robbins, Director PSC Telecommunications Department said, "While we are proposing to generally maintain the overall structure of the NBBP, we do believe there are ways in which we can improve the process and we appreciate the comments we have received."

Comments submitted to the Commission by the March 1 deadline are available on the [Commission website](#) for public review.

A public hearing on this matter was also held March 22. Once the Commission reviews the record in this proceeding, an Order will be issued that will put in place any modifications to the program.

Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program

Working to Expand Broadband for all Nebraskans



Meet Our New Executive Director

A New Year brought fresh leadership to the PSC as we welcomed new Executive Director, Nebraska Army National Guard Colonel (Ret.) Thomas Golden.

A decorated veteran, Colonel (Ret.) Golden, 56, served in both the U.S. Army and the Nebraska Army National Guard where he held numerous leadership roles before retiring after 32-years of service in August of 2021.

He brings a wide range of leadership, organizational and operational skills to the Commission.



Colonel (Ret.) Thomas Golden
Executive Director

We thought we'd get to know Tom a little better, with some Q & A.

Q: Thank you for your service. A decorated veteran, you retired last year at the rank of Colonel with 32-years of service to your country. What drew you to the military?

Tom: **It was an honor... and thank you for supporting our nation's service men and women. Frankly, necessity drew me to the military. The army offered to pay my college loans; in return I gave Uncle Sam four years of my life. Also, as cliché as it sounds, I thought I would "see the world." Little did I know what that truly meant. But perhaps more significant is why I stayed in the army 28 more years. I stayed because I discovered people engaged in a purpose far greater than themselves, and I realized I wanted to remain a part of that. Moreover, I aspire to contribute to that purpose as a leader.**

Q: How has your military service shaped your leadership style?

Tom: **I learned leadership by being led- first as a private and later as an officer. I watched great leaders during tremendously challenging moments make extraordinary decisions and take action with grace and courage. I also watched poor leaders struggle to motivate and inspire to the point of failure, which was educational as well. I simply observed and started formulating my own ideas about leadership. Most of what I learned is anecdotal. In other words, I didn't read it in a New York Times best seller; I watched it in action. There is a reason officers are out front in battle- they must be seen as courageous and willing to sacrifice everything for those they serve. Without that, there is no trust. Leaders show no fear in the line of fire. In fact, leaders want to be in that exact place. I was fortunate to have those types of leaders as my mentors, and they inspired me to want to do the same for those I've led...and still lead.**

Q: In addition to your military career, you are also a teacher and a writer. Was teaching your first passion?

Tom: **No but learning and literature were. I started teaching after my initial military tour on active duty. Teaching literature and writing had a reciprocal relationship to being a soldier- the two complimented each other in ways I never expected. Narrative is at the heart of learning. And the best narrative can propel us to extraordinary clarities in our own lives, (continued...)**

Meet Our New Executive Director Continued.....

to include how one leads; great narrative can produce both pathos and catharsis which encourages understanding and growth in ourselves and those we encounter. I don't like the question "what does this or that mean?" As a teacher (and leader), I would rather help others discover "how" something means. In other words, once someone discovers the craft of writing they start to appreciate it in greater ways. But isn't that true about most things? For instance, I'm discovering the "craft" of the talented people at the PSC, and I find it incredibly inspiring.

Q: What drew you to the Public Service Commission?

Tom: I took a little time off after retiring from the army and I was doing some writing and traveling, but I still had a desire to be a part of something significant- something greater than myself. After learning about the PSC and the unique nature of its work, I felt like it would be a good fit. I felt I might have a particular skill set that could prove beneficial to the people of the PSC.

Q: How have your first few months been? And what are you looking forward to in your role as Executive Director?

Tom: The PSC is in the middle of some exciting and innovative projects, to include expanding broadband service to unserved and underserved Nebraskans, implementing Next Generation 911 (NG911) across Nebraska, and rethinking what the workforce looks like as we emerge and learn from these past two challenging years. The PSC team possess impressive skillsets and works together to accomplish important and complex tasks regarding the regulation of varying industries for the citizens of Nebraska. I am excited to be a part of that work, and I'm looking forward to helping shape the PSC so it can continue to best accomplish that work into the future.

Reyes Named PSC General Counsel

Jamie Reyes has been named the new General Counsel at the PSC. Joining the Commission in 2003, she has held several positions most recently serving five-years as the Director of the PSC Transportation and Railroad Safety Department

"Jamie has been able to hit the ground running," said PSC Executive Director Thomas Golden. "Her background and knowledge of the agency has made her transition to her new role virtually seamless."

A native of Omaha, Reyes earned her Juris Doctorate from the University of Nebraska College of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is a 2017 alumna of the State of Nebraska's Government Leadership Certificate Program.

Licensed to practice law in Nebraska and Colorado, Reyes is a member of the Nebraska State Bar Association where she serves as vice-chair of the Women and the Law Section Executive Committee, Government Practice Section Executive Committee and Diversity Section Executive Committee.



**Jamie Reyes- PSC
General Counsel**

Keiffer-Johnson to Lead PSC Transportation Department

Dillion Keiffer-Johnson is the new Director of the PSC Transportation and Railroad Safety Department. He has been with the Commission since 2018.

Prior to being named Director, Keiffer-Johnson was a member of the Commission's Legal Department. He earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Nebraska College of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from West Virginia University.

Licensed to practice law in Nebraska, he is a member of the Nebraska State Bar Association.



**Dillion Keiffer-Johnson/Director,
Transportation Department**

PSC Welcomes New Employees in Transportation and Grain

Join us in welcoming two new members to the PSC staff.



**Robert Evans-Investigator
Transportation Department**

Robert Evans joins us as an inspector in the Transportation Department. A Lincoln native, he has 12-years of law enforcement experience to include the Lincoln Police Department (LPD), UNL Police Department and the Lincoln Airport Authority Police. Robert tells us his cousin a 25-year law enforcement veteran, influenced him to get into police work.

A big sports fan Robert enjoys, UNL Women's B-ball, KU men's B-ball and the Green Bay Packers. He is newly engaged and has a 7-year-old son.



**Tom Lawson-Administrative
Assistant/Grain Department**

Tom Lawson is the new administrative assistant in the PSC Grain Department.

Also from Lincoln, Tom spent time in the U.S. Army (Military Police), 26-years in the private sector (warehouse, retail sales, purchasing) and worked for the City of Lincoln (LPD service desk, Lincoln Solid Waste) for 18 years.

Married with three grown sons, he and his wife Kate, are animal lovers sharing their home with three rescue dogs and one rescue cat.

Energy Assistance Programs Aid Consumers Year Round

Energy emergencies can happen at any time and the PSC Natural Gas Department reminds consumers who may need help when it comes to energy needs there are programs available to provide support.

Managed by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program or LIHEAP helps low-income households by providing financial assistance to offset heating and cooling costs.

LIHEAP provides year-round crisis assistance, heating assistance, cooling assistance, emergency furnace repair and replacement, fan program and weatherization service for eligible Nebraskans. The program is funded solely through a federal grant and assistance through LIHEAP is paid directly to the energy provider.

To find out more about energy assistance available through LIHEAP visit the [Energy Assistance \(LIHEAP\)](#) page of the DHHS website. Eligible consumers can also apply for assistance by calling ACCESS Nebraska at 800-383-4278 or by visiting the [ACCESS Nebraska website](#).

The PSC Natural Gas Department also encourages customers of the state's jurisdictional natural gas providers [Black Hills Energy](#) and [NorthWestern Energy](#) who have questions or may be in need of assistance to contact their provider for available programs such as the budget billing option, or information on other community services available such as the Salvation Army.

Visit the [Natural Gas Department Consumer Information](#) page of the PSC website for additional helpful tips.



To apply call 800-383-4278 or Visit the Access Nebraska Website @ <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/ACCESSNebraska.aspx>

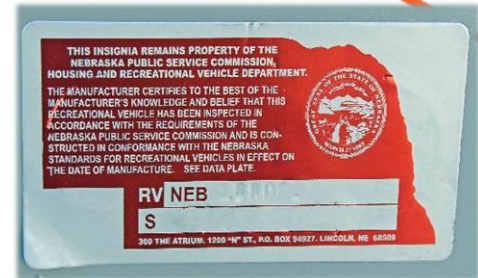
LB1147 Aims to Benefit State & RV Dealers

A bill (LB1147) that would help to level the playing field for Recreational Vehicle (RV) dealers in Nebraska is headed for approval by state lawmakers. If passed the new law would take effect immediately and would bring Nebraska regulations in line with the rest of the nation by allowing the sale of towable units over 430 square feet.

The PSC Housing & RV department reviews floor plans for all models for approval before they can be offered for sale in the state. If passed LB1147 would allow the PSC to approve reviewed floor plans of towable RV models which exceed the 430 square foot limit.

"Each unit offered for sale in the state must have a seal from the PSC ensuring it has been reviewed and is in compliance," said Lenora Isom, Director PSC Housing & RV Department. "We would expect LB1147 to have a positive impact on dealer sales and in turn on the number of state labels issued by the PSC."

The current label/seal fee is \$20. Isom said, "While we cannot predict how many of these larger units will be sold, we estimate the legislation could result in some 330 additional labels issued annually in Nebraska."



The PSC Celebrates Women's History Month (March 2022) as it recognizes the contributions of the women of the PSC. Thank you for all you do in service to the citizens of Nebraska.





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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