

March 2018

# Nebraska Broadband

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**Prairie Hills Wireless has equipment on the Ravenna water tower.**



## Ravenna Leverages Social Media, Wireless Broadband

*By Anne Byers, Nebraska Information Technology Commission*

With wireless broadband internet service of 150 Mbps, Ravenna, a community of over 1,300 in central Nebraska, has the internet service and community leadership it needs to grow.

Prairie Hills Wireless is providing high-speed wireless internet access in central Nebraska with a service area including Amherst, Boelus, Cairo, Hazard, Kearney, Litchfield, Loup City, Miller, Pleasanton, Ravenna, Rockville, and Riverdale. Prairie Hills Wireless is owned and operated by Kent and Sara Urwiller. Kent Urwiller, who is a native of Ravenna, has been in the industry 10 years.

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*“We don’t advertise. We rely on word of mouth. We focus on customer service. Ninety percent of customers in our coverage area can do 150 Mbps.”*

—Kent Urwiller  
Prairie Hills Wireless

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Prairie Hills Wireless offers residential broadband of up to 150 Mbps down with up to 500 Mbps available. Plans include 10 Mbps upload, but upload speeds can be increased through traffic shaping if needed.

“We don’t advertise,” explained Urwiller. “We rely on word of mouth. We focus on customer service. Ninety percent of customers in our coverage area can do 150 Mbps.”

Prairie Hills Wireless was recently recognized as Wireless Internet Service Provider (WISP) of the Year at the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association’s 2017 WISPALOOZA.

“Members vote for who is doing the best job,” said Urwiller.

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“We are using MicroPoPs in Ravenna. This is a new concept. We are one of the first to do this. We deployed a bunch of small cells scattered at 18 sites in Ravenna. They are low to the ground covering 10 to 20 customers per site with 1 gig or more to each site. We do a lot of beta testing. We work with Mimosa to test new products before they are out.”



**Prairie Hills Wireless is using microtowers in Ravenna.**

MicroPoPs, a concept developed by wireless equipment manufacturer Mimosa, can be a cost-effective method of high-speed broadband deployment in suburban areas and small towns, especially in areas with 400 or more households per square kilometer and which do not have broadband service being provided over fiber. Mimosa also offers products that can be utilized to provide high-speed wireless internet service in less densely populated rural areas.

The City of Ravenna worked with Urwiller on special use permits and allowed Prairie Hills Wireless to use the municipal water tower.

As far as barriers to expansion, Urwiller explained, “Finding an installer to help with installs is the big thing for us.”

When asked about advice on attracting a competitive provider, Urwiller suggested contacting nearby wireless providers and offering tower space in return for free internet service.

***“Broadband support is a huge selling point. If we don’t have broadband then they won’t come to Ravenna, and we won’t have economic development. Communities without broadband die.”***

**—Dana Dennison  
Ravenna Economic Development Corporation**

“It isn’t hard to start a WISP, but you’ve got to know what you are doing,” said Urwiller. “The best people to have are your neighbors. They will take care of you better.”



Community leaders in Ravenna also understand the importance of broadband and the need to effectively use new technologies.

“Broadband support is a huge selling point,” said Dana Dennison, the executive director of the Ravenna Economic Development Corporation. “If we don’t have broadband then they won’t come to Ravenna, and we won’t have economic development. Communities without broadband die.”

The local economic development community is using social media marketing to attract visitors and to engage members of the community. Through social media marketing, Ravenna was able to draw an estimated 20,000-30,000 people to Ravenna for the solar eclipse. Special Facebook and Twitter accounts were created just for the eclipse. The chamber, economic development corporation, and other area organizations worked together to amplify the campaign’s reach.

“We put a lot of focus on Facebook for eclipse,” said Gena McPherson, executive director, Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce. “We were able to get an insane reach. There is so much potential in being able to reach people through social media.”

Members of the community are participating in a community engagement grant designed to help them better engage with members of the community.

“We communicate to the whole community through our Facebook pages,” said Dennison. “That is how we get our news out. We felt like it was important for us to get involved. We wanted to make ourselves more meaningful in our posts.”

The community engagement grant is a collaborative project with the Purdue Center for Regional Development, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Nebraska Extension as well as three Nebraska communities: Ravenna, Nebraska City and Ashland. As part of the grant, University of Nebraska at

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*“Libraries are about innovation, not just about books. We are changing up our services. We have after school programming like Lego clubs. We are looking at utilizing more things with coding and programming.”*

—Karrie Huryta  
Ravenna Public Library

Omaha students are working with community leaders to create social media strategies focused on increasing civic engagement priorities.

“This project is about rural civic engagement,” said Jeremy Lipschultz, director of the Social Media Lab at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. “It is about using social media as a tool inside these communities to make new opportunities happen.”

Karrie Huryta, the director of the Ravenna Public Library, has also been involved in the community’s technology and economic development efforts.

“Libraries are about innovation, not just about books,” said Huryta. “We are changing up our services. We have after school programming like Lego clubs. We are looking at utilizing more things with coding and programming.”

The community broke ground on a new library last April and will be moving into the new library building in the coming months. The library will host a traveling makerspace in the new library as part of the Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities project. Funded by grant from Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the project helps local libraries host Library Innovation Studios by providing access to technology and innovative learning tools not readily accessible locally. The project is a partnership of the Nebraska Library Commission, the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL), Nebraska Innovation Studio, Nebraska Extension, Regional Library Systems, and local public libraries.

The mobile makerspace will help the community learn about and evaluate different pieces of equipment as the community makes plans to develop a permanent mak-

erspace in the back of the economic development and chamber office.

“It is our dream to have a makerspace in Ravenna,” said Dennison.

Huryta cited community leadership and support as one key to Ravenna’s success.

“We are just really lucky,” said Huryta. “I’ve gone to library conferences and talked to library directors who don’t get support from the school or the community. We have a city council, mayor, and clerk who are supportive. We have a lot of good people. Our hearts are here.”

## FCC Updates National Broadband Map

The Federal Communications Commission has updated and modernized its national broadband map. Improvements and features include:

- Fixed deployment data based on the latest collection by the FCC and updated twice annually
- Deployment summaries available for seven different geographical types: nation, state, county, congressional district, city or town (census place), Tribal area, and Core -based Statistical Area)
- Broadband availability and provider counts in each of the nation’s over 11 million census blocks, available for six technologies (fiber, DSL, cable, satellite, fixed wireless, and other) as well as seven speeds, for a total of 441 combinations
- Provider summary information available for 1,782 providers by technology, eight download speed tiers, and nine upload speed tiers
- Deployment comparisons between geographic areas
- A portal for data downloads
- Satellite imagery map overlay that shows buildings, roads, and geography
- Graphs that show what fraction of an area’s population has access to broadband at a given speed

The map is available at <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov> .

Commissioner Rosenworcel has set up a mailbox, BROADBANDFAIL@FCC.GOV, to report inaccuracies in the map.

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## Seward County Attracts Investments in Broadband Infrastructure

By Anne Byers, Nebraska Information Technology Commission

Seward County is leveraging public-private partnerships to attract investments in broadband infrastructure.

Jonathan Jank, President & CEO of the Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership, recognizes the importance of fiber to a community and has led the county's efforts to improve broadband infrastructure.

"As an economic development professional, I see fiber optic service as the fifth utility: sewer, water, electric, natural gas and fiber," said Jank. "It is a critical piece of the economic development puzzle. All of my economic development recruitment projects demand fiber at this point. I can't remember my last proposal that hasn't included that expectation of our community and of our county. We were fortunate to land a new ag manufacturing company pretty recently in Seward. And they chose Seward because they had building availability, access to good labor, and because we had fiber optic connectivity. We were competing against multiple other communities, and we won because of those things."

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*"What is exciting about the investment that was made through LB 840 in Seward, in particular, is that investment tends to attract more investment. And investments along with fiber to the business district actually led to fiber to the home."*

—Jonathan Jank  
Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership

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Because of Seward's proximity to Lincoln, many Seward residents expect to have the same amenities available in Lincoln, including fiber internet access.

"So we chose to incentivize a fiber optic service provider, Great Plains Communications, to build in our historic downtown business district, and we did that through utilizing our LB 840 funds," said Jank.



**Jonathan Jank, Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership, Brad Moline, Allo Communications, Tom Shoemaker, Pinpoint Holdings, and Cullen Robbins, Nebraska Public Service Commission, discuss how communities can work with providers at the Nebraska Broadband Today conference.**

The Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act established by LB 840 in 1991 authorizes incorporated cities and villages to collect and appropriate local tax dollars—including sales and/or property tax for economic development purposes. In order to utilize LB 840 funds, a community must develop a local economic development plan and have it approved by voters. The approved plan becomes the basis for the collection and expenditures of LB 840 funds for economic development. Over 60 Nebraska communities are currently eligible to offer loans, grants, and other activities through LB 840.

"And actually if you look into state statutes, LB 840 was created so that a portion of that can be used for infrastructure investment," said Jank. "For those that have that available in your community as an economic development tool, I encourage you to check that out."

Seeing the success in Seward, the county expanded its efforts to improve broadband infrastructure to Milford, Seward County's second largest community. The county ran a similar game plan in Milford, utilizing LB 840 funds to incentivize fiber to the business district. The county also used

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some philanthropy funds to build fiber to the home in Milford as well.

“What is exciting about the investment that was made through LB 840 in Seward, in particular, is that investment tends to attract more investment. And investments along with fiber to the business district actually led to fiber to the home. We had Bluestem Fiber choose to come into Seward as one of their pilot communities to build fiber to the home. And really the only complaint we’ve heard is when are you going to get to my home. They can’t build fast enough. We are fortunate to have that level of investment in both Seward and Milford. And really our long-term goal is to be potentially the first fiber to the home county in the state.”

Building community support was also important to Seward County’s success. Through talking to business owners during business retention and expansion visits, internet connectivity was identified as an issue—especially in downtown Milford. Members of the LB 840 committee, which included the superintendent of the schools in Milford, also identified the need for better internet access for telecommuters and for students needing internet access to complete homework.

“So we were able to articulate all those things, and say we have frustrations in the business community,” said Jank. “We educated our city council members about the importance of it, so everyone had a unified message that we were able to give as we sent out an RFP to see who wants to build in Milford.”

As more residents of towns and cities in southeast Nebraska get fiber access, residents of rural parts of Nebraska are sometimes frustrated that they don’t have fiber.

“I think that just price points can be a challenge for people that don’t understand what fiber can do for their company, or for their home, or for their family,” said Jank. “It’s been important to us to help get that education out in the community as to how they could utilize it further to benefit their bottom line or benefit their family.”

Jank is also working with Bluestem Fiber and other providers to explore ways to better connect those in rural areas of the county.

When Bluestem came to the Seward County Fair and talked to people there, they discovered that the majority of the people interested in fiber connectivity were in rural areas.

*“If you are not engaging your chamber of commerce and your economic development organizations in these broadband conversations, you should be. This is critical to the economic vitality of our state and so I would just make that general encouragement to talk with those professionals in and around your community.”*

—Jonathan Jank  
Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership

“That’s critical,” said Jank. “It can’t just be to population centers, you have to think broader scale because many of those people are our farmers and our agricultural producers that need that level of connectivity. If we are not able to help serve them, then we aren’t doing our job.”

Jank gave this advice to communities that want to improve their internet service: “If you are not engaging your chamber of commerce and your economic development organizations in these broadband conversations, you should be. This is critical to the economic vitality of our state and so I would just make that general encouragement to talk with those professionals in and around your community.”



To learn more about how communities can work with telecommunications providers, check out the [Broadband 102 video](#) from the Nebraska Broadband Today conference.

The session is moderated by Cullen Robbins, Nebraska Public Service Commission and features three panelists: Tom Shoemaker, Pinpoint Holdings, Brad Moline, Allo Communications, and Jonathan Jank, Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership.

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## School-Library Partnerships Could Improve Library Internet Access

As more schools are providing tablets or laptops to students and utilizing online educational tools, students without internet access at home may face difficulties in completing their homework. An innovative proposed project will test the feasibility of forming school-library partnerships to improve library internet access so that students can more easily complete their homework.

Public libraries are often the only source of public internet access in small, rural communities. However, many small and rural libraries do not have adequate internet speeds to service both the student population and patrons in the community. A survey of Nebraska libraries by the Nebraska Library Commission found that over 80% of the state's rural and small libraries have internet access which does not meet the FCC's 25 Mbps down/3 Mbps up definition of broadband for households.

Public schools in Nebraska, however, are well connected through a statewide fiber network, Network Nebraska, which provides substantial internet speeds to public school buildings. A school's scalable broadband could be shared with the local library, improving library internet access for their students and teachers.

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*A survey of Nebraska libraries by the Nebraska Library Commission found that over 80% of the state's rural and small libraries have internet access which does not meet the FCC's 25 Mbps down/3 Mbps up definition of broadband for households.*

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The Nebraska Library Commission, in collaboration with the State Office of the Chief Information Officer, has submitted a Sparks grant application to the Institute of Museum and Library Services to partner with, and incentivize five rural public school districts and five rural public libraries to work together to increase the internet speeds at the public library. Participating schools and libraries interested in establishing a terrestrial connection between the school and



**In the spring of 2017, five Nebraska public libraries, including the Wymore Public Library, piloted a broadband toolkit designed to help libraries assess their use of technology and to develop a technology plan. Left to Right: Tom Rolfes, Nebraska Information Technology Commission; Janet Roberts, Library Director, Wymore Public Library; Susannah Spellman, Internet2; and Holly Woldt, Nebraska Library Commission.**

library could file a mini-consortium E-rate filing in 2019-2020, leveraging available federal support through a novel model for E-rate filing.

The expected timeframe for this project will be from May 1, 2018-April 30, 2019, with pre-applications submitted and evaluated between January and March, 2018. Rural libraries, their patrons, students and teachers without home broadband access, and schools in five Nebraska communities will directly benefit from the project. Upon successful completion of the demonstration period, the project could be replicated, benefitting additional libraries, patrons, students, teachers, and schools. Additionally, the broader E-rate community will benefit from the innovative model for E-rate filing being demonstrated through this project.

*For more information, contact Holly Woldt, Nebraska Library Commission, [holly.woldt@nebraska.gov](mailto:holly.woldt@nebraska.gov), 402 471-4871 or Tom Rolfes, Nebraska Information Technology Commission/Office of the Chief Information Officer, [tom.rolfes@nebraska.gov](mailto:tom.rolfes@nebraska.gov), 402 471-7969.*

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## Broadband Available to 88.9% of Nebraskans, 65.5% of Rural Nebraskans

Broadband availability in Nebraska improved in 2016 with 88.9% of Nebraskans and 65.5% of rural Nebraskans having access to broadband at 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. Nebraska lags the U.S. with 92.3% of Americans and 69.3% of rural Americans having broadband access according to the FCC's [2018 Broadband Deployment Report](#).

Nebraska ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia on broadband availability—up two spots from 2015. Nebraska ranked in the middle of our neighboring states in broadband availability of 25 Mbps/3Mbps. (See the table to the right.)

[A more detailed summary](#), including county level data, is also available from the Nebraska Information Technology Commission.

% Population with Access to Fixed 25 Mbps/3 Mbps Service (2016) Ranked By Statewide Average			
	U.S./State (Urban and Rural)	Rural Areas	Urban Areas
United States	92.3%	69.3%	97.9%
Colorado	94.9%	72.1%	99.0%
Iowa	90.5%	77.4%	97.9%
Kansas	89.2%	66.5%	97.2%
Nebraska	88.9%	65.5%	97.5%
South Dakota	88.3%	75.1%	98.9%
Missouri	83.5%	49.5%	97.9%
Wyoming	78.2%	45.5%	97.6%

## FCC Will Launch Connect America Fund Phase II Auction in July

On January 30, 2018, the Federal Communications Commission took the final actions required to launch the Connect America Fund Phase II auction, which will provide up to nearly \$2 billion over the next decade to expand fixed, high-speed Internet service in unserved rural areas.

Nearly 1 million homes and businesses nationwide are in unserved rural areas where providers are eligible for support from the auction. Qualified providers will compete for support of up to \$1.98 billion over the next decade to offer voice and broadband service in unserved areas where, absent subsidies, there is no business case for expanding or providing service. [A map of eligible areas](#) is available.

The FCC scheduled the auction to begin on July 24, set a March 30 deadline for applications to participate, and set out detailed procedures for the auction. The FCC also adopted an Order on Reconsideration resolving all pending challenges to earlier FCC auction implementation decisions.

## FCC Releases Map of Areas Eligible for Mobility Fund Phase II Support

On February 27, 2018, the Federal Communications Commission released a [map showing areas across the United States presumed eligible to receive support](#) for the deployment of 4G LTE service as part of its Mobility Fund Phase II (MF-II) auction.

The MF-II auction will make up to \$4.53 billion in support available over 10 years to primarily rural areas that lack unsubsidized 4G LTE service. The Commission also announced the procedures for the challenge process in which mobile service providers and government entities will have an opportunity to challenge an initial determination that an area is ineligible for MF-II support. The window for submitting a challenge opens on March 29, 2018, and will remain open until August 27, 2018. The challenge process enables the Commission to resolve disputes quickly and ensures that support is allocated to the areas that need it most.

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## Broadband—Today's Steel Vine for Rural Communities

by Randy Bretz, Lincoln, Nebraska

*There is a place on the other side of Broken Bow called Westerville. Westerville, when I last saw it in the sixties, was a sad street with some decaying houses. Yet Westerville and Broken Bow vied with each other in the late 1800s for the honor of being the county seat. What happened to Westerville was what didn't happen to Westerville: the railroad didn't come through it. Westerville was condemned to perish at the moment some Railroad Intelligence looked at a map and drew a line that missed the town by five miles. The railroad meant life and money and commerce and people. It came to Broken Bow and we prospered. Westerville, severed from the life-giving steel vine, withered.*

That paragraph by Kem Luther in his book *Cottonwood Roots* tracing his family history from Broken Bow, Nebraska all the way to New England hit me as I began a mid 90's pilgrimage of promoting what then was simply dial-up Internet. It helped me realize that connecting to the Internet was the 20th Century equivalent of what Luther called the life-giving steel vine of railroad tracks. As I criss-crossed Nebraska working as a modern-day Johnny Appleseed promoting the Internet, I began to realize that access to the Internet was as important to rural communities at the end of the 20th Century as the railroad had been in the 19th Century.

And, now as we're well into the 21st Century, it's not just a dial-up connection to the Internet that's vital to the economic wellbeing of small towns, it's high speed fiber and cellular based broadband. In fact, as Thomas Friedman notes in his book *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations*, "...the global flows of commerce, finance, credit, social networks, and connectivity generally are weaving markets, media, central banks, companies, schools, communities, and individuals more tightly together than ever."

Friedman goes on to note "When you combine the power of the cloud with the power of wireless or fixed-line broadband connectivity, the resulting mix of mobility connectivity, and steadily increasing computational power is without precedent. It creates a tremendous release of energy into the hands of human beings to compete, design, think, imagine, connect, and collaborate with anyone anywhere."



**Tim Lindahl discusses the need for broadband in rural areas during a recent [TEDxLincoln talk](#).**

There are already many areas of rural America with high speed broadband and that connection to the world is helping those communities remain economically viable in the 21st Century.

Let me share some examples with you. Way out in Northwestern Nebraska, more than 100 miles from Rapid City and nearly 300 miles from Denver is Hemingford, a rural community of some 800 people. They lost one of their young folks to a marketing job in Chicago, but just a few years ago she returned to this idyllic community and continues her marketing work from her ranch home just outside of town. How? The entire county (of just over 11,000 folks) has high speed fiber based broadband which allows Paige Paradeis to live where she can enjoy the beautiful sunsets, a crime-free community and be near her family.

In his TEDxLincoln talk in 2017, Tim Lindahl of Sidney, Nebraska about 100 miles south of Hemingford in the Southwestern part of the state, talked about the need for high speed broadband not just for people in their homes and businesses, but for production agricultural workers in their

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machines driving across fields. He noted, for example, that the cab of today’s harvesting machines can look like the cockpit of a jet airplane with all of the computer equipment, GPS navigation equipment, and communication capabilities.

For example, as Lindahl noted, the farmer driving his combine in one field can, with high speed broadband, manage the irrigation equipment hundreds of miles away, monitor grain prices world wide and communicate with others running equipment in other fields. Lindahl calls for cooperative efforts by those in rural areas to provide ever faster broadband. His talk [Barn Raising Broadband](#) is compelling.

And, the need for broadband in rural communities is not just for the United States.

Over in Ghana, West Africa in the sparsely populated Aiyinasi Region lives Benjamin Afful. Benjamin has been a customer care executive with Vodafone and now teaches basic computer skills to children in a school in his village. His broadband access is through a cellular network and it’s enabled him to pursue a college degree through the online University of the People. In addition, the school where he teaches is connected giving the students an opportunity to interact with the rest of the world.



Friedman concludes that “...nothing would help create more local economic growth than bringing high-speed wireless broadband connectivity to every village in Africa. (and the rest of the world) Every study on this subject indicates that connecting the poor to the world of flows—of education, commerce, information, and good governance—drives economic growth and enables people to generate income while staying in their homes.”

Whether in rural Nebraska, Tennessee, even Western New York in the United States or in rural communities in Africa, South America, Europe or Asia, broadband is the steel vine of the 21st century, bringing life, money, commerce, and even people to the rural communities throughout the world.

## Report Finds 78% of Nebraska Households Subscribe to Fixed Internet Service

In 2016, 82% of U.S. households and 78% of Nebraska households subscribed to fixed internet service of at least 200 kbps according to the FCC’s newly released [Internet Access Services Report](#). At higher speed tiers, the gap in subscription rates between Nebraska and the U.S. average widens. In 2016, 50% of U.S. households, but only 38% of Nebraska households subscribed to broadband of at least 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. Nebraska ranked in the middle of our neighboring state on this measure—behind Colorado (60%), South Dakota (47%) and Wyoming (45%) but tightly clustered with Iowa (38%), Missouri (37%), and Kansas (36%).

% of Households with Fixed Connections as of Dec. 2016		
State	At least 200 kbps in at least one direction	At least 25 Mbps Down and 3 Mbps Up
U.S. Total	82%	50%
Colorado	89%	60%
Iowa	74%	38%
Kansas	79%	36%
Missouri	75%	37%
Nebraska	78%	38%
South Dakota	76%	47%
Wyoming	77%	45%

Source: [FCC Internet Access Services: Status as of Dec. 31, 2016](#)

[A more detailed summary](#) is also available from the Nebraska Information Technology Commission.

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## Legislature Introduces Broadband Bills

Here is a list of the broadband and health IT bills we are following in the Nebraska Legislature:

**LB 389** Adopt the Small Wireless Facilities Act (Lowe Priority Bill)

**LR 701** Provide for telehealth practice by physicians and physician assistants

**LB 856** Adopt the Internet Neutrality Act, change communications provider requirements under the Nebraska Telecommunications Regulation Act, and change financial assistance provisions relating to the Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund

**LB 966** Provide a sales and use tax exemption relating to dark fiber

**LB 989** Authorize testing of autonomous vehicles by a city of the primary class on its roadways (Wishart Priority Bill)

**LB 993** Create the 911 Service System Advisory Committee and change the 911 Service System Act and eliminate the act's termination date (Geist Priority Bill)

**LB 994** Create the Rural Broadband Study Task Force, change provisions relating to the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund, and change powers and duties of the Public Service Commission as prescribed (Transportation and Telecommunications Committee Priority Bill)

**LB 1031** Change excavation notification and marking requirements and provide for large project planning meetings, rulemaking authority, and cost allocation under the One-Call Notification System Act

**LB 1057** Change provisions relating to prescription drug monitoring

**LB 1113** Provide an exception for leasing dark fiber or providing broadband, Internet, telecommunications, or video services by an agency or political subdivision of the state (Walz Priority Bill)

**LB 1114** Provide for creation and maintenance of a statewide geographic information system map under the Nebraska Telecommunications Regulation Act

**LB 1122** Authorize testing of automated motor vehicles as prescribed

## Guide Helps Communities Work With Fiber Provider

What do city GIS records have to do with fiber readiness and working with a fiber provider? Allo has developed a [checklist](#) to help communities work with a fiber provider.



To learn more about how communities can work with telecommunications providers, check out the [Broadband 102 video](#) from the Nebraska Broadband Today conference. The session is moderated by Cullen Robbins,

Nebraska Public Service Commission and features three panelists: Tom Shoemaker, Pinpoint Holdings, Brad Moline, Allo Communications, and Jonathan Jank, Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership.

## Study Measures Impact of Broadband In 5 Rural Minnesota Counties

A [Blandin Foundation report](#) by Ann Treacy and Bill Coleman measured the impact of broadband in five rural Minnesota counties. The counties studied included Beltrami County, Crow Wing County, Goodhue County, Lake County, and Sibley County.

Using established formulas, the researchers found that the annual collective economic benefit for residents in the five communities studied would surpass the public/community investment in one to six years.

**Broadband Nebraska** is produced by the NITC Community Council in partnership with the Nebraska Broadband Initiative. To subscribe go to: <http://nitc.ne.gov/news/community/index.html>



The **Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) Community Council** ([nitc.ne.gov](http://nitc.ne.gov)) promotes the adoption and utilization of broadband technologies in Nebraska and provides recommendations to the NITC.  
**Twitter:** @NITCcommunity1  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/NITCcommunity/>



The **Nebraska Broadband Initiative** ([broadband.nebraska.gov](http://broadband.nebraska.gov)) promotes the adoption and utilization of broadband in Nebraska. Project partners include the Nebraska Public Service Commission, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Information Technology Commission, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and AIM.