

SECRETARY'S RECORD, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission,) Application No. C-3206
on its own motion, to administer)
the Nebraska Internet)
Enhancement Fund.) ORDER AWARDING GRANTS
)
)
) Entered: January 30, 2007

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

On May 18, 2004, the Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) opened the above-captioned docket, on its own motion, to administer the Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund (NIEF) established by the Legislature pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 86-579 through 86-580 (2002 Supp.). On May 31, 2006, the Commission issued an order establishing a schedule for the 2006 application process and grant awards under the NIEF Grant Program.

The Commission received five pre-applications. On September 19, 2006, the Commission entered an Order inviting the following pre-applicants to submit full applications: Village of Broadwater, Nebraska; Village of Dix, Nebraska; and Huntley and Rural Southern Furnas County, Nebraska.

Applications from the Applicants mentioned above were received on or before November 15, 2006. The Village of Broadwater, Nebraska, requested funds in the amount of \$75,000. The Village of Dix, Nebraska, requested funds in the amount of \$50,000. Huntley and Rural Southern Furnas County, Nebraska, requested funds in the amount of \$112,316.

The NIEF Advisory Board reviewed and scored the above-mentioned applications during its December 14, 2006, meeting and again at a meeting on January 19, 2007, and recommended that all three be approved for NIEF grants in the amounts requested. With respect to the application filed by the Village of Broadwater and Huntley and Rural Southern Furnas County, the advisory board advised the Commission in a letter dated January 30, 2007, that the board felt the benefits of both projects merited an award amount in excess of the \$50,000 cap set forth in the guidelines.

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The Commission has reviewed the applications submitted and finds that the proposed projects are consistent with the statutory purpose and goals of the NIEF program. Furthermore, the proposed projects will provide financial assistance to communities in which the provision of the internet and advanced telecommunications services are particularly costly due to factors including population scarcity and location remoteness. Furthermore, the Commission finds that the proposed projects are economically viable and sustainable, provide benefits to the areas they propose to serve in terms of access to the internet and advanced telecommunications services and will enhance rural development, economic development, education or telemedicine.

Although the Village of Broadwater and Huntley and Rural Southern Furnas County applicants have applied for funds in excess of the \$50,000 grant cap, the Commission finds that the potential benefits of the proposed project and the fact that the project will fund areas of rural Nebraska of considerable size to reach Nebraska citizens clearly underserved, warrants the additional funds and constitutes exceptional merit. Therefore, the Commission finds that the following applications should be approved for the amounts requested:

Village of Broadwater, Nebraska
Huntley and Rural Southern Furnas County, Nebraska
Village of Dix, Nebraska

The Commission further finds that pursuant to NIEF guidelines, each grant recipient shall sign a Grant Agreement containing the terms or conditions of the grant, previously approved by the Commission, prior to receiving any grant funds.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that the above-captioned applications are approved for the requested amounts.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the grant recipients shall sign a Grant Agreement, as previously approved by the Commission, containing the terms and conditions of the grant.

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MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 30th day of January, 2007.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Gerald L. Uy

Anne Boyle

Tim Schram

~~//s// Rod Johnson~~

~~//s// Frank E. Landis~~

Chairman

Rod Johnson

ATTEST:

A.B. Pollack

Executive Director

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