

# NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW

■ Newly elected State Senators  
include familiar faces

■ Expedited review of redevelopment  
plans: Otherwise known as Micro-TIF

■ Reduce your municipality's risk  
from cyber attacks

Official Publication of the League of Nebraska Municipalities

**DECEMBER 2020**



**Paul Lambert**  
*Plattsmouth Mayor*  
*League President*



**Deb VanMatre**  
*Gibbon Mayor*  
*League President-Elect*

## 2020-2021 League Executive Board Officers



**Marlin Seeman**  
*Aurora Mayor*  
*League Vice President*



**Dwight Livingston**  
*Former North Platte Mayor*  
*League Past President*



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No. 1,148  
ISSN 0028-1906

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Top right: Gibbon Mayor Deb VanMatre, League President-Elect;

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## CALENDAR

VIRTUAL Midwinter Conference..... February 2021

## Municipal Legal Calendar

(All statute citations to Revised Statutes of Nebraska)

### FEBRUARY 2021

#### CITIES OF THE FIRST CLASS

Within 15 days of Passage.....Clerk publishes ordinances passed. (16-405)  
Within 10 days from meeting or before  
next meeting (whichever is sooner).....Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)  
On or before second Monday .....Annual Library Board report due. (51-213)  
Within 30 days from Council meeting.....Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting. (19-1102)  
Within 20 days after end of month .....Treasurer files monthly financial report. (16-318)  
\* \* .....Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Board meeting. (84-1411)

#### CITIES OF THE SECOND CLASS

Within 15 days of Passage.....Clerk publishes ordinances passed. (17-613)  
Within 10 days from meeting  
or before next meeting  
(whichever is sooner) .....Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)  
On or before second Monday .....Annual Library Board report due. (51-213)  
Within 30 days from  
Council meeting.....Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting. (19-1102)  
Within 20 days after end of month .....Treasurer files monthly financial report. (17-606)  
\* \* .....Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Council meeting. (84-1411)

#### VILLAGES

Within 15 days of Passage.....Clerk publishes ordinances passed. (17-613)  
Within 10 days from meeting or before  
next meeting  
(whichever is sooner) .....Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)  
On or before second Monday .....Annual Library Board report due. (51-213)  
Within 30 days from  
Trustees' meeting.....Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting. (19-1102)  
Within 20 days after end of month .....Treasurer files monthly financial report. (17-606)  
\* \* .....Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Board meeting. (84-1411)

**Nebraska Municipal Review Editor and Advertising Sales: Lynn Marienau, 402-476-2829 or [lynnm@lonm.org](mailto:lynnm@lonm.org)**

The **NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW** is the official publication of the League of Nebraska Municipalities, an association of the cities and villages of Nebraska, published at 1335 L St., Lincoln, Nebraska 68508 — Telephone 402-476-2829; FAX 402-476-7052; Website: [www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org). Periodicals postage paid at Lincoln, Nebraska. Views of contributors, solicited or unsolicited, are their own and not to be construed as having the endorsement of the League unless specifically and explicitly stated by the publisher.

The **NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW** is a nonprofit publication administered and supervised by the League of Nebraska Municipalities. All revenue derived from the publication is used by the association to defray publication costs.

The **NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW** is published monthly. Subscription rates are \$5 per single copy — \$50 plus tax for 12 issues.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW**, 1335 L Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508.



## Your participation in legislative process is vital for success

BY LYNN MARIENAU, COMMUNICATIONS  
DIRECTOR, LNM

One of the League of Nebraska Municipalities' highest priorities is to work with State Senators and others to represent the interests of member cities and villages at the Legislature. As the 2021 session progresses, it is important to remind ourselves that lawmaking is a process rather than an event. It can take several sessions and many meetings for major legislation to pass. One constant is that the process requires you, as municipal officials, to participate fully. Your letters, visits and calls to State Senators at critical times are vital. Only you can provide the necessary details and information that Senators need about the matters before them. As community leaders, State Senators value your opinions.

As always, the League will monitor several hundred bills this session that may have an impact on municipalities. League staff will support legislation that will help member cities and villages and oppose legislation that is detrimental to local government.

While much remains the same each year, things are different this year. I'm sure you are tired of hearing about special restrictions because of a pandemic that has shown no mercy, but you will encounter some new rules if you go to the Capitol and it's always best to know about them ahead of time. While the Capitol remains open to visitors, the public is not allowed in the balconies to observe the Legislature at this time. Visitors are encouraged to maintain social distance and wear face masks. New rules currently are being drawn up and evolving about witnesses who wish to testify during committee hearings. Committees will be meeting both in the mornings and afternoons during this session rather than in the afternoons only, as they have done in the past. There will be limits on how many people will be allowed in committee hearing rooms and how one may submit testimony. It will be important to check to see

*One constant is that the process requires you, as municipal officials, to participate fully. Your letters, visits and calls to State Senators at critical times are vital.*

what specific guidelines and rules are in place before you plan to testify. (Also, if you would like to testify during a public hearing, please contact League staff to coordinate testimony.)

Besides the guidelines that are in place because of the pandemic, a major project to restore the heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment in the Capitol is ongoing, requiring relocation of certain legislative offices, which is confusing even to those who are familiar with the building. Please contact the Clerk of the Legislature's office if you have trouble finding a particular office.

In odd-numbered years, such as this one, the Legislature meets for 90 working days for what is called a long session. This typically means that the Legislature adjourns for the year in early June, but the schedule is determined by the Speaker of the Legislature. It's important to remember that at the beginning of the legislative session last year, no one envisioned that proceedings would be interrupted by a global pandemic. Anything can happen to the best laid plans. Currently, sine die is scheduled for June 10. ■



## Newly elected State Senators include familiar faces

In the group of eight newly elected State Senators, three have served in the Legislature before, including Sens. Rich Pahls of Omaha, Mike Flood of Norfolk; Eliot Bostar of Lincoln; Jen Day of Omaha; and, Rita Sanders of Bellevue, who used to be Mayor of Bellevue. As an aside,

tors include Sens. John Cavanaugh of Omaha; Terrell McKinney of Omaha; Mike Flood of Norfolk; Eliot Bostar of Lincoln; Jen Day of Omaha; and, Rita Sanders of Bellevue, who used to be Mayor of Bellevue. As an aside,

Sen. John Cavanaugh is the brother of Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh of Omaha. Longtime legislative observers cannot recall siblings serving in the Legislature together. ■



*Sen. Ray Aguilar*



*Sen. Eliot Bostar*



*Sen. John Cavanaugh*



*Sen. Jen Day*



*Sen. Mike Flood*



*Sen. Terrell McKinney*

### State Capitol Mailing Address

Senator  
District Number  
State Capitol  
PO Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604



*Sen. Rich Pahls*



*Sen. Rita Sanders*



## Nebraska rallies to bring space command to state

BY GOV. PETE RICKETTS

Over the past weeks, Nebraskans have been rallying to bring U.S. Space Command (SPACECOM) to our state. This tremendous support for the military is common practice in our state. Nebraskans honor our servicemen and women, and our residents take great pride in hosting strategic missions that protect our nation.

In December 2019, Space Force became the newest branch of the U.S. military. Its mission is vital to national security. We depend on spaced-based services for navigation, communication and commerce. Center pivots use GPS technology to irrigate crops.

### Communication

Airplanes communicate with satellites to chart flight paths and safely transport people through the skies. Satellite technology helps facilitate financial transactions. Satellites relay television signals into millions of homes connecting people to news broadcasts and entertainment. These are just a few of the ways satellites orbiting the planet in space affect our day-to-day lives. Additionally, our armed forces rely on space technology to keep the United States secure. For instance, missile detection systems rely on spacecraft in orbit to monitor the Earth's surface for activity. The possibility of a foreign aggressor, such as China or

Russia, seeking to jam GPS signals or knock out satellites is a real threat. The United States needs to achieve space dominance to ensure our strength on the world stage and to preserve the peace and safety of America.

Nebraska has put forward a compelling bid to bring SPACECOM to Offutt Air Force Base (AFB) in Bellevue. Our state is one of six finalists to host the command. We expect the Department of the Air Force to decide on a site this month, and we've made a great case for Nebraska. Our state has the talent, commitment and resources to successfully host SPACECOM. Our central location is also the ideal place for global operations aimed at defending every corner of our nation.

### Competitive advantage

Our first competitive advantage for hosting this mission is our people. Nebraskans are patriotic, and we give tremendous support to military families and veterans. In November 2020, SmartAsset ranked Nebraska as the 7th best state for military veterans. None of the other states competing for SPACECOM ranked in the top 15. There's no better relationship anywhere in the nation than between the community of Bellevue and Offutt AFB. With its affordability, great schools and vibrant economy, metro

Omaha is a desirable place for military families to live.

### Academic resources

The academic resources in Nebraska are second-to-none in the fields of national defense and security studies. In 2013, the University of Nebraska College of Law became the first U.S. law program to offer a doctoral degree in Space Law.

The University of Nebraska is home to the National Strategic Research Institute (NSRI), one of the few university-affiliated academic centers conducting research exclusively for the Department of Defense. In September 2020, the U.S. Strategic Command awarded NSRI a \$92 million, five-year contract. NSRI has now received nearly \$300 million in research contracts since 2012. In February 2020, the Department of Homeland Security awarded the University of Nebraska Omaha a 10-year, \$36 million grant to serve as the national headquarters for a new counterterrorism center. This continuing investment shows the confidence of the federal government in Nebraska's ability to deliver research vital to our nation's security. Additionally, University President Ted Carter is former superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy and a retired

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Vice Admiral. He has the leadership experience and qualifications to maximize the University of Nebraska's contributions to the national defense.

### **Operational standpoint**

From an operational standpoint, headquartering SPACECOM at Offutt AFB makes perfect sense. The U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), the 55th Wing and the 557th Weather Wing at Offutt AFB already play key roles in supporting the military's space mission. From 2002 until 2019, U.S. space operations were based in Bellevue as part of STRATCOM. The 55th Wing is the Air Force's premier unit for global intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The 557th Weather Wing is the Air Force's meteorological unit. The presence of these complementary, space-related missions is why the U.S. Marine Corps chose Offutt as home for its newly formed space unit this fall.

Our state also has a track record of completing ground-breaking public-private partnerships on time and under budget. For instance, local investment in the Veterans' Affairs ambulatory clinic in Omaha saved taxpayers over \$30 million. This community support also allowed the clinic to be constructed ahead of schedule even with the disruptions of the

pandemic. Private-public partnership also paved the way for the innovative iEXCEL program at UNMC, which uses state-of-the-art simulation technologies to train doctors. Last year, the Legislature and community donors pledged a combined \$600 million – contingent on a \$1 billion federal investment – for a prospective partnership with the Department of Defense on a cutting-edge disaster response medical project at UNMC. In similar fashion, Nebraska has pledged \$107 million in public-private funds to offset the estimated \$1 billion of costs to build SPACECOM headquarters in Bellevue.

### **Partnership**

This spirit of partnership extends beyond our state's borders. We've engaged leaders across the Midwest to recruit SPACECOM to the Heartland. Governors of neighboring states, both Republican and Democrat, have written letters to support SPACECOM coming to Nebraska. Adjutant Generals of the National Guards in a half-dozen states have expressed support of SPACECOM being based at Offutt in Bellevue. President Carter has recruited Kansas State, the University of North Dakota, and Purdue to join with the University of Nebraska to develop academic programs to meet the anticipated needs of the U.S. Space Command.

Public and private sector leaders have worked incredibly hard, and very closely together, to give Nebraska the best possible chance of landing SPACECOM.

If you have questions about our bid, please email [pete.ricketts@nebraska.gov](mailto:pete.ricketts@nebraska.gov) or call 402-471-2244. This is another great example of Nebraskans coming together to grow the Good

Life. I appreciate everyone who has partnered with us to shoot for the stars! ■

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# Expedited review of redevelopment plans: Otherwise known as Micro-TIF

■ **BY CHRISTY ABRAHAM**  
LEGAL COUNSEL, LNM

## Background

Last year, **Sen. Mike Groene** of North Platte introduced **LB 1021**, which provides for an expedited review of certain redevelopment plans under the Community Development Law. A League representative testified in a neutral capacity at the public hearing before the Urban Affairs Committee citing concerns about the bill, as initially introduced, but offering to work with Sen. Groene and the Urban Affairs Committee to address concerns raised at the public hearing. The League also testified that some communities would welcome the opportunity to use TIF for smaller projects to address their housing shortages. After much work by the Urban Affairs Committee and others, an amendment was offered to LB 1021. With that amendment, the bill passed the Legislature on a 49-0 vote. It was signed by the Governor Aug. 17, 2020.

## The Basics

A city council or village board may decide by resolution to allow expedited reviews of redevelopment plans that meet certain requirements. The redevelopment plan is expedited because it is exempted from several requirements of “regular TIF.” Expedited review or micro-TIF is optional for cities and villages. If a city or village decides it does want to allow expedited review, it does not need to.

## Projects Eligible for Expedited Review

A redevelopment plan is eligible for expedited review if:

- (a) The redevelopment plan includes only one redevelopment project;
- (b) The redevelopment project in-

volves the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of an existing structure located within a substandard and blighted area;

(c) The redevelopment project is located in a county with a population of less than 100,000 inhabitants, meaning every county except Douglas, Lancaster and Sarpy County;

(d) The existing structure is at least 60 years old; and

(e) The assessed value of the property within the redevelopment project area when the project is complete is estimated to be no more than:

(i) \$250,000 for a redevelopment project involving a single-family residential structure;

(ii) \$1,000,000 for a redevelopment project involving a multifamily residential structure or commercial structure; or

(iii) \$10,000,000 for a redevelopment project involving the revitalization of a structure included in the National Register of Historic Places.

## Steps for Expedited Review

The expedited review consists of the following steps:

(1) A redeveloper prepares the redevelopment plan using a standard form. The form needs to include:

(i) the existing uses and condition of the property within the redevelopment project area;

(ii) the proposed uses of the property within the redevelopment project area;

(iii) the current age of the existing structure;

(iv) the current assessed value of the property within the redevelopment project area;

(v) the increase in the assessed value of the property within the redevelopment project area that is estimated to occur as a result of the redevelopment project; and



*Christy Abraham*  
Legal Counsel, LNM

(vi) an indication of whether the redevelopment project will be financed in whole or in part through the division of taxes (TIF funds).

(2) The redeveloper submits the redevelopment plan directly to the governing body along with any building permit or other permits necessary to complete the redevelopment project and an application fee in an amount set by the city council or village board. The application fee cannot exceed \$50, which is separate from any fees for building permits or other permits needed for the project.

(3) If the city council or village board has elected to allow expedited reviews of redevelopment plans and the submitted redevelopment plan meets the requirements listed under “Projects Eligible for Expedited Review,” the city council or village board is required to approve the redevelopment plan within 30 days after submission.

Each city or village may select an appropriate employee or department to conduct expedited reviews.

## Steps NOT Required for Expedited Review

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The redevelopment plan is expedited because it is exempted from several requirements of “regular TIF.” Some of the steps that are excluded from expedited review TIF include: the detailed redevelopment plan as required in Section 18-2111; the review of the redevelopment plan by planning commission; the cost-benefit analysis; and the requirement to have public hearings on the redevelopment plan before the planning commission and the city council or village board.

#### **Requirements if Project is Financed by TIF**

For any approved expedited review redevelopment project that is financed by division of taxes (TIF funds), the CRA is required to incur indebtedness in the form of a promissory note issued to the owner of record of the property on which the structure is located.

The total amount of indebtedness cannot exceed the amount estimated to be generated over a 10-year period. The terms of the promissory note needs to clearly state that the indebtedness does not create a general obligation on behalf of the CRA or the city or village in the event that the amount of TIF funds generated over the 10-year period does not equal the costs of the agreed-upon work.

#### **Role of County Assessor in Expedited Review**

After completing the agreed-upon

work, the redeveloper notifies the county assessor. The county assessor then determines:

(1) Whether the redevelopment project is complete. Redevelopment projects must be completed within two years after the redevelopment plan is approved; and

(2) The assessed value of the property within the redevelopment project area. After the county assessor makes the above determinations, the county assessor certifies to the CRA: that the improvements have been made and completed; that a valuation increase has occurred; the amount of the valuation increase; and that the valuation increase was due to the improvements made.

After the certification is made, the CRA may begin to use TIF funds to pay the indebtedness incurred by the CRA. The payments are given to the owner of record of the property on which the structure identified in


the redevelopment plan is located. A single fund may be used for all redevelopment projects that receive an expedited review.

#### **Length of Expedited Review Project**

For redevelopment plans that receive an expedited review, TIF funds cannot exceed 10 years after the effective date as identified in the redevelopment plan. For “regular TIF,” TIF funds cannot exceed 15 years after the effective date as identified in the project redevelopment contract or in the resolution of the authority authorizing the issuance of bonds.

Expedited review of redevelopment plans is another tool for municipalities to use for smaller TIF projects including for workforce and affordable housing. If your municipality is using expedited review, please call the League and let us know how it is working. We would love to hear about your experiences! ■

**See professional directory  
on page 26**



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Tara A. Stingley

## U.S. Department of Labor issues final rule on definition of independent contractor

BY TARA A. STINGLEY, CLINE WILLIAMS WRIGHT JOHNSON & OLDFATHER, L.L.P.

On Jan. 7, 2021, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) published a Final Rule on the definition of an independent contractor under federal law. The Final Rule clarifies the DOL's interpretation of the Fair Labor Standards Act's (FLSA) classification provision to determine whether to classify a worker as an employee or independent contractor. The Final Rule is scheduled to take effect March 8, 2021.

### A. Overview of the FLSA's Definition of Employee

The FLSA requires covered employers to pay nonexempt employees at least the federal minimum wage for every hour worked and overtime pay for every hour worked over 40 in a workweek. The FLSA also mandates that employers keep certain records regarding their employees. A worker who performs services for an entity as an independent contractor, however, is not an employee under the FLSA. Therefore, the FLSA does not require such an entity to pay an independent contractor minimum wage or overtime pay or to keep certain records regarding the worker.

The FLSA does not define the term "independent contractor," but it defines "employer" as "any person acting directly or indirectly in the interest

of an employer in relation to an employee," *see* 29 U.S.C. 203(d), "employee" as "any individual employed by an employer," *id.* at 203(e) (subject to certain exceptions), and "employ" as "includ[ing] to suffer or permit to work," *id.* at 203(g). Many courts and the DOL have interpreted the "suffer or permit to work" standard to require evaluation of the worker's economic dependence on the potential employer and have developed a multifactor test to analyze whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor.

Unfortunately, this "economic reality" test has not been clearly defined or consistently articulated. Therefore, the DOL has adopted, as a final rule, guidance to increase precision in application of the economic reality test, which hopefully will in turn benefit workers and entities and encourage economic innovation and flexibility.

### B. The "Economic Reality" Test

The DOL's Final Rule reaffirms an "economic reality" test to determine whether an individual is "economically dependent" on another for work, making the individual an "employee" covered by the FLSA or whether the individual is in business for themselves, making the individual an "independent contractor." The Final Rule identifies two "core factors" as

the most probative for determining whether a worker is economically dependent on someone else's business:

- the nature and degree of control over the work; and
- the individual's opportunity for profit or loss.

If these two "core factors" point to different conclusions on a worker's status, three other factors may provide further guidance:

- the amount of skill required for the work;
- the degree of permanence of the working relationship between the worker and the potential employer; and
- whether the work is part of an integrated unit of production.

The Final Rule states that the parties' *actual practices* are more relevant than what is contractually stated or theoretically possible. For example, the potential to exercise control is less significant under the Final Rule than the *actual* exercise of control.

To illustrate these principles, the Final Rule provides several examples, including the following:

- *Example 1:* An editor works part-time, from home, for a newspaper and is responsible for assigning and reviewing articles

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to be published. Sometimes the editor also writes or rewrites articles. The editor is responsible for determining the layout and order in which articles appear in the newspaper. She also makes decisions in coordination with several full-time editors, who make similar decisions with respect to articles and who are employees of the newspaper. The DOL's Final Rule indicates the editor is likely an employee of the newspaper. The editor is part of an integrated unit of production of the newspaper because she is involved in the newspaper's entire production process, including assigning, reviewing, drafting and laying out articles. She also performs the same work as employees of the newspaper in coordination with them. The fact that the editor works from home does not outweigh these more probative considerations of the "integrated unit" factor.

- **Example 2:** A worker works full time performing home renovation and repair services for a residential construction company. In performing the construction work, the worker is paid a fixed hourly rate, and the company determines how many and which tasks she performs. She is also the part owner of a food truck, which she operates on weekends and which generates substantial profits for her.

The DOL's Final Rule indicates that the worker is likely an employee with regard to the construction work, because she is paid a fixed hourly rate, the company determines her work assignments, and she does not have a meaningful opportunity for profit or loss. However, while the worker earns substantial profits through her food truck, that is a separate business from her

work in the construction industry and, therefore, is not relevant to the question of whether she is an employee of the construction company.

It is unclear whether there will be efforts to amend or overturn this standard by the Biden Administration. Employers should continue to monitor DOL guidance in considering whether any changes to their employment and contractor arrangements are necessary. ■

*Editor's Note: This article is not intended to provide legal advice to its readers. Rather, this article is intended to alert readers to new and developing issues. Readers are urged to consult their own legal counsel or the author of this article if they wish to obtain a specific legal opinion regarding their particular circumstances. The author of this article, Tara A. Stingley, can be contacted at Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, L.L.P., 12910 Pierce Street, Suite 200, Omaha, NE 68144, (402) 397-1700, [tstingley@clinewilliams.com](mailto:tstingley@clinewilliams.com) or [www.clinewilliams.com](http://www.clinewilliams.com).*

## About the League

The League of Nebraska Municipalities is a nonprofit service association formed in 1909 to serve as a voice for Nebraska municipalities at the Nebraska Legislature.

Governed by a 15-member Executive Board comprised of municipal officials, the League has more than 385 member cities and villages. It represents municipalities whose population totals 98 percent of Nebraskans who live in municipalities. ■



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# Using libraries safely during the pandemic

■ **BY DIANE BECKER**, COMMUNICATIONS/  
MARKETING DIRECTOR, LEAGUE ASSOCIATION  
OF RISK MANAGEMENT ■

**L**ibraries, always a great resource in communities, have proven to be especially important for Nebraska cities and villages in the midst of the pandemic. As library directors strive to provide services to their patrons, they also recognize the fact that the presence of citizens in library aisles, who may or may not be positive for COVID puts staff and others at risk.

## Enthusiastic advocate

Rosa Schmidt, Oakland Public Library Director, has been an enthusiastic advocate for library use in Oakland, organizing after school programs and read-to sessions for dozens of patrons. Like most librarians in Nebraska, she has made every effort to make the library available for use, even when many public buildings across the state have been closed or have restricted attendance.

“For a couple of months, our doors were locked so people would call, message, e-mail and text us for books and then I’d put the book in a bag and leave it outside of the front door of the library. In May, we opened the doors and

patrons are good at keeping socially distanced, but there are still people who would rather we set books outside for them,” Schmidt said.

The Nebraska Library Commission website at [www.nlc.gov](http://www.nlc.gov) shows an interactive map of the status of library openings across the state. Most all of them are fully open to the public, some have limited hours and others post a stated occupancy rate. Masks are required in many libraries but, unless the city mandates usage, a director may have a difficult time restricting access to the library.

## Providing access

The American Library Association states that, as a public entity, communities are obligated to provide access to their public libraries but, at the same time, library directors have the right to set up reasonable rules in order for people to use the library.

According to the ALA website, “In drafting any policy that would restrict access to patrons, the public library must consider whether it can justify the rule as reasonable and necessary for that particular library. What will be considered reasonable and necessary in one library may not be considered reasonable or necessary for another library.”

*Continued from page 13*

*Meadow Grove Public Library. Photo by Diane Becker, Communications/Marketing Director, League Association of Risk Management.*







*Inside Oakland Public Library. Photo by Diane Becker, Communications/Marketing Director, League Association of Risk Management.*

*Continued from page 12*

Many libraries have transitioned to at least some partial online programming. The Gering Public Library went to an online story time format in December where a librarian presented songs, a fingerplay, a flannel board rhyme and three books about gingerbread. The library then provided a take and make craft that caregivers could pick up from the library.

### **Online book discussion groups**

Diane Downer, Director of the Gering Public Library, said that besides offering the online story time, the library has also set up online book discussion groups. Other coronavirus precautions include the staff “quarantining” books by waiting 72 hours after they’ve been returned and then wiping them down before returning the books to their shelves. Staff make hand sanitizer available for those who are in the library perusing the books.

“We’ve had people come in and use our computers to apply for jobs and others who want to find information about COVID and then there are others who want books to read to forget COVID. Fortunately, we’re small enough

of a community that we haven’t had to turn anyone away because they wouldn’t be able to socially distance,” Downer said.

### **Libraries have been a beacon**

Libraries have been somewhat of a beacon for many citizens when many events were cancelled or other entertainment venues were closed. Downer said they have seen people at the library that haven’t been there for a while and others who have expressed their gratitude for the library’s extra services. Parents are happy to be able to access the online story time for their children rather than being at the library at a certain time. One citizen anonymously gave the Gering Public Library \$30,000 in appreciation for their efforts in the last few months.

“It is important for us to be able to provide resources and information to our citizens and especially so through times like these,” Downer said.

For more information about operating libraries through COVID-19, go to <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/reopeningguidelines>. ■



*George W. Norris Legislative Chamber. Photo taken during 2020 session after dividers were installed to protect Senators and staff from COVID-19. Photo courtesy of the Unicameral Information Office. Reprinted by permission*

## 2021 Legislature faces redistricting, budget, COVID-19 issues

Lawmakers serving in the first session of the 2021 session face the once-every-decade task of redistricting (redrawing political boundaries based on the census) in addition to passing a state budget and looking at ways to ease prison overcrowding. COVID-19 prevention strategies will be an integral part of how the Legislature operates this year, including how public hearings are conducted.

The 2021 Legislature will begin with eight newly elected Senators, although three of them have served

in the body before, including Omaha **Sen. Rich Pahls**, Norfolk **Sen. Mike Flood** and Grand Island **Sen. Ray Aguilar**. Other new Senators include Omaha **Sen. John Cavanaugh**, who is the brother of Omaha **Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh**, who was elected in 2018. Omaha **Sen. Terrell McKinney**; Lincoln **Sen. Eliot Bostar**; Omaha **Sen. Jen Day**; and Bellevue **Sen. Rita Sanders**, who has served as Mayor of Bellevue; are the rest of the newly elected Senators.

As municipal officials, it is important

for you to know the ways in which you can follow legislative action or become part of the legislative process.

League publications such as the *Nebraska Municipal Review*, produced monthly, and the *Legislative Bulletin*, produced weekly during the session, can help you stay atop of legislative action that will have an impact on you and your community.

If you would like to testify during a public hearing, please contact League staff to coordinate testimony.

*Continued on page 15*



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Besides League publications, the Legislature provides a wealth of information about legislative action and how the legislative process works. Much of this information is available on the Nebraska Legislature's website or it is offered at a nominal cost.

The Legislature's website is <http://nebraskalegislature.gov>.

Information appearing on the Legislature's website changes to provide current details about legislation being considered during the session. Documents available include the daily agenda, the *Legislative Journal*, the weekly hearing schedule, the Speaker's session calendar, the daily summary sheet, the daily worksheet, fiscal notes, committee statements and a database of the current session's legislative bills in summary form called "one-liners." Also, photographs and biographies of the 49 Senators and a map of each Senator's legislative district are available.

Other features include information about the history of the Legislature, the legislative process and the *Nebraska Blue Book* in Adobe Acrobat format.

Resources and information have been included in the following answers to frequently asked questions about the Legislature and legislative process.

**How can I get the text of a bill or amendment to a bill?**

Bills, amendments and resolutions are available in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format on the Legislature's website. Committee statements, statements of intent and fiscal notes also are accessible. Hard copies of bills may be requested by calling either the Legislative Hot Line at 800-742-7456 or the 24-Hour Request Line at 402-471-2877.

**How do I find out when a bill is scheduled for a public hearing?**

The weekly schedule of committee hearings is prepared for publication each Friday during the session. (Hearings are held during the first part of the session.) The schedule is not available until after the Legislature adjourns for the day.

The schedule is available in the Clerk of the Legislature's Office and is published in the League's Legislative Bulletin, local newspapers and the *Unicameral Update*, the Legislature's weekly newsletter produced during session.

**What is a biennium?** A biennium is the two-year period in which a single Legislature, such as the 107th Legislature, exists. Also, the two fiscal years for which a single Legislature does budget planning and makes appropriations.

**What does it mean when there is a call of the House?** This is a procedure used to compel attendance of unexcused senators in the chamber. Any senator may move for a call of the house, and a majority of senators voting is required to place the house under call.

**What is the Emergency Clause ("E" Clause)?** This is a provision that allows a bill or a portion of a bill to take effect immediately after the governor signs it or after the Legislature overrides the governor's veto.

**What is a Fiscal Note?** This is a statement prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office estimating the effect a bill would have on state and/or local expenditures and revenue.

**What does it mean to Indefinitely Postpone (IPP) a bill?** IPP means to suspend all further activity against a bill or resolution.

**What does "Laid Over" mean?** It is a

term used to describe a motion or bill on which action has been postponed.

**What does "Line-Item Veto" mean?**

This is the power the governor has to make specific reductions in any part of a budget bill passed by the Legislature.

**What is a Statement of Intent?** This is a statement, prepared by the sponsor of a bill, that briefly describes the bill and the reasons why it is being introduced.

**What is a Priority Bill?** This is a bill that has priority status and generally is considered ahead of other bills in debate. Each Senator may select one priority bill, each committee may select two priority bills, and the Speaker may select up to 25 priority bills.

**What is a Consent Calendar?** This is a portion of the agenda in which relatively noncontroversial bills are considered and quickly advanced to the next legislative stage. Usually, a bill on consent calendar can be debated for no more than 15 minutes.

The Legislature's website, [www.NebraskaLegislature.gov](http://www.NebraskaLegislature.gov), provides an easy tool for identifying your district and Senator. Enter your full address into the "Find Your Senator" search field on the right-hand side of the website home page and press the enter key. Your district number and a photo of your Senator will be displayed on the right, along with a link to that Senator's web page.

This web page contains the Senator's contact information and links to his or her biography and photos. Importantly, it also provides a list of committees that he or she serves on, the bills that Senator has introduced and links to coverage of them in the *Unicameral Update*, the Legislature's weekly newsletter. ■

Source – Unicameral Information Office, *Unicameral Update*

## National Civic League accepting applications for 2021 All-America City Award

The National Civic League is accepting applications for the 2021 All-America City Award. The 2021 theme is “*Building Equitable and Resilient Communities.*”

**This year’s awards** will recognize communities that have worked to improve equity and resilience. Equity is the fabric that allows communities to achieve broad-based economic prosperity and other goals. Resilience enables communities to face challenging times by not only preserving what makes their community great, but adapting and growing stronger. Both qualities depend on inclusive civic engagement.

**The need for equity** and resilience has become more obvious in 2020, as communities have dealt with a global pandemic and racial bias incidents in law enforcement. Those communities with more equity and resilience have been more successful in combatting the pandemic and making the needed changes to improve the racial equity of law enforcement and other city services.

**All-America City** applicants for 2021 will be asked to discuss the strength of their civic capital – the formal and informal relationships, networks and capacities they use to make decisions and solve problems – and to provide examples of community-driven projects that have adapted and transformed the community to be more equitable and resilient.

**The National Civic League** views civic engagement as more than presenting information or having people respond to questionnaires (though both are important); instead, we promote efforts that seek to listen to, and learn from, residents in ongoing

conversations and leverage those insights to shape the way programs are administered, designed and executed.

“**The All-America City Awards** offer an opportunity for community stakeholders to come together to share and celebrate the programs and projects that make their homes great places to live. Applicants consistently note that the process leaves them feeling a sense of pride in their community and motivation to tackle the tough issues that persist,” Rebecca Trout, All-America City Award Director, said. “The League has the privilege to bring these communities together to share their innovative programs on a national stage to help others make their communities more equitable and resilient.”

**Started in 1949**, the All-America City Award program has recognized 500 communities that excel in collaborating to address pressing problems in the community. Described by George H. Gallup as the “Nobel Prize for constructive citizenship,” the award celebrates exemplary grassroots community problem-solving and honors communities that have united to achieve stunning results.

**In Nebraska**, 10 municipalities have won the All-America City Award, including:

- Gothenburg (1991, 2019)
- Grand Island (1955, 1967, 1981, 1982)
- Lexington (1973)
- Lincoln (1978)
- Norfolk (1975)
- Ogallala (1965)
- Omaha (1957)
- Ravenna (1978)
- South Sioux City (2003)
- Verdigris (1972)



The application can be downloaded at (<https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/america-city-award/how-to-apply/>) and is due Feb. 10, 2021.

**The All-America City Award (AAC)** is given each year by the National Civic League (NCL) to 10 communities in recognition of their outstanding civic accomplishments. The award spurs communities to use innovative approaches to create stronger connections between residents and non-profit and government leaders. The AAC Award celebrates those efforts and becomes a platform for sharing innovation, inspiration and insight with other communities throughout the country. ■

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*About: Founded in 1894, the National Civic League is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance civic engagement to achieve thriving, equitable communities. Based in Denver, the League offers a variety of services to local governments, including the National Civic Review, Model City Charter and Civic Index. The National Civic League also operates the program for the All-America City Awards, which over 500 communities have won since 1949, and provides one-on-one technical assistance to communities.*



## NLC: 71% of cities, villages believe their government's condition will worsen if Congress does not help bridge budget gap

The National League of Cities (NLC) released new survey data that quantifies the pandemic's impact on America's cities, towns and villages. On average, cities have seen revenues decline by 21 percent since the beginning of the pandemic, while additional expenditures – including PPE, remote work technology and overtime pay for essential employees – have increased 17 percent over the same time period. This adds up to a budget gap of about \$90 billion for 2020 alone. As COVID-19 cases continue to rise and overwhelm local resources around the country, 71 percent of cities indicated their government's condition will worsen and 28 percent of cities indicated their government's condition will remain significantly impacted if Congress does not pass another stimulus package that includes aid to cities.

Of the over 900 municipalities surveyed, about 70 percent indicated their financial health has been negatively impacted by COVID-19, with 90 percent of those experiencing decreased revenues and 76 percent having to take on additional expenses. This affects cities of all sizes – 89 percent of large cities, 71 percent of mid-sized cities and 52 percent of small cities indicated their governments will face significant challenges in providing necessary services to their residents.

After the release of the new survey results, NLC Executive Director and CEO Clarence E. Anthony issued the following statement:

“The latest report from our cities, towns and villages across the country is a sobering reminder that municipalities everywhere are continuing to suffer from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and that the



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financial hardships our local leaders are experiencing will continue into 2021 and beyond. Many of our essential municipal workers who have worked to protect residents since the beginning of the pandemic have lost or are at risk of losing their jobs, crippling the ability of our nation's municipalities to respond to the ongoing public health and economic crises facing our communities.

“It is more critical than ever that in the final weeks that Congress remains in session this year, our leaders in Washington step up to deliver the aid our municipal leaders have been seeking for months to avoid financial catastrophe in our nation's hometowns. We are urging congressional leadership to swiftly return to the negotiating table and advance a comprehensive relief package that honors our local heroes and ensures local governments can continue to safely lead our communities through the pandemic.”

Additionally, the latest NLC survey found that:

- **29 percent**, or an estimated 6,000 cities, towns and villages, did not receive any aid or funding from the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund.
- **Only 7 percent** of cities that received CRF funds indicated that the funds adequately addressed their revenue shortfalls and unforeseen expenses.
- **37 percent** of cities indicated they've made cuts to their municipal workforce, including hiring freezes, wage holds, layoffs, furloughs, reduced hours or forced early retirement of municipal employees.

NLC launched the Cities Are Essential campaign in May, calling on the federal government to ensure there is flexible, direct funding relief provided to America's municipalities in response to the coronavirus pandemic. ■

Source – NLC

# 14 communities selected to receive CDBG planning grants

*Primary objectives are to benefit low-to-moderate income persons*

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) has selected 14 communities to receive Planning grants under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for 2020. The awards total \$510,985.

CDBG is a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program administered by DED on behalf of Nebraska's non-entitlement communities (i.e., communities other than Lincoln, Omaha, Bellevue or Grand Island). CDBG funding exists to help communities achieve local goals and address challenges, from economic development to public health and safety improvements. The primary objectives of the program – and criteria that all awarded projects must address – are to benefit low-to-moderate income persons, prevent or eliminate slum and blight conditions or solve catastrophic



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health and safety threats.

DED currently administers nine CDBG funding opportunities. Planning grants are meant to help communities prepare to execute on projects that will make a meaningful difference in the lives of residents – particularly low- and moderate-income households and/or the elderly, disabled or vulnerable.

A list of this year's planning recipients is found below. For more information about the CDBG program, including eligibility, funding descriptions, application dates and how to apply, visit <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/program/community-development-block-grant/>. For questions, contact Steve Charleston at [steve.charleston@nebraska.gov](mailto:steve.charleston@nebraska.gov) or 402-471-3757.

CDBG Planning Recipients, Nebraska Non-Entitlement Communities

- **Arapahoe:** \$43,000 (Downtown Revitalization Study)
- **Bee:** \$23,100 (Storm Drainage and Flood Study)
- **Big Springs:** \$22,010 (Zoning and Plan Study)

- **Brownville:** \$53,000 (Riverfront Recreational Plan)
- **Cozad:** \$50,000 (Economic Development Study)
- **Craig:** \$22,000 (Street and Infrastructure Map Study)
- **Deshler:** \$27,000 (Commercial and Sidewalk Study)
- **Ewing:** \$30,800 (Community Strategic Plan)
- **McCool Junction:** \$53,000 (Comprehensive Development Plan)
- **Milford:** \$53,000 (Downtown Revitalization Study)
- **Mullen:** \$22,000 (Stormwater Drainage Study)
- **Superior:** \$53,000 (Recreational Master Plan)
- **Weeping Water:** \$36,075 (Comprehensive Development Plan)
- **Yutan:** \$23,000 (Downtown Revitalization Study). ■

Source – Nebraska Department of Economic Development

## Share news from your city or village

Share your city or village's news with fellow municipal officials across the state by sending information for the *Nebraska Municipal Review* to the League of Nebraska Municipalities, Attn: Lynn Marienau at 1335 L Street, Lincoln, NE 68508, 402-476-2829 by phone, 402-476-7052 by fax, or [lynnm@lonm.org](mailto:lynnm@lonm.org) by e-mail. ■

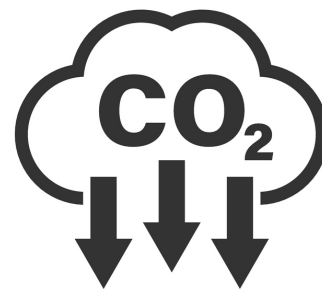
## Net zero by 2040, LES Board approves decarbonization goal

After participating in a year-long educational series on establishing a new carbon reduction goal and soliciting public opinion at the beginning of the month, the Lincoln Electric System (LES) Administrative Board adopted a 100 percent net decarbonization goal by 2040 during its Nov. 20 meeting. LES acknowledges that the emissions of greenhouse gases from fossil fuel-fired power generating plants contribute to increased concentration levels of atmospheric carbon

dioxide, which in turn contributes to climate change. The board adopted this goal in response to the risks associated with climate change.

In 2019, Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird began developing a new Climate Action Plan for the community. The board recognized its role in helping to achieve a community goal also while maintaining high levels of electric system reliability and affordable retail electric rates to every customer in the area.

In October, the city released a draft of its Climate Action Plan, in which a citywide goal to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050, relative to 2011 levels, was announced. At its November meet-



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ing, the LES Administrative Board committed to striving to mitigate its reliance on fossil fuels by establishing a goal to achieve net zero carbon dioxide production from its generation portfolio by 2040. ■

Source – LES

### Papillion renovating first, second floors of city hall

The City of Papillion is renovating the first and second floors of Papillion City Hall to utilize its space more efficiently and better serve you. During the renovation, staff, services and public meetings located in City Hall are being temporarily moved offsite.

Our Finance and Building departments have been moved to the corner of 2nd and Adams Streets in downtown. That location now houses our walk-in functions like paying water bills and building permits. Also, a drop box for payments is located in the building's drive-through lane. Administration, Planning, Legal and Human Resources have moved to the corner of Halleck and Jackson Streets.

Papillion City Council meetings will be held at Papillion Landing. ■

City of Papillion

### Scottsbluff, Morrill receive state owner-occupied rehab funds

Two applications recently submitted by the Panhandle Area Development District (PADD) on behalf of the City of Scottsbluff and Village of Morrill have been successfully funded.

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development announced they had selected nine communities as recipients under the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation funding opportunity of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for 2020 totaling \$4,067,000.

The grants are funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program and administered by DED. Both the Village of Morrill and City of Scottsbluff applications were fully funded in the amounts of \$462,500 and \$732,500 respectively.

The Owner-Occupied Housing Re-

habilitation funds enable communities to make substantial repairs and improvements to homes on behalf of low-and-moderate-income households. Ultimately, these repairs, which can range from new siding or roofing to electrical updates, energy efficient windows and everything in between not only impact the lives of individuals and families, but can transform the appearance and vitality of entire neighborhoods. ■

Source – City of Scottsbluff

**See classified ads  
on page 25**



# Nebraska Department of Economic Development establishes economic development field office in North Omaha

Gov. Pete Ricketts announced in December that the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) is launching a new North Omaha field office. The office will work to attract investment, support local entrepreneurs, develop the workforce and grow the inventory of affordable housing.

“With its physical presence in North Omaha, Nebraska’s Department of Economic Development will connect more Nebraskans to great opportunities to create jobs, grow businesses, and achieve their dreams,” Gov. Ricketts said. “North Omaha is brimming with potential, and we have terrific leaders in place to help the community prosper.”

Bellevue resident Trevon Brooks, an entrepreneur and mentor who has been a part of the local business community since retiring from the U.S. Air Force in 2017, has been selected to manage the new location. He will be supported by staff including Georgetown University law grad Jacquelyn Morrison – recently hired by DED to help administer the state’s business incentives – and a yet-to-be-named housing specialist, among others.

## ‘Proactive leaders’

“We are choosing proactive leaders with a passion for the community to help achieve our vision for this new DED location,” said DED Director Tony Goins. “I want to thank our Governor for his outstanding leadership in bringing this project to fruition. We are ready to put boots on the ground and help support a thriving North Omaha business community.”

The new field office is part of a broader effort launched by Gov. Ricketts earlier this year to spur growth in North Omaha. The “North Omaha Economic Revitalization Committee” – led by State officials including DED Director Goins, Department of Health and Human Services CEO Dannette Smith, and Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Director Jason Jackson, in collaboration



Photo by © iStock.com.

with numerous public and private sector leaders – is focused on removing barriers to growth and creating new opportunities to do business throughout the region.

DAS Director Jackson also announced an initiative to increase contracting opportunities with the state. The project is designed to help educate small businesses and minority-owned companies on the opportunity to compete for contracts.

## Several enhancements

The State Purchasing Bureau within DAS has implemented several enhancements to increase opportunities for these businesses to work with the state. The initiatives have eased the process of submitting a bid proposal, brought greater transparency to contracting opportunities and raised awareness about contracting opportunities.

One of these initiatives is the Procurement Concierge Program, which walks businesses through the process of bidding on government contracts. Other efforts include the online publication of upcoming bid opportunities and a media campaign to solicit bids from businesses in North and South Omaha. Additionally, state officials are dedicating resources to educating businesses on how they can expand beyond Nebraska by participating in cooperative contracts with other states and political subdivisions. Businesses can search for bid opportunities with the state by visiting the DAS State Purchasing Bureau website.

“We are excited about making it easier to do business with state government,” said DAS Director Jason Jackson. “These initiatives are going to enable us to increase opportunity for small businesses and minority-owned businesses, while keeping more taxpayer money in Nebraska.” ■

Source – Nebraska Department of Economic Development

## Municipal Legal Calendars also available in Clerks Newsletter

Municipal Legal Calendars are available in the *Nebraska Municipal Clerks Newsletter* in addition to the *Nebraska Municipal Review*. ■



## Lance Hedquist recognized for 40 years of service as City Administrator

Lance Hedquist, City Administrator for the City of South Sioux City, was recently recognized for 40 years of service in that position. Hedquist, who grew up in South Sioux City, returned after attending college at Wayne State College, where he graduated with honors in 1972.

He has been in public service for over 45 years and has dedicated his life to public service and cares deeply about the community, its citizens and employees.

He was presented with a plaque in December 2020 that states: "In grateful appreciation for 40 years of working tirelessly to make South Sioux City a better place to live, enhancing the quality of life for all and always planning for the future."

Hedquist has long been active in the League of Nebraska Municipalities, speaking at conferences and serving for many years on the League's Larger Cities Legislative Committee. ■

*Source – City of South Sioux City*



*Lance Hedquist, City Administrator, City of South Sioux City, receives plaque of appreciation for 40 years of service to city. Photo courtesy of the City of South Sioux City.*

## City of Norfolk Awarded Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award

Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to City of Norfolk for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 2019. The report has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.



The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. ■

*Source – City of Norfolk*

## City of Lincoln government programs available on Roku, Apple TV

LNKTV, the City of Lincoln government access group of channels, is now available on Roku and Apple TV. The free apps allow people without cable and those living outside of Lincoln to view live-streamed and archived LNKTV City, Health and Education programs. Residents with Roku or Apple TV devices will find LNKTV in the channel guide or app store.

LNKTV provides gavel-to-gavel coverage of City Council and other government meetings as well as COVID-19 briefings and other news conferences, programs on local and state history, exercise shows and health and wellness programs. All programming features closed captions.

For more information on LNKTV, visit LNKTV.lincoln.ne.gov. ■

*Source – City of Lincoln*

# Reduce your municipality's risk from cyber attacks

■ **BY BRETT BENSON, LARM & LONM**  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGER ■

The risk of your village or city's computers being hacked into has only increased through the years. As recent as August 2020, the City of Lafayette, Colo., was forced to pay a hacker \$45,000 so that the city staff could regain access to their network, phone lines and e-mail. It is possible to keep computer systems secure, but it does take a concerted effort and buy-in from everyone who has access to those systems. Below are a few tips that should be shared with all city staff and elected officials as it only takes one misstep to make your government entity information vulnerable.

## 1. Data Backup

- a. One of the most vital aspects of cybersecurity is to back up your data and periodically restore your backups as a test to ensure they are working. You should have four copies of your data backed up at a minimum, i.e., week one backup sets, week two backup sets, week three backup sets, and week four backup sets. Week two and week four backup sets should be stored offsite. Use a cloud backup service for duplicate storage.

## 2. Awareness Training

- a. Implement a regular employee cybersecurity training program on e-mail phishing scams and general computer security. Use the e-mail awareness slogan of "Stop, Think, Act." Stop – when presented with a possible suspicious e-mail or link. Think – and analyze the email content, hover over the link to see where it is pointing and determine who the real sender is. Act – if the e-mail fails the "smell test," delete or report it. If still in doubt, call the sender and confirm the e-mail was sent from someone you trust.

## 3. Security Policies

- a. Use a passphrase for user passwords that utilizes alphanumeric, special characters, upper and lowercase letters, and a minimum of 12 characters. Change user passwords a minimum of twice a year. Never share your login credentials for



*Brett Benson*

any device. Lock your computer automatically when it is not in use. Each user should have his or her own log on account (no shared accounts) to access a computer and network resources.

- b. Implement Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), which requires two pieces of information to gain access to a system. The user's password is one, and the other is a random code that is generated and sent via text to the user's smart device. The user enters the password and the random code to gain access to the system.
- c. Mobile or smart devices need to be part of your security policies. Hackers use text messages (text message makes you think the text is from someone you know or do business with) containing malicious links and websites potentially compromising your smart device and confidential data. Use a passcode, facial recognition, or touch id to unlock a smart device. Have the capability to track the device and delete all business data from the device if it is lost or stolen.
- d. Never allow people who are not part of staff to access your business network. Implement a separate Guest Network for guest access. A security key and en-

*Continued on page 23*

Continued from page 22

encryption method must be implemented for the business and guest network access.

- e. Non-approved USB external devices should not be allowed in any device on the business network.

#### 4. Network Security Monitoring

- a. Use a firewall/router that monitors all incoming and outgoing internet network traffic and “intrusion detection systems” to block known harmful websites and filters network traffic reducing the risk of dangerous intrusion.
  - i. Include anti-virus software which is a necessity on servers and workstations.
  - ii. Install anti-spyware, which includes anti-malware, to run alongside anti-virus software.
  - iii. Use email filtering to scan emails and strip them of known malicious attachments before they

are delivered to a user’s e-mail inbox.

#### 5. Remote Access

- a. Block all remote access through Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) from the open internet. Implement a secure remote access method such as Virtual Private Network (VPN). VPN access authenticates the username and password and MFA, just like the user does when working at the office.

#### 6. Security Patches

- a. Implement a consistent patching schedule across all network devices. Installing hardware and software patches is one of the most essential keys to reducing a system breach. Vendors that produce the products you use are continually fixing bugs and know exploits that hackers or malware use to evade your security defenses. Installing updates and patches is recommended to be done weekly.

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## McCook teams up with First Due to release Community Connect

The McCook Fire Department has teamed with First Due to release Community Connect. Community Connect is a secure, easy-to-use platform that allows residents in our area to share critical information about their household in order to aid first responders and emergency service personnel to respond more efficiently and effectively.

Community Connect is completely voluntary and residents are able to decide which information they are comfortable sharing. Residents simply create a profile and enter critical property and occupant information which is then made available to the McCook Fire Department only. Data provided by resident's within Community Con-

nect is 100 percent secure and is used only for the purpose of better serving the residents during an emergency.

For more information about the program and to create a profile for

your household, please visit City of McCook Community Connect. <https://www.communityconnect.io/info/ne-mccook>. ■

*Source – City of McCook*

## Cyber attacks

*Continued from page 23*

7. Important cybersecurity contact information:

- a. Department of Justice (FBI) 100 Centennial Mall North, Suite 363, Lincoln NE 68508, <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/cyber> (402)476-6393
- b. Department of Justice (FBI) Internet Crime Complaint Center, <https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>.
- c. Department of Homeland Security Critical Infrastructure Cyber Community Voluntary Program: <https://www.us-cert.gov/ccubedvp> (888)282-0870. ■

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## Positions

**Deputy City Clerk.** City of West Point, Neb., is accepting applications for the full-time position of deputy city clerk. Work includes preparing and processing payroll biweekly including all reporting; assist in detailed performance and maintenance of record keeping, accounts payable and account receivable; clerical work and standard office practices; assist the City Clerk in the operation of the City Clerk's office; and responsible for the performance of clerical duties related to the custody of official records of the City.

Minimum qualifications include any combination of education and experience equivalent to associate degree in accounting, records management, public administration, legal assistance or a closely related field or equivalent with a minimum of two years' experience in an office environment. Ability and willingness to receive continuing education in municipal government. Benefits include health and life insurance, retirement, vacation, sick leave, personal leave and paid holidays. Position open until filled. Salary depending on experience. Application form is online at the City's website [www.ci.west-point.ne.us](http://www.ci.west-point.ne.us) or contact the City Office at 402-372-2466 for an application. Return resumes and applications to the City of West Point, 444 S. Main Street, P.O. Box 327, West Point, NE 68788 or email to [westpoint@cableone.net](mailto:westpoint@cableone.net).

**Chief of Police.** City of St. Paul is accepting applications for position of Police Chief. St. Paul, Neb. and has a population of about 2,400, a City of the Second Class. St. Paul has an active community that is the county seat and has a strong school system, church community, law enforcement relationships and local

## Positions

businesses. We are located close to the Tri-City Area.

St. Paul Police Department currently has an authorized force of 4 officers to include a chief, sergeant and two officers as well as part-time officer, as needed.

Nebraska Law Enforcement Certification is required as well as supervisory experience. Applications available from the City of St. Paul or the St. Paul Police Department. A background check and review of references is required. Please forward application, resume and references to Mayor Joel Bergman, 704 6th St., St. Paul, NE 68873. Based on qualifications and experience: 2/12/2021

Mayor Joel Bergman; [jbergman@cityofstpaulne.org](mailto:jbergman@cityofstpaulne.org); 308-754-4483; 704 6th St.; St. Paul, NE 68873

**City Manager.** City of Chadron, NE (5,855) is accepting letters of application for the position of City Manager. Salary negotiable, depending on qualifications; \$16.3 million dollar budget with 50 full-time employees. Desire bachelor's degree in public administration or related field or work or life experiences and skill sets that are equivalent. Position open until filled, with the intent to begin the review process on Feb. 11, 2021. Applicants will send a letter of application, professional resume with verifiable references, and other candidate profile support items to [clerk@chadron-nebraska.com](mailto:clerk@chadron-nebraska.com).

For additional information, visit [www.chadron-nebraska.com](http://www.chadron-nebraska.com) or email [clerk@chadron-nebraska.com](mailto:clerk@chadron-nebraska.com) or call (308)432-0505. City of Chadron is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

**City Treasurer.** City of Alma, NE (pop. 1,153) is currently accepting applications for position of City Treasurer until filled. Position includes a variety of

## Positions

professional, administrative, and technical accounting and finance functions including maintaining the fiscal records of the city, preparation of the annual budget, along with managing the utility billing system and payroll. Experience with QuickBooks, Excel and Word is preferred and the ability to learn new programs is required. Salary is negotiable, DOQ. City provides an excellent benefit package. For additional information visit [www.almacity.com](http://www.almacity.com). Send resume to City of Alma, 614 Main St., P.O. Box 468, Alma, NE 68920. (308) 928-2242 [cityclk@almacity.com](mailto:cityclk@almacity.com). EOE.

**Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer.** City of Curtis, NE is accepting letters of application for the position of Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer. Desire bachelor's degree in public administration or related field or work or life experiences and skill sets that are equivalent. Position open until filled, with the intent to begin the review process as soon as possible. Applicants will send a letter of application, professional resume with verifiable references, and other candidate profile support items to [Curtis@Curtis-ne.com](mailto:Curtis@Curtis-ne.com) or Doug Schultz, City of Curtis, PO Box 6, Curtis, NE 69025. To see full job description visit <https://www.curtisnebraska.com/employment-opportunities-1> or email [curtis@curtis-ne.com](mailto:curtis@curtis-ne.com). City of Curtis is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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