

IT Planning and Development 2007

Objective

- To foster community and economic development in Nebraska communities through the effective use of information technology.

Description

The NITC Community Council has partnered with the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension and Rural Initiative to form the Technologies Across Nebraska partnership. Technologies Across Nebraska is a partnership of over 40 organizations working to help communities utilize information technology to enhance development opportunities. Technologies Across Nebraska facilitates technology-related development by building partnerships, leveraging resources, and strengthening community capacity.

Technologies Across Nebraska's quarterly newsletter, *TANgents*, reaches over 1,000 individuals with an interest in technology-related development. Articles from *TANgents* have been reprinted by several organizations including *Government Technology*.

Technologies Across Nebraska introduced the Podcasting Across Nebraska program in the fall of 2006. Project partners include the Nebraska Information Technology Commission; University of Nebraska (including the New Media Center, Computer Services Network, Communications and Information Technology, and UNL Extension); Nebraska Department of Economic Development; Division of Travel and Tourism; Network Nebraska; Nebraska Lied Main Street; and Apple Computer. Over 30 communities and regional groups applied to participate in the program. The City of South Sioux City, Highway 14 Association, Panhandle Public Health District, and North Platte/Lincoln County Convention and Visitors Bureau were selected to participate in the program and will receive training on podcast production in early 2007. They will also receive hardware and software to produce podcasts. Network Nebraska will host the podcasts created by participants.

Benefits

The potential benefits of information technology to communities, businesses, health care, local government, education, and citizens are numerous:

- Communities can use the Internet to publicize community events, communicate with former residents, and advertise available commercial sites.
- Businesses can use information technology to decrease costs, increase sales, and provide better customer service.
- Local governments can use information technology to more efficiently deliver services and provide information to citizens.
- Students can take advanced placement courses or study a foreign language through distance learning.
- Through telehealth, patients can receive medical care from specialists and doctors can participate in continuing medical education without leaving their rural communities.
- Citizens can easily access the minutes and agendas of local governments, update their skills through continuing education, and share photos with distant family members.
- The effective use of information technology can improve a community's quality of life and can enhance economic development efforts.

Action Plan

Current Action Items

- 1. Support community IT development by working with the University of Nebraska and other Technologies Across Nebraska Partners, including the following action steps:**
 - Continue partnering with Technologies Across Nebraska and the University of Nebraska to promote technology-related development through the quarterly newsletter, *TANgents*.
 - Continue to maintain and update the TAN and NITC Web sites, including adding information on podcasting.

- Provide and/or promote training opportunities on effectively using technology to enhance development opportunities and the delivery of services, especially in the area of IT-related economic development.

Lead: Community Council

Participating Entities: Community Council, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, University of Nebraska Rural Initiative, and other interested entities.

Timeframe: January 2007– January 2008

Funding: No additional funding required

Status: Continuing

2. Promote the use of podcasting by communities and regional groups through the Podcasting Across Nebraska program.

Lead: Community Council and University of Nebraska Extension

Participating Entities: Nebraska Information Technology Commission; University of Nebraska (including the New Media Center, Computer Services Network, Communications and Information Technology, and UNL Extension); Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Division of Travel and Tourism; Network Nebraska; Nebraska Lied Main Street; and Apple Computer.

Timeframe: August 2006– August 2007

Funding: \$19,030 was approved from the Community Technology Fund in August 2006. Funding for an additional year may be requested from the Community Technology Fund in 2007.

Status: New

Completed Action Items (2005-2006)

1. Continued partnering with Technologies Across Nebraska and the University of Nebraska to promote technology-related development through the quarterly newsletter, *TANgents*.
2. Continued to maintain and update the TAN and Community IT Toolkit Web sites.
3. Supported local efforts to effectively use e-commerce through the Technology Innovation Grants for Economic Revitalization (TIGER) program. The grant award period ended on January 15, 2007.