

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 OPENING DOCKET AND  
  ) ADOPTING GUIDELINES, PRE-  
  ) APPLICATION AND APPLICATION  
  )  
  ) Entered: May 18, 2004

BY THE COMMISSION:

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

The Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) hereby opens 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.)*. NIEF is to "be used to provide financial assistance to install and deliver broadband or other advanced telecommunications infrastructure and service throughout the state." § 86-579.

The Fund consists of "money appropriated by the Legislature, any money transferred pursuant to section 86-127, and gifts, grants, or bequests from any source, including money remitted to the fund pursuant to section 86-577 and any other federal, state, public, and private sources." § 86-579.

In furtherance of its statutory duty to "establish an application process through which any county or municipality in the state may apply for financial assistance from [the Fund]," the Commission staff, with the assistance of the NIEF Advisory Board<sup>1</sup>, has drafted Program Description and Grant Application Guidelines, a Pre-Application, an Application, and a Scoring Sheet. Copies of these documents are attached hereto as Exhibits A, B, C and D, respectively.

The NIEF Advisory Board has reviewed the above-mentioned documents and recommends that the Commission approve and adopt them for use in administering the Fund.

The NIEF Advisory Board further recommends that the Commission adopt the following schedule for the grant application period:

June 1, 2004:                 The Pre-Application period opens.

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<sup>1</sup> Established pursuant to Title 291 Chapter 5 of the Nebraska Administrative Code, Section 6.15.

August 15, 2004: All Pre-Applications must be submitted to the Commission no later than 5:00 p.m.

September 1, 2004: All Pre-Applicants will be notified as to whether they are eligible to submit a full application and the full Application period opens.

November 15, 2004: All Applications must be submitted to the Commission no later than 5:00 p.m.

The Advisory Board will then evaluate all Applications and submit its recommendation to the Commission as soon as possible. The Commission anticipates announcing the recipients of the grants in January 2005.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that the above-captioned docket be, and it is hereby, opened to administer the Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Program Description and Grant Application Guidelines, the Pre-Application, the Application and the Scoring Sheet are approved and adopted for use in administering the Fund.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the schedule for the grant application period as described herein is adopted.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 18th day of May, 2004.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chairman

ATTEST:

Executive Director