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all across Nebraska

NROC

Nebraska Regional Officials Council
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Survey Looks at How Nebraskans are Using Broadband and Cost Benefits

The Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC) encourages all communities and counties to take the broadband survey. "Access to good reliable broadband is crucial to the growth of our communities and the state" said Thomas L. Higginbotham Jr, NROC Board Chairman. NROC is the state association of the Nebraska Economic Development Districts providing statewide coverage, for state and federal programs and include all the defined local governments. For more information regarding NROC please visit our website. <https://www.nrocne.com/>

West Central Nebraska Development District, Inc. (WCNDD) is one of eight development districts included in the NROC organization. The WCNDD service coverage area includes the following counties: Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Arthur, McPherson, Logan, Keith, Perkins, Lincoln, Dawson, Chase, Hayes, Frontier, Gosper, Dundy, Hitchcock, Red Willow and Furnas.

(LINCOLN, NEB.) — Digital readiness is key to building a stronger workforce and strengthening the State's economy. The University of Nebraska Extension, the Nebraska Information Technology Commission, the Nebraska Public Service Commission, and Nebraska Library Commission have partnered with the Purdue Center for Regional Development to conduct a statewide Digital Readiness survey. The survey is open to the public and available until April 30.

"Broadband availability and digital readiness are fundamental to helping all Nebraskans realize the benefits of participating in the digital economy," said Ed Toner, Chief Information Officer for the State of Nebraska and Chair of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission.

The survey will provide information on how Nebraskans are using broadband at home and the cost benefits of using broadband technologies. Results from this survey will help communities, resource providers, and policy makers address digital readiness and the digital divide. Participation in this survey is voluntary and is for research purposes only. Results will only be released in aggregated form removing personal identifiers.

“According to the Brookings Institutions, two-thirds of new jobs between 2010 and 2016 required medium to high digital skills,” said Roberto Gallardo, Assistant Director of the Purdue Center for Regional Development. “In order to make sure our communities participate fully in the digital age, we need to better understand how digital-ready they are. This survey will provide key information with implications for workforce development and digital inclusion.”

The Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) seeks to pioneer new ideas and strategies that contribute to regional collaboration, innovation and prosperity. Founded in 2005, the Center partners with public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations to identify and enhance the key drivers of innovation in regions across Indiana, the U.S. and beyond. These drivers include a vibrant and inclusive civic leadership, a commitment to collaboration, and the application of advanced data support systems to promote sound decision-making and the pursuit of economic development investments that build on the competitive assets of regions.

Resources:

The Digital Readiness survey can be found at <https://go.unl.edu/bbsurvey>
Purdue Center for Regional Development home <https://pcrd.purdue.edu>

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<http://broadband.nebraska.gov>
<http://communityvitality.unl.edu/>
<http://agecon.unl.edu>

Strategic*Learner*Achiever*Ideation*Connectedness



USDA Community Connect: Providing Access to Broadband in Unserved Rural Areas

LINCOLN, Nebraska, March 20, 2018 — Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today announced that USDA is accepting applications for grants to fund broadband infrastructure projects in unserved rural communities.

“E-connectivity is essential to the economic vitality and quality of life in rural communities,” Hazlett said. “Investing in broadband can strengthen rural economic growth and

improve critical access to jobs, education, health care and social services.”USDA is accepting applications through May 14 in the Community Connect program. Grants from \$100,000 to \$3 million are available to state and local governments, federally-recognized tribes, nonprofits and for-profit corporations. Applicants must be able to provide a 15 percent match on the desired grant amount.

The funds must be used to provide broadband service at a minimum rate-of-data transmission of 25 megabits downstream and 3 megabits upstream, which is the speed benchmark that the Federal Communications Commission has officially adopted for broadband connectivity. Awardees must use USDA funding to offer free broadband service to all critical community facilities in their proposed service areas for two years and provide a community center with free broadband service for two years.

For more details on this grant opportunity, contact General Field Representative Roger Meeks at 402-416-4936 or roger.meeks@wdc.usda.gov or visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants>

Big Results from Tiny Marketing Department

When you are starting out as a small business, it is tough to not only find the time to market your business, but also to budget funding towards marketing. Name recognition and quality products are vital to turn a profit in today’s world with every business being so saturated with competition.

Even though small businesses tend to only invest 3% of their revenue into marketing, there is still a way to compete with companies that have much larger marketing teams. By tracking your results of promotional events on your website through Google Analytics, you know exactly who your clientele is and where they reside. You will also gain a comprehensive understanding of how well each promotional event works for your company. Another key aspect, is to set aside a marketing strategy that lays out a road map for upcoming deadlines and campaigns.

Time management is crucial to laying a good foundation for a company. With that in mind, automating invoices and reports will ensure the ball keeps rolling even if your are tied up elsewhere. Outsourcing projects that need to be done, but are not in your particular realm of skills will reduce the amount of time spent learning a highly specialized task.

Don’t let being part of a small team diminish your goals. Some of the most effective, admired marketing teams in the business are “only” about 3-5 people.

A small group of talented people who work hard and smart as a cohesive team can often beat larger teams. Even much larger teams. Especially in markets that change fast. The agility of smaller teams can often trump the resources larger teams wield.

For more information, <https://www.score.org/blog/how-get-big-results-tiny-marketing-department>





#whatshappeningWCNDD

What are you doing this year? Send us your pictures to mburke@west-central-nebraska.com with the hashtag #whatshappeningWCNDD and we might feature them in our newsletter. Meanwhile, see if you can guess where this is ...

Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities

The Nebraska Library Commission along with partners University of Nebraska—Lincoln, Nebraska Innovation Studio, Nebraska Extension, and Regional Library Systems, are excited about the Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities project, which was recently awarded a National Leadership Grant of \$530,732 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The project will begin July 1, 2017 and conclude June 30, 2020.

The project uses Library Innovation Studios (makerspaces) hosted by public libraries to support community engagement and participatory learning experiences by providing access to technological and innovative learning tools not readily accessible locally. This strengthening of the maker culture in Nebraska communities is expected to stimulate creativity, innovation, and the exchange of ideas to facilitate entrepreneurship, skills development, and local economic development.

With this project, rural community residents will be empowered with the tools and guidance to explore, collaborate, create, learn, and invent. Libraries will transform their rural communities through participatory learning spaces, while establishing themselves as strong community catalysts for community change. If your community is interested in this opportunity, be on the lookout for the 2018 second public library application deadline.

For more information, contact JoAnn McManus at joann.mcmanus@nebraska.gov or visit <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/grants/InnovationStudios/>

Important Deadlines:

Broadband Survey Deadline	April 30, 2018
USDA Community Connect Application	May 14, 2018
Second Cycle Public Library Application	May 18, 2018
CDBG Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Pre-application	August 4, 2018
CDBG Planning Application Cycle 1	August 30, 2018
CDBG Downtown Revitalization Application	September 30, 2018
CDBG Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Application	October 6, 2018
CDBG Water & Waste Water	Open Cycle