

Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

March 2024

Barriers to municipal fiber optic leasing removed

*By Lash Chaffin,
Utilities Section Director*

On March 18, the Governor signed into law **LB 61**, introduced by **Sen. Tom Brandt** of Plymouth, which would remove some of the barriers on public entities such as municipalities, counties and power districts from leasing publicly owned fiber-optic facilities.

Public entities, such as municipalities and power districts, can now build and lease fiber-optic technology with fewer barriers when broadband is not available to

a location by fiber-optic technology, cable modem, or hybrid fiber-coaxial technology and at speeds of **at least 100 megabits per second for downloading and at least 20 megabits per second** for uploading with a latency sufficient to support real-time, interactive applications. The existence of fixed wireless technology is not enough to take away the authority of a public entity to build and lease fiber.

Public entities, such as municipalities and power districts, would be limited in their ability to lease fiber-optic technology to a

2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



location if there is an “enforceable commitment” between the State of Nebraska or the federal government which the internet service provider receives a grant of federal or state funds in exchange for the internet service provider deploying broadband service infrastructure to

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Sash joins Utilities Section as Utilities Field Representative

Jackson Sash has taken over the Utilities Section Field Representative/Training Coordinator role for the League of Nebraska Municipalities. Rob Pierce recently retired from this position.

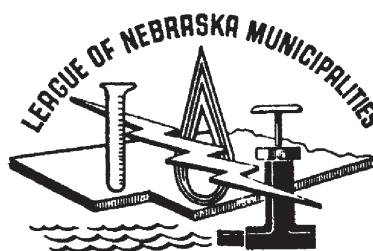
Sash comes to the Utilities Section after holding positions at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the University of Nebraska focusing on wildlife conservation and education. He loves the outdoors and is an avid fisher, boater, and hunter.

Sash is very excited to learn how municipal utilities operate and work in so many different ways. So, don't be surprised if he shows up at your municipal shop with a lot of questions.

Sash also wants your input on the Utilities Section training opportunities so if you have any thoughts, you can email him at jacksons@lonm.org.



Jackson Sash



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Lash Chaffin
Utilities Section Director
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Utilities Field Representative

Barriers to municipal fiber optic leasing removed

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one or more locations at speeds of at least 100 megabits per second for downloading and at least 20 megabits per second.

The lease rate must fall within a “safe harbor range” set by the Public Service Commission. The current safe harbor range is \$20 per strand, per mile to \$200 per strand, per mile monthly.

The lease must then be filed with the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission must then give notice to all internet providers in the county.

Within 30 days, an internet

provider may then challenge the lease alleging that the lease does not serve an unserved location. The Public Service Commission will make a determination regarding such alleged violation within 30 days.

If an internet provider files a challenge alleging that a location is not an unserved location and the Public Service Commission finds that it is an unserved location, the internet provider filing such challenge may be prohibited from filing any other challenge for a period of two years from the date of such challenge under a novel “Cry

Wolf Penalty.”

No electric revenues can be used to subsidize the lease.

Revenues from the lease must be used for management and maintenance of the fiber-optics involved in the lease.

Do you need to get a wastewater or water operator certified?

Check the following websites for information on training and test dates.

- Nebraska Water Environment Association – www.nebwea.org
- Nebraska Rural Water Association – www.nerwa.org
- Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy – www.deq.state.ne.us

Future “Snowball” Wastewater Conferences

The dates for future “Snowball” Wastewater Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed



with the Kearney Holiday Inn.

Please note the upcoming Snowball Conference schedule:

- Jan. 22-23, 2025
- Jan. 28-29, 2026
- Jan. 27-28, 2027

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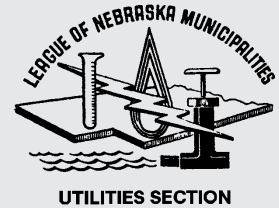
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SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

Ascend with confidence: A comprehensive guide to ladder safety

By Jackson Sash, Utilities Field Rep./Training Coordinator

In the fast-paced world of work, the importance of ladder safety often slips through the cracks. Every year, numerous accidents occur due to improper ladder use. It's imperative for workplaces across all industries to prioritize ladder safety, ensuring the well-being of employees and colleagues alike.

Understanding the Risks

Ladders are indispensable tools in various professions, aiding tasks at heights. However, if not handled correctly, they pose significant risks. Falls from ladders can lead to severe injuries, ranging from broken bones to head trauma. Adhering to proper ladder safety practices is essential to mitigate these risks and promote a safe working environment for all.

Essential Safety Guidelines

Begin by selecting the appropriate ladder for the task at hand, considering height and weight requirements, and ensuring it's in optimal condition. Before use, always conduct a thorough inspection for any signs of damage

or wear. If issues are identified, refrain from use and report it for maintenance.

Position the ladder on a stable, level surface, whether indoors or outdoors. Maintain three points of contact while climbing and descending and avoid overreaching to minimize the risk of falls.

Be vigilant of your surroundings, avoiding obstacles, power lines, or overhead hazards. Keep the area around the ladder clear to prevent tripping hazards. Never exceed the ladder's weight limits and avoid climbing in adverse weather conditions.

Shared Responsibility for Safety

It's crucial to understand that ladder safety is a collective responsibility. By fostering a culture of safety and looking out for one another, workplaces can minimize accidents and ensure a secure environment for all. Regular training sessions can reinforce the importance of ladder safety, empowering employees to make safe choices.

Ladder safety is not merely a regulatory requirement but a moral obligation. By prioritizing



safety, workplaces can create an environment where employees feel valued and protected. Remember, your safety and that of your colleagues are paramount.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding ladder safety, don't hesitate to reach out to your workplace safety team. Together, let's prioritize safety and ensure that every ascent is a safe one.

Check out the League's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/leaguene. Be sure to "Like" us.

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Drinking Water Engineering

This article was written by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy. More articles, tools, and resources can be found at dee.ne.gov or email the NDEE public information office at nde.moreinfo@nebraska.gov.

Turning on a faucet is an everyday occurrence that most people have likely taken for granted at one time or another. In reality, there is a complex set of systems and processes behind this seemingly simple action, and it takes a team of engineers to ensure that water

from the tap meets all federal and state standards.

At the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE), engineers are a vital component in the department's commitment to ensuring that Nebraskans have reliable and safe drinking water. NDEE drinking water engineers review engineering plans and specifications; issue construction permits; inspect newly constructed projects; and assist owners and operators of public water systems, consulting engineers, government officials, and the general public

in matters relating to design, construction, maintenance, and operation of public water systems.

During the state's 2023 fiscal year, NDEE engineers reviewed and approved 178 drinking water projects in communities across Nebraska. Typical projects evaluated by the engineering team include water mains, public supply wells, water storage systems, water treatment plants, and pumping station construction projects among others.

Engineering staff also work
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Drinking Water Engineering

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in concert with Drinking Water Monitoring & Compliance staff on construction timelines for systems under an Administrative Order, water quality monitoring requirements for wells and water treatment plants, and evaluation of impacts of new drinking water regulations. Additionally, NDEE drinking water engineers work alongside Drinking Water Field Services staff on inspection related issues that require an engineering consultation.

NDEE's Drinking Water Engineers

work with communities that need to upgrade their facilities. To help facilitate these projects, NDEE engineers may meet with municipal officials, funding agencies, and consulting engineers to help

develop strategies — like pursuit of low-interest loans through the [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program](#) — that can help bring drinking water projects to fruition for Nebraska communities.

Utilities Section members only

Do you have equipment to sell or a position to fill? Place your ad in the Classifieds section of the *Utilities Section Newsletter* free. This service is a membership benefit.

Contact Brenda Henning at the League office at 402-476-2829, fax to 402-476-7052 or email your ad to brendah@lonm.org.

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Classifieds

Journeyman Lineman. Village of Morrill (Population 934) is accepting applications for the position of full-time Electric Journeyman Line Worker with a pay range of \$22-\$30 per hour DOQ. This individual will perform skilled line work in the operation, construction, maintenance and repair of overhead and underground electric distribution and transmission systems. A Class B CDL with Airbrakes is required. Applications, with resumes, will be accepted until the position is filled. A complete job description for this position and an application is available at www.villageofmorrill.com or at the Village Office located at 118 S Center Avenue, Morrill, NE. This position includes an excellent benefit package including health insurance, retirement, vacation, sick leave, and paid holidays.

Electric Distribution Superintendent. The City of Wayne is accepting applications for the position of Electric Distribution Superintendent. The Electric Distribution Superintendent supervises electrical distribution operations and maintenance work of overhead and underground electrical distribution systems and equipment for the City of Wayne. This position is responsible for accomplishing goals

and objectives of the City by using independent discretion in utilization of personnel, equipment, and supplies within existing financial resources. This position directs and supervises the work of the electric line crew and provides oversight and field supervision of daily work and project management. *Qualifications:* Experience and extensive knowledge of the operations of an electrical distribution and transmission system. Must be able to interpret electrical distribution drawings, and electric building and safety codes. Must be able to work with customers, answer questions, and resolve problems. Five to 10 years of experience in a supervisory, management, or in a line Foreman position is preferred. An equivalent combination of experience and education may be considered. Excellent fringe benefits including Group Health, Accident Insurance, Life Insurance, retirement plan along with vacation and sick leave. Starting pay (\$74,422.40-\$96,657.60) will be based on prior experience and certifications. Application and job description are available at the City of Wayne, 306 Pearl Street, Wayne, NE 68787. Applications, along with cover letter and resume, will be received until position is filled and should be returned to Betty Mc-

Guire, City Clerk, with applicable resume. First review of applications began Jan. 22, 2024. City of Wayne is an EOE. For more information, call 402-375-1733 and ask for Wes Blecke, City Administrator.

Utility Superintendent. The City of Bennet is now accepting applications for the position of Utility Superintendent. This position is responsible for directing, supervising, and/or performing all construction and maintenance of streets, sewers, water operations, parks, equipment, garbage site, and all other City facilities. Necessary skills include the ability to supervise others, maintain records, operate excavation equipment, and diagnosis equipment problems. Applicants must possess a strong work ethic and be proficient in multi-tasking, problem solving, crisis management, and customer relations. **REQUIRED:** Basic math skills, water, and wastewater certification, OR demonstrate the willingness and ability to complete the necessary certifications. This is a full-time position with benefits. Wages will be based on documented experience and proven skills. The application form and complete job description are available at the Bennet City Office, 685 Monroe Street. (402)782-3300 or email cityoffice@cityofbennet.com. EOE.



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2024 Training calendar

Visit our [website](#) for a complete list of workshops and conferences.

April

April 2[Water Operator Training Workshop](#)..... Community Center, Wymore

May

May 21-23[Rubber Gloving School](#)..... Northeast Community College, Norfolk

June

June 12-14.....Municipal Accounting & Finance Conference Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

August

Aug. 13.....Backflow Workshop..... Beatrice

Aug. 14.....Backflow Workshop..... Wayne

Aug. 15.....Water Operator Training Workshop..... Seward

Aug. 20.....Backflow Workshop..... Ogallala

Aug. 21.....Backflow Workshop..... Grand Island

Aug. 22.....Water Operator Training Workshop..... Grand Island

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Service Awards

Remember to recognize your employees' anniversary milestones. The League provides certificates for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, and 65.

You can request them by emailing brendah@lonm.org.

Retirements: Let us help recognize those municipal employees who are retiring after years of service.



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