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To: NITC Commissioners  
From: Vanessa Castro  
Date: March 04, 2026  
Subject: Community Council Report

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I am pleased to introduce four new official Community Council members for consideration and vote:

- Jonathan Jank, President/CEO for Seward County Chamber
- TinaMaria Fernandez, Founder/Executive Director for HOPE-Esperanza
- Jillian Linster, Chief of Programs for Center for Rural Affairs
- TBA

Their professional backgrounds and community leadership will not only broaden the expertise represented at the table, but also expand the reach and impact of projects and initiatives across the State of Nebraska. I have included their biographies below for your review.

The Council's first meeting will be in Lincoln on the 26<sup>th</sup>. During this meeting, members will vote on Council Chairs, reviewing and revising the charter as needed to ensure alignment with current priorities, and begin establishing our key goals for the year ahead. This meeting will lay the foundation for the Council's direction, structure, and strategic focus moving forward.

Regards,

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Vanessa Castro  
Community IT Manager

# Membership

# ABOUT JONATHAN JANK



## BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan Jank is the President and CEO of the Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership, where he has served as a visionary leader driving strategic economic growth and community development in Seward County, Nebraska. With more than a decade of experience in economic development, Jank has been instrumental in expanding business recruitment, workforce housing, childcare access, broadband connectivity, and major community investment initiatives. Under his leadership, Seward has achieved significant milestones including national recognition and transformational projects that have attracted investment and created jobs. He has led the creation of the Digital Empowerment Center, which provides digital literacy training. In 2025, he was honored as one of North America's Top 50 Economic Developers by Consultant Connect, a prestigious accolade recognizing his exemplary leadership and measurable impact fostering economic vitality in the region. Jank's work emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and long-term prosperity for Seward County and its residents.



ABOUT

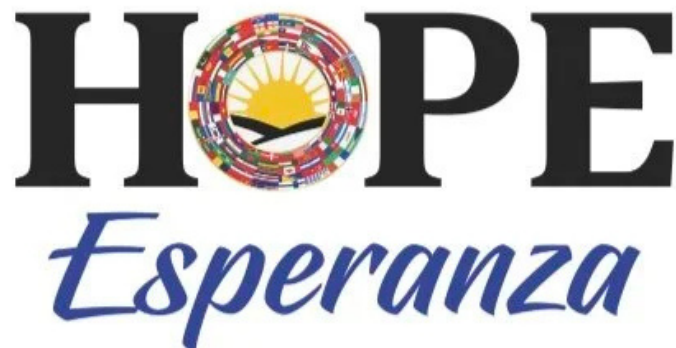
# TINAMARIA FERNANDEZ



## BIOGRAPHY

TinaMaria Fernandez is the founder of Hope Esperanza, a North Platte-based 501(c)(3) organization focused on fostering inclusion, belonging, and community collaboration. She launched the organization after identifying key local needs, including strengthening cultural connection among Latino youth, proactively preparing the community to welcome new residents, and ensuring families moving to North Platte have access to critical support services.

TinaMaria convenes diverse community partners – including local government, law enforcement, United Way, and other stakeholders – to problem-solve and plan for long-term success. She works to bridge gaps in language and access across government, healthcare, workforce, and youth engagement, and is a recognized advocate for building welcoming communities across Nebraska.



# ABOUT JILLIAN LINSTER



## BIOGRAPHY AND PRESENT

Jillian Linster serves as Chief of Programs at the Center, where she oversees all non-lending initiatives and advances the organization's mission to strengthen rural communities. In this role, she draws on a diverse professional background to support impactful programming and collaborate with partners across the state.

Jillian holds a doctoral degree in English from the University of Iowa and previously taught at both the University of Iowa and the University of South Dakota. Her experience also includes work in agriculture and finance, along with a culinary arts degree that reflects her commitment to rural life and community sustainability.

She and her husband live on a small acreage near Pender, Nebraska, where they are raising their two daughters and remain deeply connected to the rural communities she serves.



CENTER *for*  
RURAL AFFAIRS

## **Nebraska GIS Coordinator Report, March 2026**

The council has met once since the previous NITC meeting, on February 4. Official membership appointments and renewals continue to be of concern, as we have had difficulty communicating with the Governor's Office to update their records. There are many positions that are either vacant or awaiting confirmation/renewal.

### **Action Items:**

There were no relevant action items at the February meeting. Future action items include the appointment of a new Vice Chair for 2026, and Chair for 2027. Mike Schonlau with Douglas County GIS has announced his decision to retire from the County in March. His current seat has a representative of the Nebraska League of Municipalities and future job requirements will likely prevent him from being on the GIS Council, unless an existing appointment or At-Large position becomes vacant.

### **Working Group Updates:**

The Boundary Working Group has reviewed 79 of 90 Nebraska Revised Statute Chapters. After reviewing all Chapters, the group will identify the goals and outcomes of the review process and report to the Council.

The topic of an official State of Nebraska Boundary layer has been presented by multiple Agency and Council members recently. There are multiple copies of boundaries for the state that contain differences, especially on the eastern border between Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri. The current dataset published by the U.S. Census bureau appears to be incorrect in several areas, causing confusion for permitting, hunting and fishing enforcement, and other authoritative boundary datasets.

A Supreme Court Decision from 1972 calls for the general enforcement of the Iowa-Nebraska Boundary Compact of 1943 (Nebraska Revised Statute 1-104) The compact designates the center of the Corps of Engineers' stabilized channel as the border, with both states ceding land to each other to align jurisdictions. The boundary defined in this statute differs from the current census boundary that is used in a variety of basemaps for popular public apps including Google Maps, Bing Maps, etc. causing confusion for public users. The Council will determine the best course of action for defining and potentially updating the U.S. census data, while determining how it would affect other State of Nebraska datasets.

### **Discussion, Concerns:**

During the Coordinator's report, Ryan Werner provided an update on continued efforts to determine the State of Nebraska's GIS licensing needs and infrastructure support with the

reduction in OCIO staffing and budget. Council members continue to express concerns regarding the State's ability to maintain and deliver GIS data and services to citizens and local governments.

Members of the Council expressed support for an effort to modernize the Nebraska Enterprise GIS solution through cost-effective strategies that maximize the State's Enterprise Agreement with Esri. As part of this effort, DWEE and NDOT have coordinated with 15 enterprise GIS partner agencies to determine an accurate assessment of ArcGIS licensing, web application and development needs, and budget forecasts.

Currently, all Nebraska State Government GIS licensing is contracted through a single ESRI License Agreement, which lasts 3 years, expiring in July of 2027. The current agreement costs the State \$583,000/year and utilizes ESRI's previous "Concurrent Use" licensing model. The Enterprise must begin planning for a new agreement beginning August 2027 immediately as the License Agreement process takes nearly a year for completion. State biennium budgets requirements also force the process to move swiftly. The next agreement, or any licensing thereafter July 2027 will require a change to "Named User" licensing. This licensing model will drastically increase the statewide licensing contract if all current users are converted according to current usage.

The following considerations are being discussed to reduce agency licensing costs, decrease dependency on OCIO/GIO staffing, decrease infrastructure costs, and allow agencies to effectively manage GIS applications and data:

- Continued usage of OCIO SQL Databases for data storage and inter-agency distribution
- NDOT, DWEE, and potentially DHHS will deploy their own GIS web Portal, ArcGIS Online, or hybrid Cloud/on Premise deployments.
  - These agencies have the expertise and staff to manage and deploy their own GIS systems and infrastructure
- Determine the feasibility of a continued On-Prem deployment of ArcGIS Enterprise Portal for the remaining agencies
  - The On-Premise portal relies on a large infrastructure of OCIO Virtual Machines and quickly becomes unmanageable without multiple staff
  - Additional staffing needs to support the Portal deployment rapidly increase budgets for smaller agencies
  - Many agencies have very few, if any web applications in Enterprise Portal. Some use and manage applications in their own ArcGIS Online (Cloud) environment. Many Agencies already have active ArcGIS online sites.

- If Enterprise Portal is required, it must be reduced to few servers that can be managed by a single staff member at OCIO/GIO.
- This staff also is responsible for GIS web development for several of the agencies and may not have time for server management.
- A central State of Nebraska ArcGIS Online site could also be utilized for smaller agencies with few users that rely on application development from OCIO/GIO.
- NDOT and DWEE have coordinated with ESRI to grant “Named User” licenses, compatible with the current Enterprise Portal deployment, to distribute to agency GIS staff in order to determine the correct tier of desktop licensing for each user.
  - This will help provide a more accurate assessment of the licensing needs for the next potential license agreement in August 2027.
- NDOT and DWEE will discuss strategies with the GIS council and other State Government organizations in Ohio and Kansas, who have gone through similar decentralization of GIS infrastructure and licensing.

In addition to advice from the GIS Council, the determinations resulting from this discovery process will provide a plan for the State of Nebraska to continue to produce quality authoritative data, while facilitating license management and web application development for participating agencies at a reasonable cost.

## Network Nebraska RFP Update

### Nebraska Information Technology Commission Report

#### RFP Overview

Network Nebraska recently completed the evaluation phase of the statewide connectivity Request for Proposal (RFP). The procurement covered connectivity services for **19 school district locations across the state and 25 sites total**, with multiple aggregation options available through the Network Nebraska backbone.

We received a strong response from the vendor community with **bids from 10 providers**, including:

- Allo Communications
- Viaero Wireless
- Great Plains Communications
- Hamilton Telecommunications
- Glenwood Telecommunications
- Windstream
- OPTK Networks
- Midstates Communications
- UPN

This level of participation reflects continued interest in supporting Nebraska's Research and Education Network and demonstrates a competitive market environment for broadband connectivity across the state.

#### RFP Results

Following evaluation of the submitted bids, the tentative award distribution is as follows:

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Number of Winning Bids</b>
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Viaero	15
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Allo	4
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Hamilton	4
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## **Vendor    Number of Winning Bids**

Glenwood 1

OPTK      1

A notable outcome of this cycle is the strong showing by Viaero, a new competitor in the Network Nebraska RFP process, which secured the majority of winning bids. Their participation significantly increased competition in several regions of the state.

Importantly, all requested locations received at least one bid, including Randolph Public Schools, which did not receive a bid during the previous RFP cycle. This indicates improved vendor engagement and coverage across the network.

## **Cost Impact**

The competitive nature of this year's bidding has resulted in meaningful cost reductions for participating schools.

In some cases, schools are seeing monthly savings of approximately \$700 per circuit.

The potential impact across **19 participating schools** would be:

- **Monthly savings:** \$4,200
- **Annual savings:** \$50,400

These reductions help improve the long-term sustainability of the Network Nebraska model and reduce the connectivity costs borne by Nebraska schools.

## **New Participant: Stuhr Location**

This year also included a new Network Nebraska location at Stuhr. The site received multiple competitive bids, which is encouraging for future connectivity options in that region.

Network Nebraska is currently working with Stuhr administrators to enroll in the federal E-Rate program. Once eligibility and funding levels are confirmed, we will determine whether E-Rate discounts can support:

- connectivity for the entire campus, or
- connectivity for the primary building initially

This will help ensure the most cost-effective implementation for the site.

## **Next Steps**

Over the coming weeks, Network Nebraska will:

- Finalize vendor award notifications following public posting requirements
- Coordinate contract execution and circuit implementation timelines
- Continue assisting participating schools with **E-Rate filings and compliance**
- Work with new participants such as **Stuhr** to integrate them into the Network Nebraska network

These steps will ensure a smooth transition into the next service cycle and help participating schools realize the cost savings identified through the RFP process.

# Projects Status Dashboard

March 2026

## Enterprise Projects - Current

Project Name	Sponsoring Government Entity	Manager	NITC Designated	Total Estimated Costs	Actual Costs to Date	Estimate to Complete	Status
Nebraska Regional Interoperability Network (NRIN)	31 Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)	Krogman, Sue	3/15/2010	\$ 12,500,000.00	\$ 10,405,204.00	\$ 2,094,796.00	Completed
iServe Nebraska	25 Department of Health and Human Services	Leonard, Anthony	11/12/2020	\$ 33,524,476.00	\$ 26,207,464.00	\$ 7,317,012.00	Completed
Kronos Transition to UKG Dimensions	65 Office of the CIO	Beer, Joe	7/14/2023	\$ 1,340,000.00	\$ 1,054,129.25	\$ 285,870.75	Cancelled
Message Switching System (MSS) Modernization Project	64 State Patrol	Neukirch, Chris	7/14/2023	\$ 1,628,927.96	\$ 276,953.87	\$ 1,351,974.09	Completed
Computer Aided Dispatch Project	64 State Patrol	Neukirch, Chris	7/14/2023				Completed

Note: Status is self-reported by the agency