

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission, ) Application No. C-2874/PI-71  
on its own motion, seeking to )  
investigate the current status )  
of distance learning in ) ORDER OPENING DOCKET,  
Nebraska. ) SEEKING COMMENTS AND  
 ) SETTING WORKSHOP  
 )  
 ) Entered: February 4, 2003

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, seeking to investigate the current status of distance learning in Nebraska. It has come to the Commission's attention during the past several months that certain educational facilities located in Western Nebraska have been experiencing difficulties with the timely deployment of telecommunications infrastructure to meet their distance learning needs. The Commission has received a number of complaints from students enrolled in Leyton High School regarding the delay in implementing distance learning in their school. The Commission has also received complaints from other Educational Service Unit (ESU) coordinators. We are also interested in the technologies used to provide distance learning and the potential for interconnecting the different distance learning networks.

The Commission invites all interested parties including, but not limited to, telecommunications carriers, educators, students and ESU coordinators to comment on the following issues:

1. Are telecommunications carriers timely deploying adequate infrastructure to meet distance learning needs in Nebraska?
2. If the answer to question 1 above is no, what should be done to ensure that carriers deploy adequate infrastructure to support all the distance learning needs of the state?
3. What distance learning technology issues need to be addressed? (E.g. JPEG versus MPEG video standards.)

4. What issues prevent interconnecting existing distance learning networks?
5. What should our goals include to ensure Nebraska has a distance learning network that meets present and future needs?

Written comments should be filed by interested parties on or before March 7, 2003. All parties filing comments should file one original, five paper copies and one electronic copy in Word or WordPerfect format.

A public workshop is hereby scheduled for March 18, 2003, at 2:00 p.m. CST in the Commission Library, 300 The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Lincoln, Nebraska to review the comments submitted and discuss further the status of distance learning in Nebraska. Videoconference links will be made available at the following sites:

Columbus Public Library  
Columbus Room, 2nd Floor  
2504 14th Street  
Columbus, NE 68601

College Park  
Conference Room C  
3180 West Highway 34  
Grand Island, NE 68801

Hastings Public Library  
517 West 4th Street  
Hastings, NE 69101

Kearney Public Library  
2020 First Avenue  
Kearney, NE 68849

Von Riesen Library  
Room 6, Basement Level  
1205 East 3rd Street  
McCook, NE 69001

Northeast Community College  
Macclay Building, Room, 122  
801 East Benjamin Avenue  
Norfolk, NE 68702

McKinley Education Center  
301 West F Street  
North Platte, NE 69101

Avera St. Anthony's Hospital  
Cornhusker Room  
2nd and Adams Street  
O'Neill, NE 68763

Panhandle Learning Center  
High Plains Room  
4502 Avenue I  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Any party interested in participating via one or more of these videoconference sites should contact the Commission office by March 14, 2003, for further information.

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 investigate the status of distance learning in Nebraska.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that interested parties file comments on or before March 7, 2003, in the manner prescribed herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a public workshop be held on March 18, 2003, at 2:00 p.m. CST in the Commission Library, 300 The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, with video conference links available in Columbus, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, McCook, North Platte, Norfolk, O'Neill and Scottsbluff at the addresses listed above.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 4th day of February, 2003.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chair

ATTEST:

Executive Director