

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

PAVING THE WAY FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE BY EDUCATING, ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING OUR EMPLOYEES.

August / September 2014
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<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/docs/newsletter/>

Technology Bits & Bytes



XP to Windows 7 Upgrade Project

On April 8, Microsoft support ended for the Windows XP Operating System. Public Works and Utilities (PWU) has funding approval to replace or upgrade all XP-based computers to the Windows 7 Operating System.

PWU has 511 computers. In September, about 150 existing XP computers with Windows 7 licenses will require only a software upgrade. At that time, an additional 250 new Windows 7 computers will be ordered, with installation anticipated by the end of November. The XP to Windows 7 upgrade affects several applications. Technology Services staff will work with each Division to determine which applications require updating or patching to work in the new Windows 7 environment. The goal is to complete the project by the end of 2014.

PWU has also purchased 10-gig equipment for the network upgrade project. Information Services will be installing the equipment at key sites in September.

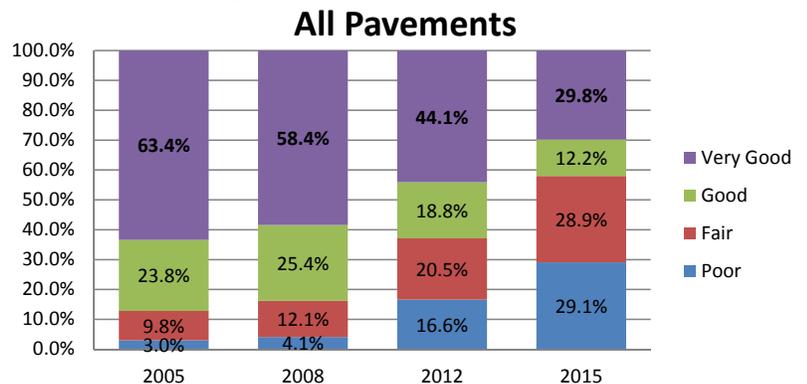
What do Potholes and Sales Tax Have in Common?

That is the \$7 million dollar question.

For the past eight months, City leaders have been presenting information on a sales tax initiative to close the \$7 million transportation gap that exists in our streets budget. Another \$2 million would be dedicated to making our sidewalks safer and ADA compliant. The Administration held 50 community meetings reaching a wide range of stakeholders and opinion leaders to get their feedback and craft a sales tax package that made the most sense to the community.

The City has over 1,200 miles of arterials, collectors and residential streets. The number of streets in "poor condition" has increased since 2005, while the number of streets in "good" and "very good" condition is decreasing. Potholes are simply a symptom of an unhealthy street. Filling them is meant to be a temporary remedy – a Band-Aid

approach to a problem that deserves a cure. The best way to cure a pothole problem is to have consistent and sustainable funding for the rehabilitation of streets.



Rehabilitation (as opposed to road construction) extends the life of a road and means big savings for taxpayers in two ways:

- They're short in duration; so you can close and open up the street relatively quickly without much inconvenience to the traveling public.
- It means that we're stretching existing funds farther. Spending \$1 in rehabilitation now can save between \$8 and \$15 in more costly repair or new construction work later.

The trouble is the \$7 million roads gap impedes our ability to rehab these unhealthy streets in a timely and cost-effective manner. At the same time, construction inflation is growing at five percent per year. So the longer we wait, the more potholes we endure, and the more expensive it becomes for City taxpayers.

The sales tax initiative could close the gap.

Until we get the level of funding necessary to create healthier streets for our citizens, potholes will be our reality. In the interim however, I urge you to report potholes to Street Maintenance. They have a great track record for repairing those that they know about.

Thank you for everything you do!

Miki

Ways to Report Potholes:

- App – Search for "Lincoln Action Center" in your app store where potholes can be photographed and reported online to the City.
- Online – lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: action)
- Pothole Hotline – 402-441-7646

STRONG LINCS

"THERE IS NO 'DIVISION' AMONG OUR DIVISIONS."

Miki Esposito

PWU Director Miki Esposito is pleased to announce the Strong Linc Award recipients for the workplace principle of **commitment**. Please congratulate these Strong Lincs for their valued service:

Wayne Bates, Troy Bolender, Jimmy Chapman, Steve Connell, John Dahlgren, Jim Danek, Eric Garten, Jim Glenn, Andy Grow, Don Kubicek, Erik Muttersbough, Rick Nobbe, Tom Shockey, Bill Stangl, Mark Walkinshaw and Bret Watkins (*Water*)

The commitment to provide the best service available to LWS customers runs deep within the Water Distribution Service Section. Even during the daunting summer heat, the employees keep busy installing and testing water meters, installing service taps and locating and talking with contractors. These employees have a wealth of knowledge and are always willing to take the time to answer questions in the field. In June, there were 1,443 requests and some were blocks long and involved several projects. Staff members are commended on maintaining their pleasant attitudes and commitment in less than ideal situations. Thanks to this group for continuing to deliver "stellar service" with limited resources.

Keith Baue, Jim Boston, Paul Donahue, Don Frazier, Dennis Haakenson, Corbin Harms, Steven Hentzen, Jim Kruse, Eric Lee, James Moore, Avery Quakenbush, Jeff Riecken, Tucker Shockey, Brad Titman, Jace Wikoff, Steve Vandenberg and Paul Wimmer (*Water*)
Water Division staff have always remained committed to a safe and reliable water supply. It is a fundamental responsibility taken very seriously by all staff. This was apparent on the evening of July 7 when a storm disrupted communications with all Lincoln Water facilities for about 30 hours. This required an immediate response by numerous staff to help troubleshoot and manually operate the distribution system. Avery, Don, Dennis, Paul Donahue, James, Jace, Corbin and Tucker quickly volunteered to be part of the response. Paul Wimmer and Eric

worked to coordinate activities between the Lincoln and Ashland treatment plants. Staff involved worked 24 hours or more to ensure water service was maintained to customers and facilities were not harmed. Don delayed vacation plans to provide his knowledge and expertise. Throughout the response, on-duty water operators including Keith, Jim Boston, Steven, Brad, Jim Kruse, Steve, and Jeff were forced to operate the system by making decisions based on information coming from field staff. They then relayed pump commands back to field staff. This would be the equivalent of an aircraft pilot switching from Instrument Flight Rules to Visual Flight Rules in the middle of fog. All staff worked calmly and professionally as a team throughout the event.

Tim Brabb, Kyle Williams (*Street Maintenance*)

Roger Borchers, Kelly Frazier, Mike Kramer, Rick Nobbe, Neal Reblin, Tony Robinson, Mike Smith and Andy Walker (*Water*)
Water Distribution staff routinely respond to emergencies, focused on minimizing water service outages and traffic disruptions while maintaining safe water quality. It's all about customer service, and it requires great commitment by staff. This was demonstrated at about midnight July 4 when staff members Mike Kramer, Andy, Mike Smith and Rick responded to a water main break on Smith Street. This crew became aware that a very important family gathering was being held, and the area needed immediate cleanup of mud and debris to accommodate guests and ensure an enjoyable evening. This prompted another crew consisting of Roger, Tony, Kelly, Neal and Tim and Kyle from Street Maintenance to respond for cleanup in advance of the party. These employees quickly volunteered to work, even though they were not on-call and obviously had other plans with their families. In fact, Roger was in Seward enjoying the day when he was called. Knowing the importance of this day for the family impacted by the water main break, these employees did not hesitate to report. This is fine example of staff committed to service. Later that day,

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A Farewell Note

Congratulations to our Public Works and Utilities colleagues on their retirement from City employment. Thank you for your service to our community. May you find success and happiness in all your future endeavors!

Jerry Obrist
Lincoln Water System –
45 years

Gary Lacy
Watershed Management –
38 years



Michele Abendroth Joins PWU Team

Michele Abendroth is the new Executive Secretary to the Director of Public Works and Utilities. She had previously worked in the Planning Department for 11 and one-half years.

After graduating from Norfolk Catholic, Michele attended college at UNL where she met her husband Curtis and received her degree in Business Administration. Michele worked for the superintendent at Gering Public Schools for 10 years before returning to Lincoln.

Curtis is active in the National Guard and works in Facilities Management at UNL. They have two boys who play football and baseball at Pius X High School – Colton is a senior and Peyton is a sophomore. Michele enjoys sightseeing and getting together with her two sisters and brother. The family enjoys Husker volleyball.

Michele is busy learning the dynamics of Public Works and Utilities. *Welcome, Michele!*

Andy, Rick and the two Mikes were called to yet another water main break, so their Fourth of July was committed to service.

Kyle's commitment to his job shows in his efforts to educate office staff and keep them apprised of the more detailed aspects of their jobs. This enables us to be more efficient when answering calls.

Steve Bussen (*Street Maintenance*)
Steve's commitment to his job shows with his response to questions or concerns, whether from a citizen or office staff. He goes out of his way to find the needed answers. He is very detail oriented when putting information into our database program, which makes answering multiple calls for the same situation a more efficient process.

Ammar Abu-Hamda, Mark Bahensky, David Cox, Drew Debuhr, Justin Dunn, Tracy Galter, Doug Hanson, Jeff Harrison, Jesse Hoage, Deryk Johnson, Rich Kostner, Steve Kostner, Kris Mayer, Jamie Mitchell, Brian Murray, Matt Stevens, Steve Stewart and Justin Topil (*Street Maintenance*)
The north and south asphalt crews are recognized for their exceptional hard work and commitment while working on the S. 56th Street Project. The two crews worked together to remove and replace over 110 tons of asphalt in four and one-half days. The project could have easily taken one crew two weeks to complete. These two crews showed that, when given a difficult task, they can come together and exceed the level of service expected. Their commitment to Public Works and the City of Lincoln is commendable.

Jay Edmiston (*Street Maintenance*)
Jay's support of the snow program shows great loyalty and commitment. He takes it personally that things run properly, and the plans assigned to him are as good as they can be.

Michelle Zuhlke (*Technology Services*)
Michelle regularly works long hours making sure that the City's web pages are correct and up-to-date. She is a tireless resource during snow season, keeping citizens informed of the latest happenings with snow removal. Her commitment to making sure the web pages and information are updated and accurate is outstanding.

Amy Cornelius-Jones (*Engineering Services*)
Amy does a great job in keeping Engineering Services on-track and up-to-date. She is committed to ensuring that purchasing and personnel paperwork is correct and on time.

Curt Weber (*Engineering Services*)
Curt deeply cares about ensuring that the design and construction of the City's traffic signal infrastructure is correctly done.

Tim Hunt (*Engineering Services*)
Even when an overwhelming amount of work is given to him, Tim shows dedication and works hard to get tasks done accurately and to make sure timelines are met.

Reid Winkelmann (*Engineering Services*)
As a summer employee, Reid has shown commitment to the project he's working on. When the Project Manager was gone for several days on vacation, Reid welcomed the opportunity to take a greater role in seeing the project progress properly.

Benjamin Cosier (*Engineering Services*)
Benjamin put in long hours and a lot of effort in creating a new tool for viewing and monitoring much of the City's underground network and traffic signal equipment. His dedication to the project showed his commitment to something that would be useful, not only for his job, but ultimately City-wide.

Scott Opfer (*Engineering Services*)
Scott Opfer has repeatedly displayed commitment to his employees and to the citizens of Lincoln. He often works late and into the early morning hours during snow and inclement weather events. He actively investigates opportunities to improve employee morale and health as evidenced by his participation in the Wellness, Safety, and Food Bank Committees and other programs. Although some may question his methods, one could never question that his motivation is due to his commitment. Scott also showed his dedication by assuming leadership of both the Traffic Operations and Street Maintenance sections since the previous Street Maintenance Manager position was vacated.

Colin Clark (*StarTran*)
When the evening shuttle was first announced, Colin was very willing to commit to this service, even though it would require a change in hours. This was one of many areas in which he has shown his commitment.

Brad Barber (*Wastewater*)
As Superintendent of Operations, Brad supervises all pollution control operations at both treatment facilities. He is available 24/7 and handles calls constantly. The key to his performance is that he takes ownership of the operations as if they were his own personal property. He constantly looks for ways to improve the operation and is available to provide guidance to the operators. His commitment, as shown by his ownership and accountability, is outstanding.

Ron Swanson (*Wastewater*)
Ron has continually shown his commitment by taking ownership of maintenance at the Theresa Street Treatment Facility. He is on call 24/7 and takes many calls from operations staff determining what action is necessary on each maintenance issue. His availability and commitment have saved the Wastewater System a great deal of money by not needlessly calling staff or by bringing them in before additional damage is done to the equipment. He is always mindful of what must be operational to maintain regulatory standards.

Jorge Samayoa (*Wastewater*)
Jorge supervises six Environmental Lab Specialists in the Wastewater laboratory, which operates seven days a week and 362 days a year. The staff, part of the City's long-time workforce, have all maxed-out on vacation. Because of this, the scheduling task of ensuring that all tests are run timely and accurately can be a challenge. Jorge does a superb job of this, taking ownership of performance by filling in to complete testing as needed. He stays to complete his own responsibilities or complete a needed lab test without any overtime compensation. His personal commitment and ownership show through his performance.

Gene Hanlon (*Solid Waste Management*)
Gene works tirelessly to advocate the tangible and intangible benefits of recycling. His commitment to quantifying the benefits of resource conservation and increasing the participation rate of recycling is unwavering.



**SATURDAYS
AUGUST 30
SEPTEMBER 6, 20, 27**

Big Red Express
Husker Football Shuttle
Six Locations

**SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 14**

Streets Alive

**WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 24**

Wellness Fair
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Municipal Services Center

**UPCOMING
CONSTRUCTION
PROJECTS**

2014
Construction Season Projects
lincoln.ne.gov
(keyword: projects)

**A Day in the Life of Jason and Chuck –
LWS’s Contractor Services Crew**



Everyone can see water at the tap or a highly-visible broken water main, but it's what goes on behind the scenes at Lincoln Water System (LWS) that is truly impressive. LWS staff coordinate street projects, redevelopment projects, water mains in new developments and the replacement of five miles of mains a year.

Meet Jason and Chuck.

Each morning, Jason and Chuck attend a briefing with water construction supervisors to evaluate the day's schedule. Today's plan includes taking a water quality sample from a repaired water main, followed by meeting with a contractor regarding his progress on a project. After lunch, they notify customers regarding a planned shutdown. They check the valves in the area to make sure the shutdown will be effective. Jason and Chuck then head to a job site to complete the connection for a new pressure reducing valve that was

installed to solve some water quality concerns.

Back at the water shop, they finish work orders and head home for the evening. Shortly after getting home, Jason receives a call about a broken main. He goes back to work to help remedy the situation. Fortunately, he had recently worked with the contractor to relocate the 16-inch water main.

A dirt work contractor had just damaged the 16-inch main, which was providing the only water to the new Nebraska Innovation Campus. Lincoln and Ashland personnel worked together to devise a temporary solution to provide water and fire protection until permanent repairs could be made the following week. Long after the sun had set, Jason returns home to his family.

LWS personnel maintain great working relationships with contractors, who also are vital in making sure the system works. LWS staff perform these and other critical duties each day to prevent contamination to adjacent water mains, which could become a health or safety issue for customers.

Clint Bundy (*Solid Waste Management*)
Clint is the quintessential committed employee. Throughout his career, he has embodied commitment in word and deed. Clint is available to his employer regardless of day, time, weather conditions and work assignments. He speaks well of his job and of his fellow employees and truly enjoys serving the citizens of Lincoln.

John Nemeč (*Solid Waste Management*)
The commitment John makes to maintain the heavy equipment assigned to the Bluff Road Landfill is invaluable. His efforts improve the cost effectiveness of the operation and ensure predictable failures are addressed sooner rather than later. John has taken it upon himself to lead the in-house predictive maintenance (i.e., oil changes, oil sampling and filter changes) on the dozers, compactors, scrapers, loaders, pickups and other miscellaneous support equipment for his entire career of 35-plus years.

Karla Welding (*Solid Waste Management*)
As Superintendent of Solid Waste Operations, Karla's position easily translates into a 10- to 12-hour day as she brings many construction or environmental projects she's in charge of to a successful completion. She always projects a cheerful attitude in her approach but with a no-nonsense business-like attitude dedicated to making sure everything is handled to the best of her ability. She plays a key role with fellow citizens in the implementation of the Solid Waste Management Plan and by serving on the Solid Waste Association Board of North America.

The next workplace principle will focus on being **cost conscious**. Nominations are due to Miki by Friday, September 12.

AREA PROJECT UPDATES

Construction projects are in full swing around the City, from sidewalk repairs to major arterial reconstruction. Here are some project updates:

Old Cheney Road from 70th to 82nd streets. This roadway widening project includes utility work, grading operations and retaining wall work. Major work will occur at the 77th Street and 80th Street intersections. The project is scheduled for completion in November.

33rd Street: "P" Street to Holdrege. Work on this resurfacing project began at the end of May. The contractor has finished paving from "P" to Vine streets. They've begun removal work north of Vine while work continues on the traffic signal at Vine. When completed, the MoPac Trail crossing will be outfitted with **"Rapid Flashing Beacons."** 33rd Street is expected to reopen to traffic by the beginning of September.



Lincoln Airport Entryway Corridor. This project consists of pavement repairs and streetscape enhancements along Adams Street, N.W. 12th Street and Cornhusker Highway as well as 9th and 10th streets at "S" Street. Streetscape enhancements will include district markers and pole-mounted banners. Trees and median plantings will be included under a separate contract. Construction is expected to be complete by mid-October.

For more information on construction projects in Lincoln, visit lincoln.ne.gov (**keyword: construction**).

NEW STARTRAN CNG BUSES

StarTran celebrated the newest addition to their fleet – five new compressed natural gas (CNG) buses.

StarTran plans to add eight more CNG buses and 11 CNG handi-vans over the next two years. These buses are better for the environment and will be less expensive to operate. Over the 15-year life of these vehicles, the City will save about \$1.3 million in lower fuel and maintenance costs. These new CNG buses were engineered by New Flyer and replaced buses which have been in service over 12 years.

These new CNG buses are the first to be painted with a new design based on the City's branding initiative and will be utilized on the UNL routes. Once StarTran acquires all 24 CNG vehicles, they will make up one-third of the StarTran fleet.

Not only are these buses cleaner and cheaper, they also are safer. CNG storage tanks are stronger than gasoline or diesel fuel tanks, reducing the likelihood of accidental release. If an accidental release occurs, CNG disperses quickly into the air instead of forming pools on the ground, thus reducing the risk of fire and ground contamination. CNG fuel is about \$1.50 less per gallon than diesel, and the stability of CNG prices makes it easier to plan for long-term costs. Utilizing CNG is just another testament to why StarTran has been recognized nationally as a transit leader in the use and promotion of alternate fuels.



**What you get
by achieving your goals
is not as important
as what you become
by achieving your goals.**

Henry David Thoreau

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

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