Priorities and Action Plan Discussion

2001 Community Council Priorities
Approved by the Community Council on June 1, 2001

Nebraska will cultivate an economic, political, and regulatory environment conducive to IT development by:

- Ensuring access to public and private services for all citizens of the State of Nebraska (regardless of impediment--i.e., location and socio-economic status) through the appropriate and efficient use of information technology.

- Promoting the development of an infrastructure (including sufficient bandwidth) that is secure, affordable, reliable, and responsive to the specific needs of various sectors. Efforts should be made to ensure that systems across the state are compatible.

- Developing the intellectual infrastructure necessary to support Information Age development. Intellectual infrastructure includes the development of a workforce knowledgeable of and fluent in the use and applications of information technology, the availability of IT support services, and the inclusion of information technology in local or regional economic development plans.

- Facilitating IT development and innovation by raising awareness, sharing information, encouraging collaboration, and developing partnerships among public and between public and private entities.

- Fostering awareness and collaborative and innovative uses of information technology by local governments to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and provide better customer service.

Current Priorities

- Ensuring access to public and private services for all citizens of the State of Nebraska (regardless of impediment--i.e., location and socio-economic status) through the appropriate and efficient use of information technology.

- Promoting the development of an infrastructure (including sufficient bandwidth) that is secure, affordable, reliable, and responsive to the specific needs of various sectors. Efforts should be made to ensure that systems across the state are compatible.

- Developing the intellectual infrastructure necessary to support Information Age development.   Intellectual infrastructure includes the development of a workforce knowledgeable of and fluent in the use and applications of information technology, the availability of IT support services, and the inclusion of information technology in local or regional economic development plans.

- Facilitating IT development and innovation by raising awareness, sharing information, encouraging collaboration, and developing partnerships among public and between public and private entities.

- Fostering awareness and collaborative and innovative uses of information technology by local governments to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and provide better customer service.

Alternate Set of Priorities
(More results-oriented)

- Develop leadership capacity in Nebraska's communities to address IT development. (This is a new priority.   Some aspects of current priority #1are addressed in the new fourth priority)

- Promote the development of an infrastructure (including sufficient bandwidth) that is secure, affordable, reliable, and responsive to the specific needs of various sectors. Efforts should be made to ensure that systems across the state are compatible.   (No change from current priority).

- Support the development of the intellectual infrastructure necessary for Information Age development.   Intellectual infrastructure includes the development of a workforce knowledgeable of and fluent in the use and applications of information technology and the availability of IT support services. (Community leadership has been made a separate priority.)

- Encourage the use of information technology to enhance community and economic development.   (This is a new priority.   It replaces current priorities 1 and 4)

- Foster awareness and collaborative and innovative uses of information technology by local governments to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and provide better customer service. .   (No change from current priority).

2001 Community Council Action Plans
Approved by the Community Council on June 1
Update April 8, 2002

Action Plan: Telehealth Reimbursement and Licensure
Address the issues of telehealth reimbursement and licensure, by providing insurance companies, telehealth providers, and policy makers with information on these issues.
Lead: Telehealth Subcommittee
Time Frame: Completed
Update: The Telehealth Subcommittee has learned that many insurance companies are reimbursing for services provided via telehealth technologies.   The situation is expected to improve after October 1 when new Medicare policies take effect which expand reimbursement for services offered via telehealth technologies.

Action Plan: Technical Assistance Center for Telehealth
Explore the feasibility of establishing setting up a Technical Assistance Center for Telehealth. A virtual technical assistance center could provide technical assistance to telehealth providers. The Technical Assistance Center could be a virtual call center or could be Web-based with a bulletin board and best practices. A listserv might also be useful to link telehealth providers in the state.
Lead: Telehealth Subcommittee
Time Frame: Responsibility has been transferred to the Telehealth Development Committee
Update: A separate group, the Telehealth Development Committee, has been formed to pursue funding for telehealth development projects.   The Telehealth Subcommittee will focus on policy-related issues surrounding telehealth.   The Telehealth Subcommittee will also develop a telehealth section of the Community IT Toolkit by January, 2002.

Action Plan: Telehealth Standards
Make recommendations to the Technical Panel regarding telehealth standards and compatibility issues.
Lead: Telehealth Subcommittee
Time Frame: June, 2001-July, 2002
Update: Michael Beach, the chair the of the Video Standards Work group, spoke to the Telehealth Subcommittee in August.   Video Standards were adopted by the NITC in January, 2002.

Action Plan: Rural and Community IT Development
Address the information technology planning needs of Nebraska's communities, by:

- Inventorying and assessing current programs and strategies that address community IT leadership and planning, intellectual infrastructure, and telecommunications infrastructure in communities.

- Identifying specific gaps, duplication and collaborative opportunities regarding information technology needs in communities, including community IT leadership and planning, intellectual infrastructure, and telecommunications infrastructure.

- Making recommendations regarding program development.

- Inventorying community-based IT planning groups in the state.

- Working with the Technologies Across Nebraska initiative to review, make recommendations, and develop Information Technology toolkit resources for communities.

- Conducting a series of meetings with members of community IT committees to review to solicit feedback.

- Making action item and policy recommendations to the Community Council and the NITC.

Lead: Rural and Community IT Development Planning Group
Time frame: May, 2001 – January, 2002
Update: The first four sections of the toolkit (telecommunications infrastructure, intellectual infrastructure, and economic development) have been completed.   The telehealth section is near completion.   The Rural Development Commission has conducted an inventory of community-based IT planning groups. A conference on IT planning and development is planned for April 12. and anticipates having that information by October 1.   A Technologies Across Nebraska action plan was presented at the March Technologies Across Nebraska meeting.

Action Plan: IT Needs of Entreprenuers and Small Businesses
Address the IT needs of entrepreneurs and small businesses by:

- Inventorying and assessing current programs which serve entrepreneurs and small businesses.

- Working with the Technologies Across Nebraska initiative to review, make recommendations, and an IT resource guide for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Lead: Community Council and Technologies Across Nebraska initiative
Time frame: by January, 2002
Update: This action item will be completed as part of the Rural and Community IT Development action item listed above.

Action Item: Information Technology Clearinghouse
Continue to develop, within the NITC Web site, a clearinghouse service to provide convenient access to information about information technology.
Lead: Community Council, Local Government Subcommittee, Telehealth Subcommittee, and Rural and Community Technology Planning Group
Time Frame: Ongoing
Update: The Community IT Toolkit will be the new community section of the Clearinghouse.

Action Plan: Local Government IT Needs
Address local government IT needs by:

- Reviewing and evaluating information technology policy implications for local governments.

- Identifying and developing toolkit resources for local governments, including sample IT plans, sample inter-local agreements, best practices, and case studies.

- Identifying the implications of LB 827 and developing information resources to help local governments utilize the tools this bill offers communities.

- Developing local government policies and procedures that would
  - Reduce duplication of effort
  - Ensure appropriate compatibility of equipment and software both within a political jurisdiction and between other jurisdictions
  - Establish adequate and meaningful planning, and
  - Establish uniform public policies and procedures which promote uniformity, resource sharing, standards and guidelines, support services, training, and cooperative development of geographic information systems.

Lead: Local Government IT Subcommittee
Time Frame: June, 2001-June, 2002
Update: Members of the Local Government Subcommittee met with NIDCAC to discuss this action plan.   It was agreed that NIDCAC would focus on the policy issues and the Local Government Subcommittee would focus on developing and identifying toolkit resources.

2002 Action Plan Ideas

1. Work with the NITC, Public Service Commission, and Department of Communications to establish standards for service levels to meet requirements of different sectors, including business, health care, and education. Identify strategies to achieve these levels of service, including the role of communities. Monitor differences in service levels and cost.

2. Work with the University of Nebraska and other Technologies Across Nebraska Partners to support the implementation of the Technologies Across Nebraska Action Plan, including the following action steps:

- Inventorying what activities TAN partners are planning regarding information technology development in the next year .

- Identifying gaps in the information and resources that are available to assist communities.

- Setting up regional support teams and regional meetings of IT committees.

- Developing and maintaining an e-mail discussion facilitate the exchange of information among resource providers and members of community IT committees.

- Piloting toolkit materials by working with at least 10 communities to develop community or regional IT plans.

3. Work with the NITC and other stakeholders to develop a vision and strategy for expanded use of telehealth.

4. Identifying and developing toolkit resources for local governments, including sample IT plans, sample inter-local agreements, best practices, and case studies.