

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
PUBLIC MEETING
Saturday, May 21, 2005
Omaha, Nebraska

Approved

Call to Order and Introductions: Barbara Loos, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM, welcomed everyone, and read through the agenda.

Commissioners Present: Barbara Loos, Lincoln; Bob Burns, Omaha; Dorothy Westin-Yockey, South Sioux City; Nancy Oltman, Hastings; Bill Orester, Lincoln.

Commission Staff in Attendance from Lincoln: Dr. Pearl Van Zandt, Executive Director; Val Peery, Administrative Assistant; Hubert Paulson, Recorder; Bob Deaton, Deputy Director of Independent Living; Carlos Serván, Deputy Director of Voc Rehab; and Bill Brown, Business Manager (part of the meeting only). Staff from Omaha: Nancy Flearl, Omaha District Supervisor; Shawn Djernes, Program Specialist; Robert Newman, Rehabilitation Counselor; Jane Lansaw, Orientation Counselor; James Juarez, Transition Counselor.

Members of the Public Present: Ryan Osentowski, Nebraska NFB-Newsline(r) Coordinator and Secretary of NFBN, Lincoln; Jim Jirak, NCBVI Volunteer Webmaster, Omaha; Wes Majerus, Lincoln; Fritz Yockey, South Sioux City; Janet McCrae, Administrative Assistant of Radio Talking Book, Omaha; Jack Mindrup, Omaha; Jo Genit, Omaha; Betty Benninato, Omaha; Bob Lockwood, Omaha; Mary Lou Ebel, Omaha; and TABS (Teen Adventures in Blindness Skills)

Students Donald Lilly, Jennifer Okell, Vanessa McIlheran, Ronnie Kellogg, Ben Micek, Robbie Wingfield, Aaron Peterson, and Jordan McCoy, all from Omaha.

Loos welcomed everyone and thanked Nancy Flearl for providing donuts. A free will offering was collected to help defray costs of donuts and lunch supplies which were provided by Flearl.

Announcement Concerning Public Comments And Tapes of Meetings:
Loos called everyone's attention to the specific times noted on the agenda for Public Comment. Loos stated that meetings are taped and available upon request from each Commission office or by calling the 800 number.

Lunch Arrangements and Other Logistics: Flearl stated that lunch was being prepared and served by the TABS students.

Approval of Minutes of the February 12, 2005 Meeting: Orester moved and Westin-Yockey seconded to approve the February 12, 2005 minutes. The vote was unanimous. Loos stated that the minutes should be moved from draft to approved status and requested that those needing to make this change please do so.

Focus Topic:

Services to Older Blind Consumers and Visually Impaired Peer Support (VIPS): Bob Deaton, NCBVI Deputy Director, Independent Living Services, stated that he had submitted the annual report and several other reports in advance so Commissioners would have time to read them prior to the meeting.

Deaton introduced two clients from Omaha, Betty Benninato and Bob Lockwood, who were both in group home teaching and who spoke about their experiences and the services they had received. Benninato and Lockwood both gave brief stories of their difficulties when they began losing their sight and how the Commission had helped them.

Public Comment: Burns expressed gratitude and appreciation to Deaton for all the reports and information prior to the meeting and stated that it was one of the best focus reports and commended him. Orestor and Oltman concurred; Oltman added that she had learned many new things. Deaton stated that he wanted everyone to understand and give him input as to how to make the services be the best they can be. Loos stated that the information was very helpful and useful.

A consumer suggested that it would be helpful if the Commission could send emails in large print. Djernes stated that he would be glad to show the individual how to make the font size larger for all received emails.

Radio Talking Book Services (RTBS) Update: Janet McCrae, Administrative Assistant, at the request of the Board, gave a thorough report on Listening Link. She stated that it became a separate entity in 1994 and currently deals with 24 client organizations which include all grade levels of public and private schools, businesses and vocational training institutions. Listening Link has served 264 individual clients, the majority of whom are college students. McCrae stated that all assignments come through special needs counselors who verify eligibility. She reported that 935 projects have been completed and all assignments are done on 90-minute tapes with most projects taking 20-25 tapes. All taping is done by volunteers, several of whom have done more than 30 assignments. McCrae spoke about the advantages of Listening Link, including the communication between counselors, professors, clients, coordinators and readers.

Radio Talking Book keeps the original tapes in order to use them for future clients taking the same class so volunteers aren't repeating assignments. Subjects are matched with volunteer expertise to ensure that materials are prepared professionally and knowledgeably.

Public Comment: Lockwood initiated discussion concerning bookshare.org.

Break: The Board took a short break.

Report from the Chairman:

Loos began by stating the need to preserve rehabilitation and that she had written a letter from the Board concerning HR27. She stated that she had also written to Margaret Spellings as had Oltman and Burns. Loos asked if Orestor and Westin-Yockey had written letters. They both stated that they had done so. Loos reminded everyone that it wasn't too late to still send letters.

Loos stated that on February 24, 2005, she attended the budget hearing before the Appropriations Committee, but that Don Peterson allowed little verbal testimony. She stated that she submitted hers in writing and that others had written letters to Senators. She thanked everyone who participated.

Loos reported that, on March 15 and 16, Burns, Oltman Van Zandt and she attended the State Rehab Council Training in Kansas City. She stated that they met with people from Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, both blind and general, from Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri.

Loos attended the Vendors Committee Meeting on April 1, 2005, where they discussed, among other things, the Offutt Air Base facility.

Loos reported that Oltman, Burns, and she had participated in NCBVI's State Staff Meeting in Grand Island, April 5, 2005. She stated that she and Burns stayed overnight to interact with staff and to attend the first part of Doug and Chris Boone's presentation the following morning.

Loos reported that LB55 passed and that things should improve for vending locations.

Loos stated that the Board has received a great deal of material, including staff anniversary letters, which all appreciate. She listed names of all staff members who received letters from Dr. Van Zandt to date. Loos publicly congratulated each staff member on his/her years of service with NCBVI. She also stated that the Board appreciates being informed whenever a staff member's email address changes. *Refer to Addendum at end of minutes.

Loos thanked everyone who worked on the Chapter 4 Rule. She thanked Peery for sending a current listing of staff, Van Zandt for the messages and information regarding the bills in Congress, Nebraska Center for the Blind students for the disk of materials from State Rehab training, Karen Mosier for her transition letter, Sahar Hussein for sending the Board a copy of the letter the Nebraska Center for the Blind students wrote regarding the Extreme Makeover-Home Project of a blind individual, and Deaton for all the ongoing information concerning Older Blind and for sending his sign language manual.

Loos stated that the Board also appreciated receiving a copy of the complimentary note regarding Larry Roos, for the evaluations and community service project reports from Fatos concerning Center students, for the information Cheryl Poff sent regarding the Deaf/Blind proclamation ceremony scheduled for June 16th at the Capitol and stated that she does plan to attend. She stated that Commissioners also appreciated receiving the list of staff who are serving on boards in the community and are a part of community activities.

Loos congratulated Ryan Strunk for being selected to speak at the Transition Conference to be held in June.

Loos reported that Charles Lowe from the Attorney General's Office has been assigned to NCBVI.

Loos stated that she was offered the opportunity to participate on RSA's Monitoring Steering Committee but, although it was a difficult decision, she decided to decline.

Public Comment: Discussion included concerns about a potential upswing of veterans experiencing blindness and needing services due to the war and local efforts to help them; an upcoming demonstration in Washington, D.C. concerning rehabilitation services; and the Governor's Office's approach to providing interpreters for the Deaf-Blind Awareness Proclamation Ceremony. Orester volunteered to follow up on the interpreter situation, since it recurs each year.

Report from the Executive Director:

Van Zandt reported that Voc Rehab served 710 clients with 47 successful closures since October 1, 2004 and Independent Living served 647 clients with 151 successful closures during the same timeframe. The Center served 122 full-time clients from 1996 through May 2005 with 68 individuals placed in competitive employment; 16 placed as homemakers and 28 students. This equates to 89.34% competitive employment; 22.95% students and 9.18% not working.

Van Zandt stated that Michele Nelsen will be leaving mid-June for a position in New Zealand teaching technology to the blind.

Van Zandt reported that the Vendors Committee met on May 19, 2005. Election for the new Committee had been conducted by mail. Results were announced. The new committee is comprised of Howard Simons, Fred Scarpello, Judy Beck, Dave Johnson and Gail Crowe. The new committee then voted in officers: Simons, Chair; Scarpello, Vice Chair; and Beck, Secretary. Alternates were elected for the first time: Dave Samson, Dave Hunt and Ray Johnson. Having alternates will help to manage situations when the committee lacks a quorum. Van Zandt reported the Committee also addressed the Set-Aside amount and voted to continue it at 13% of net income.

Van Zandt reported that the Alumni Association is going strong and working on fund raising and a website.

She reported that NCBVI has entered into an agreement with the National Center for the Blind to administer a portion of a Mentoring Grant and that, although it hasn't started yet, Serván will be leading staff.

Van Zandt stated that Deaton has been working on the In-Service Training Grant Proposal due June 13, 2005.

Van Zandt stated that we would have an answer next week regarding what the individual rate would be to have all staff on the SON Server Network. She stated that if the cost remained at \$14 a month for each user and not \$10 as previously told, we would discontinue service except for a few administrative users.

Van Zandt informed us that she and Ryan Strunk would be presenting at the RSA National Conference on Transition in Washington next month.

Van Zandt gave updates on her goals and objectives for the fiscal year 2005: With regard to the NCBVI service delivery system, office and district staff meetings and State Staff Meetings have focused on training in strategies for successful job placements with good pay, benefits and potential for promotion. She is developing strategies to continue transition services after the 5-year grant ends by expanding involvement of all field staff with transition activities. She also is developing strategies for service delivery to the growing number of older blind Nebraskans by holding local curriculum-based training and providing focus on limited individualized home teaching.

Her second goal relates to fiscal operations of NCBVI, an ongoing effort to maximize resources, plan for emergencies and create opportunities for growth and development by identifying sources and working to fully match federal funds; identifying ways to fund the Deaf-Blind and Transition Services and seeking the continuation of the Quality Award or similar funds for In-Service Training.

Her third goal relates to the workplace culture of NCBVI. She stated that the process to promulgate Rule Title 192, Nebraska Administrative Code Chapter 4, Workplace Policies has been finalized, and copies will be distributed in preferred format to all current staff and in the future to any new hires. The “new” performance review tool is being used and will be assessed for quality and effectiveness; revisions will be made as needed.

Public Comment: Jirak stated that he was unable to attend the February Board meeting but wished to extend an apology for remarks he made in an article he wrote concerning the NFB State Convention. Jirak stated that he did not represent the Commission very well and was sorry for the comments he made. He stated that during the previous break he had spoken to Van Zandt and reimbursed her the amount paid by the Commission for his convention expenses. He apologized again and stated that he hoped, at some future date, he could attend another convention.

There was a discussion regarding types of positions and salaries of individual clients who become employed. Serván volunteered to furnish this information prior to each Board meeting. Discussion led to a request for such information annually.

Comments were made concerning ensuring that staff are informed about Nebraska Business Enterprises during their initial training.

Break: The Board took a half hour break at 11:50 for lunch and then the meeting reconvened.

Old Business:

Rule Update: Van Zandt reported that Chapter 4 has been completed and went into effect April 8, 2005 and she has just received the printed copies. She stated that every staff member will be provided a copy and will sign a form stating she/he received it. As new people start, they will also receive a copy. Van Zandt asked whether minor errors (spelling, punctuation) found after approval by the Attorney General should be changed or not. Van Zandt stated that in this last chapter, they were changed before printing. It was the Board's consensus that errors should be corrected, but revision should be clearly noted, so that it would be easy to identify the officially approved document from all revised ones. Van Zandt stated that all chapters are reviewed once a year. Chapter 3, relating to the Nebraska Business Enterprises, has some areas that need more information and further clarification. At some point, we will initiate the public process again.

Loos mentioned that the Nebraska Business Enterprises by-laws still refer to 206, which is now obsolete. Van Zandt responded that this would need to be handled by the Vendors Committee and stated that she would inform the Chairman.

Budget Update: Van Zandt stated that general funds will be \$644,765, which is an increase of \$80,000 over the initial figures received at the beginning of the year. She reported that this is the last year for the Transition Grant (\$275,000) and the Helen Keller Grant (\$50,000). Van Zandt gave a brief history concerning the budget including the position upgrades (\$90,000 expense increase), the social security reimbursements that have diminished, the denied increase request for '04-'05, and the major cost increases (Workers Compensation increased 400% and cost of state cars increased 25%). Van Zandt reported that, if the new figures are final, the shortfall, beginning October 1, 2005, will be \$320,000. That means changes will be necessary.

Loos reported that she had received a letter from the NFBN in addition to input from staff. In the interest of time, she didn't read the letter, but said she had sent it to the Board. She stated that, although the Board does not intend to micromanage, Commissioners are available for brainstorming. Loos emphasized the need to trust one another and understand how difficult the decisions are. Van Zandt stated that the budget modification plan was not "cut in stone" and there is flexibility.

Website Update: Loos stated that the Board appreciates the statistics and reports, as well as ongoing updates and does not mind receiving test e-mails which ensure the site's successful service. Djernes stated that staff e-mail addresses would be changing soon and either he or Brown would be sending the Board a list of new addresses. Van Zandt thanked Jirak and commended him for doing a good job.

Friends of the Commission Update: Loos stated that the Board had received minutes from the last meeting and appreciated the e-mail message regarding the distribution of the \$5000 donation. Orester stated that Friends is not complying with its bylaws and mentioned several examples. Discussion ensued, resulting in Orester's agreeing to contact Friends President, Mike Floyd, and report on the matter at the Board's next meeting.

NIS Update: Van Zandt stated that she had nothing new to report. Wes Majerus reported that testing is still going on. Brown stated that people can track grants, pay bills, and get information needed. He stated that it isn't perfected yet, but that there are other agencies who are experiencing greater problems than NCBVI currently is.

Newsline® Update: Osentowski reported that he had sent his report from last year. He stated that there are currently 958 subscribers and he hopes to have 1,000 subscribers by end of year. A Spanish newspaper has been added and there are plans for more in the future. To date, there are 136 newspapers on the system, including both national and local. Osentowski stated that the AARP magazine is now in the magazine section and is updated quarterly.

Osentowski asked the Board about the posting of minutes with attachments and stated that he would prefer that the attachments be sent as separate articles instead of having them included with the minutes in one lengthy document. Van Zandt asked Jirak which would be easier for readers on the website. Djernes suggested that attachments be linked where they occur in the document and offered to show Jirak how this could be accomplished. It was decided that Peery would send attachments separately to both Osentowski and Jirak. There was a discussion as to the order of the attachments. It was decided that, to remain consistent, attachments would be posted in the order of their occurrence on the agenda, beginning with the minutes for this meeting.

WIA Plus and Status of Rehab: Loos explained that WIA stands for Workforce Investment Act. Van Zandt stated that the proposal to block grant VR funds appears to be effectively dead and is not part of the Senate bill. She stated that, although it is no longer a major threat, it should still be communicated that it is not recommended.

Status of Taped Public Meeting Educational Materials: Loos reported that she has not yet read them. Loos stated that she would complete them and then send to Westin-Yockey. It was suggested that, after Westin-Yockey finishes them, she should bring them with her to the next meeting.

LB55 Update: Loos reported that this law did pass and was signed by the Governor on March 25, 2005.

Offutt Update: Van Zandt reported that the contract for a vending site is still not certain. She stated that there is a bill in Congress to keep the Randolph-Sheppard Act out of military bases. She also reported that there is pressure from Offutt to keep whoever has the current contract. Van Zandt stated that a letter has been sent to Offutt, but so far there has been neither a reply to that nor success in setting up a phone conference. NCBVI completed the hiring process in the event of an available position. The candidate not selected has requested the evidentiary process. A hearing officer has been selected and the hearing is scheduled for July 12, 2005. She also stated that a meeting has been set for May 31, 2005 for the grievant's attorney to interview Terry Harris.

Status of Braille on Vending Machines: Van Zandt reported that vendors are labeling and keeping machines labeled as best they can. One vendor's labels were torn off. A Braille labeler has been ordered so he can replace them. There was discussion about the difficulties in labeling new machines, the necessity for encouraging consumers to talk directly to vendors with concerns, and marketing strategies involving moving items from place to place or keeping them in consistent locations. Van Zandt stated that she would discuss concerns raised with Terry Harris. She also plans to discuss Braille on machines with the Randolph-Sheppard Committee and stated that she would send a note to the two major consumer organizations emphasizing the need for vendors to work with manufacturers toward building accessible machines. .

Training for Commissioners (SRC Forum, Kansas City): Loos stated that this training was very worthwhile and she was sorry that Westin-Yockey and Orester could not attend. She stated that there was a lot of networking and brainstorming time. A short movie on the history of vocational rehabilitation was shown.

Loos reported that this was one of four movies that were shared at the Forum and wanted everyone to have an idea of what they were like. There was discussion about putting these short movies on the website, copyrights permitting. Van Zandt stated that she would check on getting permission. Djernes volunteered to make copies for Orestes, Westin-Yockey and for future commissioners. Loos thanked Djernes for setting up the movie and for making the copies. Burns and Oltman agreed with Loos that the training was very worthwhile. Oltman stated that she also liked the breakout sessions. Van Zandt agreed with the others and added that the materials were very good and thought they would be beneficial in training new Board members. It was also mentioned that they could be used for training new staff.

Meeting of Commissioners and Staff: Loos stated that the experience was valuable. Oltman mentioned hearing that staff appreciated Loos's and Burns's staying overnight to visit with them.

Mission Statement/Job Description: Loos stated that it was modified at the last meeting and asked if the Board wished to continue modifying or put it on the website and update as needed. There was discussion and it was decided that a motion was not required to move the document from draft to approved status. It was decided that Loos would send the final version to Van Zandt, who would disseminate to staff, the Newsline® coordinator, and the Webmaster.

Public Comment: The status of LB665, a bill to lower the cost of State identification cards, was discussed.

There was further discussion of ways for making vending machines accessible, ideas for their soliciting comments, and suggestions for acquiring locations through such entities as the Federal Reserve Bank.

Van Zandt stated that the next Vendors Committee Meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2005, in Grand Island.

Loos presented the money collected earlier to Flearl and thanked TABS students for the delicious meal!

Break: The Board took a 5 minute break and reconvened.

New Business:

State Plan: Loos asked if there was anything the Board needed to do. Van Zandt asked if anyone had any changes. A motion was made by Burns that the State Plan be approved. Orester seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Survey Revision: Loos stated the need to revise question #8 regarding the chain of command. Following considerable discussion, it was decided the statement should read "I believe that the NCBVI Board of Commissioners is accessible". It was determined that the rest of the survey was fine. Loos stated that the surveys would go out next week. Oltman volunteered to gather the data. Burns stated that staff should be requested to respond by June 8, 2005.

Set Meeting for Executive Director's Evaluation: The Board decided on a conference call June 13, 2005, at 7:00 PM. Van Zandt is to set up the conference call.

Order of Attachments to Minutes: It was decided that attachments would appear in the same sequence as the items on the agenda to which they relate.

List of staff participation in community boards, councils, committees, etc.: Loos reported that the Board received the list, which represented a lot of staff activities. Van Zandt pointed out that the list did not include personal participation, but primarily what staff did relating to their positions. There was a discussion concerning community involvement of staff, both personal and professional.

List of NCBVI Board Operational Motions: Burns stated that he had not yet had a chance to do this, but would have it done for the next meeting.

List of types of materials Board would like to receive from Executive Director: After a discussion of what the Board receives and doesn't receive and the time involved in preparing reports, etc., it was determined that the Board isn't currently in a position to formulate a list. Van Zandt will consider the rationale she uses in deciding whether or not to forward given materials to Commissioners as a basis for potentially assisting the Board in defining parameters for developing a list of preferred information. It was also determined that Serván would annually compile data on positions and salaries that are achieved by clients for submission to the Board.

Per Diem and Expenses for meetings other than quarterly Board Meetings: Loos stated that this issue came up when considering Commissioners' involvement in events such as State Staff Meetings. She mentioned the difficulty arising when Board members have to take off work and stressed the need to set a precedent. Van Zandt suggested, as a guideline, that when the Board decides as an entity to attend something, it would be covered.

When the board “encourages” members to attend a function, the per diem would not be paid. After a discussion regarding the possible effects of a Commissioner's place of residence, what would be considered reasonable, what is fair and what is impractical, it was determined that this issue would be placed on the agenda for further consideration at the next meeting.

Brainstorming Ways to Educate Public Officials about and Involve them with NCBVI: Burns suggested that e-mails be exchanged back and forth to start the groundwork and then at the next meeting everyone can bring and share suggestions. Loos thanked Flearl for planting the seed of considering inviting local public officials to attend Board meetings.

Focus Topic for Next Meeting: It was decided that the focus topic would be on Voc Rehab with the emphasis on job placement or job success with Serván submitting the first of the annual reports discussed previously.

The following were also mentioned as possible focus topics: specific jobs people have, graduates from the Nebraska Center for the Blind coming and talking about what they are doing and their accomplishments, staff training, training for new staff, and philosophical readings which staff discuss.

Public Comment: Osentowski stated that the name of the Spanish paper on Newline® mentioned earlier is El Nuevo Herald.

Flearl reported that she had contacted the Omaha Senators and they were sorry they couldn't attend but several requested a copy of the minutes. Flearl stated that she also has invited them to go out in the community with counselors and observe direct service delivery. Loos stated that if/when that should happen, it could only occur with the okay of persons being served.

Van Zandt requested that details for the next meeting be added at the end of the agenda. Loos stated that the next meeting would be held August 13, 2005, in Grand Island, at the Public Library.

Van Zandt stated that transportation for consumers or anyone in the community can be arranged, but if a van is needed, it must be reserved in advance. Therefore, early communication of interest in attending is appreciated. Discussion followed regarding whether or not there should be a deadline for transportation requests. It was decided not to set a time frame. People should contact the Commission as soon as they know they plan to attend and the Commission will try to accommodate them, but transportation is not guaranteed.

Loos thanked Flearl for hosting the meeting and stated that it had been fun to meet and visit with the TABS students.

Adjourn: Burns moved to adjourn and Westin-Yockey seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM.

*ADDENDUM: Loos stated during the board meeting of 8-13-05 that several items were missing from the materials list, including two anniversary letters (Deaton and Rodriguez). Loos apologized for not congratulating them. Loos requested minutes be modified prior to being moved to approval status.

Respectfully submitted,

Val Peery, Administrative Assistant

Barbara Loos, Chairman

NCBVI Board of Commissioners

Older Blind Services

Report to the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Board of Commissioners

Submitted by: Bob Deaton, Deputy Director of Independent Living Services

Submitted: May 21, 2005

To properly understand the status of services to older blind consumers, particularly in this time of diminishing resources, it is necessary to review the history of services to this target population in general.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was amended in 1978 to include Title VII Chapter 2 authorizing for the delivery of services to older individuals who are blind. This action recognized the existence of a large population of older blind consumers in need of services to maintain personal independence, but it did not authorize funds for the delivery of those services.

Estimates based on national statistics indicated that 22,000 Nebraskans 55 years of age and older were struggling with problems created by vision loss that could not be corrected. This estimate was far larger than similar estimates for individuals representing younger ages. Clearly, the largest group of blind people in need of services was over the age of 55, a group not traditionally served by state rehabilitation agencies at that time.

Nebraska Services for the Visually Impaired, or SVI as we were called then, responded to this need with the provision of services including basic information and referral and home teaching. The range of services available to blind consumers, including Talking Book and Braille Services (TBBS) and Radio Talking Book (RTB), were described to new referrals.

Assistance was provided to those who elected to apply for services provided by other agencies. Counselors often returned to instruct consumers in the operation of equipment provided by TBBS or RTB.

Home teaching was provided then much as it is today. The counselor and new referral would discuss specific problems caused by vision loss in that person's life. Alternative skills of blindness would be explored relevant to the individual's situation. The stove or thermostat would often be marked with raised indicators during the initial visit. Low cost items such as writing guides or needle threaders would be provided depending on the individual's need.

A positive understanding of blindness and appreciation of the alternative skills of blindness was and is considered essential to the rehabilitation process. The idea that people could continue doing what they did visually using non-visual or low vision skills was promoted from the initial visit on.

Individuals aged 55 or older were typically placed in what was called a "non-client" status. Since federal funds were not available to older individuals who were blind throughout much of the 1980's, there was no official mechanism in place for reporting services to this population. Internal filing, what there was of it, was simple and kept for tracking purposes.

Another crucial element in the rehabilitation of blind consumers is the opportunity to network with other blind consumers. This has special relevance to the aging population already at risk of isolation and withdrawal.

Peer support groups for older individuals struggling with problems caused by vision loss were started in the early 1980's. Consumers wishing to participate in a peer support group were encouraged to contact a group near them. This was an effective strategy for providing support to a larger number of older consumers than could be accomplished through individual counseling, and peer support groups continue to be a significant source of new referrals.

There were twelve groups with approximately 100 members across the state when the Nebraska Visually Impaired Peer Support (VIPS) incorporated in 1986 with assistance from SVI. Title VII Part B funds were used to award VIPS its first grant from SVI in the amount of \$6,500.

Note: Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act authorizes for the provision of rehabilitation services to consumers with independent living rather than vocational goals. Title VII Chapter 2 funds authorized funding for services specifically provided to "older individuals who are blind." Title VII Part B of the Rehabilitation Act authorized funding for independent living services to all consumers regardless of disability or age. Title VII Part B funds do not represent a significant amount of money for the provision of independent living services. The grant awarded to the Commission in FY 2005 was \$34,259.

The need for services to many new referrals would often be satisfied during the first few visits after which the case would be closed. Those who elected to continue with more comprehensive services including instruction in the use of the long white cane, Braille, or homemaking were placed in the VR track with an "Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan" and a goal of "Homemaker."

A discretionary process for awarding federal funds for services to older blind consumers was initiated towards the end of the 1980's, although SVI did not apply for its first grant until 1994 when the "Nebraska Older Individuals who are Blind Project" was established. Discretionary grants were awarded on the merits of the grant, and the amount awarded to SVI compared well with other state rehabilitation agencies.

The availability of federal funds for services to older blind consumers increased the amount of paperwork staff were expected to do as reporting requirements were instituted comparable to those for services provided to vocational rehabilitation clients. There was no longer any need for a "non-client" status to track services provided to consumers with independent living rather than vocational rehabilitation goals.

The initial grant for older blind services awarded to SVI in FY95 was \$150,970. This provided funding for grants to RTB (formerly funded with Title I or VR funds) and VIPS, low vision assessments and aids and devices such as closed circuit TV's and magnifiers, and salaries of staff providing services to older blind consumers.

Title VII Chapter 2 funds were not enough, however, to cover the total commitment of staff involved in the delivery of services to older blind consumers. A portion of the funding came from the Title VII Chapter 2 grant and the balance came from the Title I grant. The expedience of using Title VII Chapter 2 and Title I funds to pay the salaries for the time commitment of staff providing services to older blind consumers was widely practiced among state rehabilitation agencies. Despite Education Department General Administration Regulations (EDGAR) restricting the use of funds from one grant to pay for activities or services supported by another grant, this practice continued without comment from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. There was a general acknowledgement that Title VII Chapter 2 funds, although significant, were insufficient to administer the grant and cover staff salaries as well.

Title VII Chapter 2 funds to SVI increased gradually until the year 2000 when the Older Individuals who are Blind Project achieved formula rather than discretionary grant status. This meant that Title VII Chapter 2 funds would be awarded to the states according to population rather than on the merit of grant applications. A base annual rate of \$225,000 was established for states with the lowest populations such as Nebraska. Title VII Chapter 2 funds awarded to the Commission have not been increased since that time.

VIPS had grown steadily since its incorporation in 1986 from 12 peer support groups and 100 members to a network of 45 groups with over 1,000 members. The success of VIPS is a testament to the value of peer support, but success has brought a different set of challenges for the Commission. In the beginning, agency staff planned and coordinated all the meetings and facilitated group discussions.

Peer support groups proved to be an effective vehicle for serving a larger number of consumers than counselors could have done working with consumers individually as anticipated, but as the number of peer support groups increased, the time staff committed to services to older blind consumers increased as well. Not only were staff more involved with support groups, but more older blind consumers were applying for services.

Once older blind consumers applied for services, many remained on the caseload year after year if they belonged to a peer support group. In 1998, an administrative decision was made to close all cases from active independent living services if they were no longer receiving any services other than peer support. This helped to relieve the growing paperwork burden and did not affect the continued participation of consumers in peer support groups.

In 1999, another administrative decision was made to limit attendance of counselors at peer support group meetings to not more than once every two months. This decision precipitated a crisis for some groups. Some groups elected to meet only when counselors could attend and run the meeting. Others decided to continue meeting every month.

For the past several years since 2002, leadership training workshops for peer support group leaders were held in each of the six offices operated by the Commission across the state. The purpose of this training was to provide group leaders with information, resources, and skills for planning and facilitating peer support group meetings and reduce reliance on Commission staff.

A committee of Commission staff met throughout 2004 to consider ways in which limited staff time and resources could be focused on meeting the training needs of consumers struggling with the initial stages of vision loss. The committee recommended a gradual reduction of counselor attendance at peer support group meetings over the next two years. Beginning in July 2005, counselors will not attend more than one peer support group meeting every three months for each group they support. Beginning in July 2006, counselor attendance at peer support group meetings will be reduced to once every six months for each group they support. Counselor attendance at peer support group meetings will discontinue altogether after June 2007.

The committee also recommended a curriculum-based model for providing more comprehensive training at the local level. This model features a series of three-day sessions to be held monthly over a period of four months for three or four people. Training would focus on Braille, cane travel, and activities of daily living with seminars on topics related to blindness. The goal was for each office to conduct training for two groups a year using this model. Up to 48 consumers could benefit from this approach. This compared well with Home Teaching Plus which typically provided training for 12 consumers at a much higher cost. The curriculum based model also had an advantage over traditional home teaching in that

it provided opportunities for networking with other blind consumers learning the alternative skills of blindness locally.

It would be useful now to consider the budget for the first formula grant awarded to the Commission in 2000.

\$109,000 Staff salaries

32,000 Direct services to consumers including training tools and equipment

31,000 Grant to VIPs

30,000 Grant to RTB

10,000 Support for NFB Newslines

3,000 Travel and conference expenses

\$225,000 Total

The FY 2000 formula grant came after the discretionary grant had already been awarded that year giving Nebraska, in effect, a bonus grant for one year. This was the year special grants were awarded to consumer groups for special projects benefiting older blind consumers. It also provided funding that carried over into the next year.

Although the amount of the grant for older blind services has not increased since 2000, more of it has been used to pay for staff salaries with a consequent reduction in the amount available for direct services, especially training tools and equipment.

At the annual Older Individuals who are Blind Project Managers meeting in Washington, DC this spring, I learned that at least one other state rehabilitation agency for the blind, Oklahoma, was cited for using Title I and Title VII Chapter 2 funds to cover staff time committed to the provision of services to older blind services. This has forced Oklahoma from a position of administering a program with the larger portion of the funding covering direct services to consumers to a program with the larger portion covering staff salaries. This could also be the case in Nebraska.

The Commission's Business Officer, Bill Brown, has projected \$201,000 for FY 2006 to cover the total commitment of staff time to older blind services. Given the situation in Oklahoma, continued use of Title I funds to pay for staff commitments to older blind services does not appear to be an option.

Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act is expected soon. If it is enacted with current language relevant to formula funding intact, Title VII Chapter 2 funds available to minimally funded states such as Nebraska will be increased to \$350,000 annually, an increase of \$125,000. If this increase does not happen, some hard decisions will need to be made regarding funds for grants to third parties and direct services to older blind consumers.

The Commission can expect real challenges in the provision of services to older blind consumers in the not so distant future. The number of individuals 55 years of age and older experiencing vision loss is anticipated to increase dramatically as the Baby Boom generation ages. Funding increases for services to older blind consumers cannot be assumed. The focus of services to older blind consumers needs to be more firmly placed on provision of independent living services to consumers in the initial stages of their adjustment to blindness. Innovative approaches to serving a growing population of older blind consumers with existing staff need to be explored.

The need to concentrate available resources on serving consumers in the initial stages of their adjustment does not minimize the importance of peer support. The fact that many people continue participation in peer support groups for years strongly indicates the value of peer support.

My vision for the future looks to a partnership with older blind consumers to meet a continuum of need. The Commission will be there to provide the training and counseling services necessary to guide consumers through the initial adjustment process. As the initial need for services is satisfied, there will be a network of peer support as represented by VIPS to provide ongoing motivation and support.

NEBRASKA Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES
Demographics FY 2004

Title VII Chapter 2 (Older Individuals who are Blind) program:

Number of Active OIB cases on Hand at the Beginning of FY 2004: 194

Number of OIB Cases Accepted for Active Services During FY 2003: 244

Total number of Active OIB Cases Served During FY 2004: 438

Number of OIB Cases Closed from Active Services During FY 2003: 240

Number of Active OIB Cases on Hand at the End of FY 2004: 197

Gender:

Female: 304

Male: 134

Age:

55-59 25

60-64 23

65-69 29

70-74 40

75-79 66

80-84 114

85-89 98

90-94 30

95-99 10

100+ 3

Race:

White: 404

Black or African American: 13

Asian: 1

Hispanic or Latino: 13

American Indian or Alaskan Native: 6

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 1

Other: 0

Title VII Part B program:

Number of Active IL cases on Hand at the Beginning of FY 2004: 57

Number of IL Cases Accepted for Active Services During FY 2004: 54

Total number of Active IL Cases Served During FY 2004: 111

Number of IL Cases Closed from Active Services During FY 2004: 32

Number of Active IL Cases on Hand at the End of FY 2004: 79

Gender:

Female: 51

Male: 60

Age:

0-5: 5

6-17: 37

18-24: 4

23-64: 65

65 and over: 0

Race:

White: 93

Black or African American: 9

Asian: 1

Hispanic or Latino: 6

American Indian or Alaskan Native: 0

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 1

Other: 1

VIPS Group Leaders Revised: May 16, 2007

Region 1

Regional Representative:

Joe Roos
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(308) 665-1820

Alternate:

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Alliance VIPS

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Chadron VIPS

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Kimball VIPS

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Prairie Wind VIPS
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High Plains VIPS - McCook
Contact Person:
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Contact Person:
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Region 3
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Listening Link

Janet McCrae - Administrative Assistant and Coordinator of Listening Link (LL)

Listening Link was organized as a separate entity in 1994 since then there are 24 umbrella client organizations.

- a. all grade levels of public and private educational institutions
- b. business and vocational training institutions
- c. manuals for employee training
- d. requests have come from Nebraska, Iowa, Florida, New York

264 individual clients have been served

- a. majority of requests have been college, but have done elementary and secondary
- b. all assignments come through special needs counselors who have verified eligibility
- c. according to a survey done by RTB in 2000, almost 90 % of LL clients complete their courses successfully

935 projects have been completed

- a. all assignments are done on 90 minute tapes - most projects take between 20 and 25 tapes
- b. every conceivable subject has been done - from the basics of English, math, and history to medicine, law, massage therapy, and motorcycle repair - we also have volunteers who can tape foreign languages - we have done Spanish, French, and Greek
- c. all taping is done by volunteers - a core group of more than 30 assignments

LL Textbooks on tape

- a. Listening Link (LL) provides taped educational and training materials of high quality for those with print impairments. Students, business people, and community agencies with specific needs have utilized Listening Link .

Volunteer readers have recorded printed materials on such diverse subjects as medicine, law, history, mathematics, computers, education, and art. A nominal fee is required to meet the expenses of processing and materials.

Advantages of LL

Recording is done by syllabus - since many instructors skip back and forth through book or leave out sections, we do only what is needed for assignment and in the correct order.

There is constant and immediate communication between counselor, professor, client, coordinator, and reader so as class progresses, adjustments can be made.

Client receives tapes throughout the term so information is current and timely - our volunteers appreciate this also since it spaces the reading into more doable segments.

The original is kept at the RTB offices in case the client loses or ruins a tape - this also allows us to fulfill a request if a future client takes the same class - we don't want our volunteers re-doing assignments.

Subjects are matched with the expertise of our volunteers so terms, names, pronunciations, technical symbols and interpretations are done knowledgably and professionally.

Closing: LL provides a necessary service much appreciated by counselors and clients - the number of projects requested grows each year - the number of institutions who use the service keeps expanding - I have every reason to believe that this will be a viable service for many years to come.

Webmaster Report

Web Server Statistics for Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

February 1-28, 2005

(Figures in parentheses refer to the 7-day period ending 01-Mar-2005 00:07).

Successful requests: 8,762 (1,314)

Average successful requests per day: 312 (187)

Successful requests for pages: 8,712 (1,314)

Average successful requests for pages per day: 311 (187)

Failed requests: 1,693 (381)

Redirected requests: 6 (2)

Distinct files requested: 233 (188)

Distinct hosts served: 1,378 (436)

Corrupt logfile lines: 1

Unwanted logfile entries: 838

Data transferred: 206.11 megabytes (34.08 megabytes)

Average data transferred per day: 7.36 megabytes (4.87 megabytes)

March 1-31, 2005

(Figures in parentheses refer to the 7-day period ending 01-Apr-2005 00:07).

Successful requests: 9,107 (2,807)

Average successful requests per day: 293 (400)

Successful requests for pages: 9,089 (2,805)

Average successful requests for pages per day: 293 (400)

Failed requests: 1,551 (296)

Redirected requests: 6 (2)

Distinct files requested: 203 (196)

Distinct hosts served: 1,488 (445)

Unwanted logfile entries: 795

Data transferred: 235.55 megabytes (75.33 megabytes)

Average data transferred per day: 7.60 megabytes (10.76 megabytes)

April 1-30, 2005

(Figures in parentheses refer to the 7-day period ending 01-May-2005 00:06).

Successful requests: 10,606 (1,882)

Average successful requests per day: 353 (268)

Successful requests for pages: 10,541 (1,870)

Average successful requests for pages per day: 351 (267)

Failed requests: 1,672 (371)

Redirected requests: 7 (3)

Distinct files requested: 240 (199)

Distinct hosts served: 1,339 (387)

Unwanted logfile entries: 753

Data transferred: 238.07 megabytes (36.46 megabytes)

Average data transferred per day: 7.94 megabytes (5.21 megabytes)

We currently have 94 subscribed to the list serve.

Webmaster Report

*With concerns that list serve posts were not readable by some low vision folks, on February 16, adjusted the font settings in Outlook Express to a larger font size. After consultations with Jonathan Ross of Accessibility Dot Net, he advised to use an aerial/regular/14 point font setting and to go no larger as any larger settings could impact JAWS.

*On February 16, sent E-mail to Pearl questioning whether announcements of the availability of newly posted draft minutes should be sent to the list serve. Then on February 17, she responded with the go ahead to do this. The postings will emphasize these are draft minutes subject to the approval of the board of commissioners at the next public meeting.

*On February 23, received another E-mail from a low vision subscriber concerned that the posts to the list could not be read even with increased font size.

*On February 26, sent reply to the consumer and sent a "CC" to Dr. Van Zandt as the consumer attempted to address the issue with Dr. Van Zandt, but did so using an incorrect E-mail address. The reply sent, minus the name of the individual, reads as follows:

"The messages come from Pearl and others. Prior to posting, I enlarge the print then send them out. I have also changed the font setting in Outlook Express on my end. Mailman, which NCBVI uses for their mail list, according to Nebraska On Line, does not have the capability of overriding the font size and changing it to a smaller font. At this point, while access to information is of vital importance, I am at a loss as to what to do.

I am sending Pearl a "CC" of this message as it never reached her given the incorrect E-mail address you used to send her your original concern.”

*On February 28, received correspondence from Pearl advising she neglected to enlarge the print in a previous message posted to the list serve. As this issue is now resolved, the Webmaster will ensure all posts to the list will have an arial/regular/14 point font setting, which is visually appealing to low vision subscribers.

*On February 28, for consistency purposes, sent inquiry E-mail to Nebraska On Line to see whether the font settings in the header displayed atop list serve posts could be adjusted to the desired font setting of arial/regular/14 point.

*On March 1, received response from NOL how to change the font settings using the header. While Kevin wasn't sure his steps would completely satisfy the requirements as specified for low vision list subscribers, he was of the opinion it was worth a shot.

*On March 2, made Pearl aware of my correspondence with NOL concerning the list header. She recommended a test message labeled "Header On List Serve" be sent to gain feedback as to the readability of the header. This will be done once changing the font size is figured out.

*On March 5, sent E-mail to NOL again as the Webmaster, after visiting the WebPages where our list serve is housed, was unable to figure out how to change the font size for the header and requested assistance and confirmation when the change was made.

*On March 7, NOL advised there were high priority issues needing attended to and this would be looked at when matters permitted. However, at a quick glance, NOL advised the font size for the header seemed to be at its fixed size, as the initial steps provided did not work. This matter will be re-visited at a later date.

*Due to pending changes to the Webmaster's E-mail account, on March 13, sent message to NOL requesting subscription and un-subscription to the mailing list be done automatically by the subscriber with "CC's" being generated to the list owner by NOL.

*On March 14, received correspondence from NOL advising the subscription process, as previously requested by the Webmaster, could be done. NOL will advise when the changes to the subscription and un-subscription process are complete.

*On March 15, NOL advised the font size of the header on the mailing list could not be changed. Additionally, they advised that part of the request for subscription and un-subscription had been complete in that the password option for current and new subscribers has been activated. Now at the beginning of each month, all subscribers will receive automatically generated list subscription reminders, which include the user name subscribed and password and un-subscription procedures.

*On March 31, telephoned NOL to learn the progress of the subscription and un-subscription enhancement. As Dougg out of the office, will follow up later.

*On April 16, as three out of the last four posts have had varying font sizes while Word shows one consistent font size, sent E-mail to NOL asking why the font size shows different on the past three out of four sends when cut-and-pasted from Word into a plain

Text E-mail.

*On April 18, received the following response from NOL concerning the font settings being different throughout list serve posts:

“My suspicion would be that it has to do with the cut & paste. Looking at the source of the email, for some reason it's setting the font twice.

The first lines are in "Arial normal", whatever that standard may be, then the following lines are set to Arial 14pt first, then Arial 12pt bold - basically the 12pt reset is getting ignored since it's a second font declaration but the bold tag is being set.

I can't give you a definitive answer, but the only thing that would do that I can think of is Outlook reformatting the e-mail as it gets sent out. I'd bet that the cut & paste is adding in some extra things that are confusing Outlook as it reformats the e-mail to your personal

Settings when you send it out.”

I will try setting the style to arial/regular/14 point in Word prior to sending out future posts in hopes this corrects the problem.

*On April 18, received correspondence from NOL that the second part of the subscription and un-subscription process has been changed. Now, the list owner will receive "CC's" on all new subscriptions and un-subscriptions.

*On April 26, received word that the subscription and un-subscription changes had been made. NOL requested a test be done before uploading the change to the site.

*On April 30, ran a test to see if the process worked and received internal error messages. Sent copy of error messages to NOL for review and follow-up.

*On May 2, NOL advised the error in the subscription and un-subscription process had been corrected and to advise when testing was complete so new subscription and un-subscription page could be uploaded.

On May 3, tested new subscription and un-subscription process. As it works, sent E-mail to NOL requesting they upload the new page and to advise when complete. (**Note: The new subscription and un-subscription process, once again a two-step process, will cut down on unauthorized subscriptions and allow the subscriber to control the frequency of receiving commission posts as well as temporarily disabling delivery of messages, IE vacations, etc. Additionally, a user does not have to wait for the Webmaster to unsubscribe them as the new process allows user control with all subscriptions and un-subscriptions being "CC'd" to the Webmaster to ensure the manual list of subscribers is current.)

On May 4, NOL advised the new page was uploaded and ready for use. In an attempt to download the new subscription page and change the font settings to be consistent with the other pages and re-upload, an error occurred preventing the upload with the correct font settings. Sent E-mail to NOL asking them to make the font settings and asked them to advise, since no changes would be made further to this page, whether the inability to upload the page was of grave concern since NOL was going to change the font settings. (*Note: In testing other pages for uploading issues, the new subscription page was the only problem page. Additionally, the new subscription and un-subscription procedures still work, as they should. **)

*On May 5, received E-mail from NOL advising the restrictions on the preclusion of the upload of the new subscription and un-subscription link were removed. After making the appropriate font setting changes, the upload was successful.

*On May 5, received correspondence from a subscriber to our mailing list, which raised concern about a virus being picked up from their anti-virus program. The E-mail reads, "I don't know who you are but my Spam blocker notified me of a virus sent from

hostmaster@ncbvi.state.ne.us

This is your website & I would appreciate an explanation. I would also like an assurance that I will not be receiving further viruses from NCBVI."

*On May 7, replied to the subscriber saying "I have no clue how this might have happened. Let me investigate and find out. Please rest assured it was unintentional."

I then sent correspondence requesting how this could happen as attachments are not generated to the list to NOL including a copy of the description of the problem as described by the anti-virus program

*On May 7, as the Webmaster is ready to launch the enhanced Spam filtering for his account, sent E-mail to Pearl requesting permission be granted to do this once the installation is complete to ensure NCBVI posts pass through the filter.

*On May 9, received go ahead for test message to list serve. Sent E-mail to Pearl requesting commissioners is notified of the test message.

*On May 10, received E-mail from Pearl concerned about how the subscription and un-subscription process would work and as to how new subscribers would be affected.

*On May 10, received CC on the first successful subscription since the change has been implemented.

*On May 11, addressed Pearl's concern as previously outlined in this report.

*On May 11, received the following from NOL concerning the virus allegedly sent from NCBVI' S mail list: "Yes, it's not uncommon at all, you can just ignore it. Basically, someone sent out a Spam/virus of some sort and made it look like it came from " hostmaster@ncbvi.state.ne.us",when it really didn't.

Things like this are becoming more and more common; we deal with it all the time here. It's a misunderstanding from the person who received the email about how virus's and Spam work.

*With reference to the April 18 entry of font settings on list serve messages being different the past three out of four times, on May 11, sent announcement of meeting and copy of agenda to the list serve in an arial/regular/14 point font setting, which corresponds with my settings in Outlook. This did the trick, as the font setting was consistent throughout the message.

*On May 12, Pearl advised that since there was no change in potential subscribers being denied access to signing up for the list serve, the commissioners need not be notified of the test message being posted when ready.

*On May 15, changed E-mail address online for contacting the Webmaster as the enhanced Spam filtering service now precludes non-approved senders from contacting the Webmaster via his personal account.

*After adding the enhanced Spam filtering service and sending two test messages to the list serve, copies were not received by all subscribed. The Webmaster will resolve this internal issue.

*On May 16, internal issue solved and the list serve is generating to all 94 subscribed to the list, inclusive of the Webmaster.

MATERIALS LIST FOR MAY 21, 2005 MEETING

02-12-05--VZ: Faxes to the House and Senate

02-12-05--VZ: Webmaster's Report

02-13-05--Jirak: Re: Webmaster's Report

02-13-05--Loos: HR 27 Letter to Congress (has follow-up)

02-13-05--Loos: HR 27 Letter to Senators (has follow-up)

02-14-05--Loos: MISSION STATEMENT OF THE NCBVI BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS (has follow-up)

02-14-05--Hunt: vendtalk] Action Needed to Save Vocational Rehabilitation

02-15-05--Peery: FW: 2 MORE anniversaries (Jennifer Miller & Shane Buresh)

02-15-05--VZ: Update on Voc Rehab Funding in Congress

02-15-05--Loos: Re: Letter to Tom Osborne (forwarding letter from Dave Hunt to Commissioners)

02-12-05--Loos: Newslite Report (to Ryan Osentowski)

02-16-05--Peery: Staff Listing (has follow-up)

02-16-05--VZ: FW: Today's Markup of the Workforce Investment Act (article by Dr. Fred Schroeder)

02-16-05--Harris, Terry: next Blind Vendors Committee Meeting (has follow-up)

021605--VZ: FW: Bills in Congress (link to bills; has follow-up)

02-16-05--VZ: FW: State Plan (inquiring about time frame for completion)

02-16-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary! (Jennifer Miller)

02-16-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary Shane! (to Shane Buresh)

02-17-05--VZ: RE: [NCBVI] Update on Voke Rehab Funding in Congress (to Jirak about spelling)

02-17-05--VZ: Federal Legislative Update (from Council of State Administrators of Voc. Rehab. CSAVR)

02-17-05--VZ: State Budget Update (preliminary figures from Unicameral)

02-17-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary Linda! (to Linda Kane)

02-17-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary Jeff! (to Jeff Altman)

02-17-05--VZ: Omaha Chapter NFB-N and a vacation in March (has follow-up)

02-18-05--VZ: Memorandum of Understanding (agreement between NCBVI and University of Nebraska concerning services; has follow-up)

02-18-05--VZ: RE: Legislative contacts (Appropriations Committee, Unicameral)

02-18-05--VZ: Data on Nebraska's Two State Designated Agencies for Vocational Rehabilitation (to State Senators)

02-18-05--VZ: Second Request (concerning Assistant Attorney General to replace Mark Starr)

02-18-05--VZ: Budget Hearing for NCBVI

02-18-05--VZ: Budget Decisions February 2005

02-18-05--VZ: Attorney General Representative (Charles Lowe assigned to NCBVI)

02-18-05--VZ: FW: Attorney General Representative

02-22-05--VZ: Survey from Doug Boone for State Staff Meeting

02-22-05--VZ: FW: Contracts (relevant to Rule Chapter 4)

02-22-05--VZ: Budget History with Text and Excel Attachments.

02-22-05--VZ: FW: Memo from RSA (IM-05-06, requesting topic ideas for Institute on Rehabilitation Issues)

02-22-05--VZ: FW: Reports attached (concerning Transition Programs; has follow-up)

02-22-05--VZ: Impartial Hearing Officers (letters to the four who comprise the pool)

02-22-05--VZ: SRC Training (Bill Orester plans to attend; has follow-up)

02-22-05--VZ: RE: [NCBVI] Fw: Budget History with Text and Excel Attachments. (has follow-up)

02-23-05--Peery: Emailing: conframe.htm (SRC Training Forum Agenda)

02-23-05--Deaton: VIPS Leadership Training Workshops

02-23-05--F. Floyd: client eval (Number 74)

02-23-05--VZ: Exciting News for Two! (Sara Schmidt & Sherrie Bruegman won suites for staff meeting)

02-23-05--F. Floyd: Roy's community project (has follow-up)

02-23-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary John! (John Schmitt)

02-24-05--Peery: Disks (supplementary materials for SRC forum)

02-24-05--Wilmott: State Staff Meeting - April 5-7, 2005 (has Direct Billing Form)

02-24-05--VZ: Testimony (thank you to Center students)

02-24-05--VZ: FW: Finalizing Rule

02-24-05--VZ: State Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing (includes attached materials provided to Senators)

02-25-05--Loos: Testimony

02-25-05--Peery: Draft Minutes

02-25-05--VZ: FW: 192 NAC 4 - Workplace Policies

02-25-05--VZ: FW: [rehabnet] ACTION ALERT

02-25-05--VZ: Correspondence between NCBVI and NFB-N (concerning NCBVI webmaster; has follow-up)

02-28-05--VZ: Chapter 4 - Workplace Policies (approved by Attorney General)

02-28-05--Loos: Re: Draft Minutes (concerning order of attachments; has follow-up)

02-28-05--VZ: Newspaper Coverage of our Budget Hearing

02-28-05--Loos: Re: [NCBVI] Draft Minutes Now Available (to Jirak; has follow-up)

02-28-05--VZ: Budget Letter from Bill Brown (to Senators; has follow-up)

02-28-05--VZ: FW: Equal Opportunity Commission Open House

02-28-05--Loos: Re: VIPS Leadership Training Workshops

02-28-05--Loos: Re: Emailing: conframe.htm (thanking those who put materials onto disks)

03-01-05--Orester: Re: VIPS Leadership Training Workshops (intention to go to Lincoln one)

03-01-05--Hunt: vendtalk] FW: > Job Act May Be Harmful

03-01-05--Hunt: Action Needed (includes phone and fax for Nebraska Senators and Representatives)

03-01-05--Nyman: Friends Minutes, February 21st

03-02-05--VZ: FW: [rehabnet] Troy Justesen Named Acting Commissioner of RSA

03-02-05--VZ: HR 27

03-04-05--Deaton: VIPS Update

03-08-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary! (to Cheryl Livingston)

03-08-05--VZ: FW: ABC Memo: Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work Day

03-08-05--VZ: FW: 2005-2007 NAPE Contract (includes contract and change of staff at NAPE/AFSCME)

03-08-05--VZ: Leave Time

03-09-05--VZ: LB 55 - vending program language

03-10-05--Loos: Re: SLA Decision on Offutt Vending Facility

03-11-05--VZ: Letter thanking our friends (to Friends of the Commission)

03-16-05--F. Floyd: center evaluation (Number 75)

03-17-05--VZ: State Staff Meeting (concerning room reservations)

03-17-05--VZ: Heading West (has follow-up)

03-17-05--VZ: Sheltered Employment

03-22-05--Loos: Fw: Passage of LB 55

03-23-05--Hunt: [vendtalk] PROPOSED TROOP DINING LANGUAGE

03-23-05--Peery: FW: Final Agenda - State Staff Meeting - Grand Island

03-25-05--Servan: Help NRA and RSA

03-29-05--VZ: RE: Furlough Hours and Vacation Time

03-29-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary! (to Karen Mosier)

03-29-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary Larry! (to Larry Mackey)

03-29-05--VZ: State Staff Meeting (concerning agenda items)

03-29-05--VZ: NCBVI Personnel Rules (concerning implementation of Rule Chapter 4)

03-29-05--Bill Wood: Re: NCBVI Personnel Rules

03-29-05--VZ: LB 55

03-30-05--VZ: Chapter 4 Workplace Policies (final version attached; has follow-up)

03-30-05--Servan: State staff meeting agenda attached

03-31-05--VZ: FW: Time Reporting for 3/18/2005 through 4/1/2005

03-31-05--VZ: Correction: Time Reporting for 3/18/2005 through 4/1/2005

03-31-05--VZ: FW: Correction: Time Reporting for 3/18/2005 through 4/1/2005

03-31-05--VZ: Visitors (from Idaho and upcoming, Carl Augusto from AFB)

03-31-05--VZ: FW: NCSAB participants for the Section 107 Planning Committee

04-01-05--VZ: Moving Forward (includes testimony about budget)

04-04-05--VZ: RE: State Staff Meeting (Westin-Yockey's regrets)

04-04-05--VZ: FW: NFVIC Scholarship

04-04-05--Mosier: Transition newsletter attached

04-04-05--Loos: We'll miss you, Dorothy (unable to come to staff meeting due to work)

04-08-05--VZ: FW: Senate Picks Up the Pace of Reauthorization

04-08-05--VZ: Budget Update April 2005

04-08-05--VZ: State Staff Meeting (thank you to Dave Roberts)

04-08-05--VZ: Focus on Services (letter to staff)

04-11-05--VZ: State Plan (policy directive about due date; has follow-up)

04-11-05--VZ: Letter to Governor Heineman (invitation to visit Center)

04-12-05--VZ: RTB

(concerning her discontinuing to serve on its Board; has follow-up)

04-12-05--Robinson: Workplace Policies (asking how many want Braille copies; has follow-up)

04-12-05--VZ: FW: by laws (for Nebraska Business Enterprises)

04-12-05--VZ: Article (from Grand Island Independent about staff meeting)

04-13-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary (to Cindy Zimmer)

04-13-05--VZ: FW: Senate Hearing on WIA Reauthorization

04-13-05--VZ: Understanding why dedicated funds are needed for vocational rehabilitation

04-13-05--VZ: NBE Appeal (appeal from Howard Simons)

04-13-05--VZ: Congratulations (to Ryan Strunk, invited to speak at RSA National Transition Conference; has follow-up)

04-14-05--VZ: A compliment from a consumer. (complimenting Larry Roos; has follow-up)

04-14-05--Bill Drinkwine: Nebraska Statute (question unrelated to blindness; has follow-up)

04-15-05--VZ: Visit from the Governor (will be after Legislative session; has follow-up)

04-15-05--VZ: Hearing (concerning NBE appeal; has follow-up)

04-18-05--VZ: RE: blind doctor (to Jirak, suggesting that article about Tim Cordes be disseminated through consumer groups and staff, but not on NCBVI listserv)

04-18-05--VZ: Monitoring RSA (concerning steering committee)

04-18-05--VZ: My Schedule

04-19-05--VZ: State Plan Draft (has follow-up)

04-21-05--F. Floyd: Article (about Michael and Fatos, to appear in UNL paper; has follow-up)

04-21-05--F. Floyd: Article about the Center (has follow-up)

04-21-05--Deaton: 2004 Annual OIB Report (has follow-up)

04-22-05--Deaton: Double Trouble - Article Attached (about deaf-blindness; has follow-up)

04-26-05--VZ: FW: Transition Conference--Call for Papers

04-26-05--Deaton: Fw: IL & OIB Statistics (has follow-up)

04-26-05--VZ: Agenda for May meeting (items to include; has follow-up)

04-27-05--Loos: Letter to Secretary Spellings (concerning rehab situation; has follow-up)

04-28-05--VZ: May Meeting (ideas from Nancy Flearl; has follow-up)

04-28-05--Oltman: RSA letter (has follow-up)

04-28-05--VZ: FW: Leave Reporting for April 15 through the 29th, 2005 (has follow-up)

04-28-05--VZ: FW: May 21st NCBVI Meeting (concerning RTB; has follow-up)

04-29-05--VZ: FW: WIA update

05-01-05--Loos: Presentation at May 21 Meeting (invitation to Janet McCrae to present about RTB; has follow-up)

05-02-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary Josie (to Josie Rodriguez)

05-02-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary Bob (to Bob Deaton)

05-02-05--F. Floyd: Article (by Mary Johnson)

05-03-05--VZ: Revised Letter (to Josie Rodriguez)

05-03-05--VZ: FW: Final Chapter 4 Rule (final version with revisions not requiring further action)

05-03-05--VZ: FW: Monitoring (letter from CSAVR Director, Carl Suter, about RSA Monitoring)

05-05-05--Peery: Public Meeting Notice (has follow-up)

05-05-05--VZ: FW: Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired at Rehabilitation Services Administration (from NCSAB president, Brian Sigman to Secretary Spellings)

05-05-05--VZ: FW: NCSET Youthhood

05-05-05--VZ: Chapter 4 (clarification concerning approved version; has follow-up)

05-05-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary (to Larry Roos)

05-06-05--VZ: Letter to Lieutenant Governor (invitation to tour Center; has follow-up)

05-06-05--VZ: FW: [rehabnet] Fw: People With Disabilities By Congressional District

05-06-05--Burns: Fw: Concern about changes in rehabilitative services for the blind (to Secretary Spellings; has follow-up)

05-06-05--VZ: FW: IM-05-07

05-06-05--VZ: Evidentiary Hearing (concerning Offutt appeal; has follow-up)

05-06-05--VZ: Inviting Senators to May 21 meeting (draft letter; has follow-up)

05-06-05--Husseini: Letter to the Editor (concerning ABC Extreme Makeover involving blind person; has follow-up)

05-06-05--F. Floyd: Center article (Angie Larson)

05-06-05--F. Floyd: Community service project (Angie Larson)

05-06-05--VZ: FW: book on deaf-blindness (concerning Diane Chambers's Words in My Hands)

05-06-05--VZ: FW: Good News (concerning WIA Plus; has follow-up)

05-09-05--VZ: State Plan Attachments Draft (has follow-up)

05-09-05--VZ: Movies for our meeting (from SRC training forum; has follow-up)

05-09-05--Loos: May 21, 2005 Agenda (draft; has follow-up)

05-10-05--Loos: Draft Agenda (has follow-up)

05-10-05--VZ: Lieutenant Governor Visit (scheduled for May 25; has follow-up)

05-11-05--Servan: Fw: WIA Reauthorization and the Senate (Policy Notes from Dr. Fred Schroeder)

05-11-05--Hunt: Please Call Immediately (concerning contacting Senator Ensign about Randolph-Sheppard)

05-11-05--F. Floyd: Jeremy's article

05-11-05--Deaton: VIPS Manual Attached (has follow-up)

05-11-05--F. Floyd: Jeremy's community project report

05-12-05--"Deaton: American Sign Language Manual for Blind Consumers Attached (has follow-up)

05-12-05--VZ: Time reporting for 04-29-2005 to 05-13-2005

05-12-05--VZ: Lt. Gov. Tour (time changed to 1:00 PM; has follow-up)

05-13-05--VZ: FW: Senate draft distributed this morning (no changes concerning rehab)

05-13-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary (to Deanna Jesse)

05-13-05--VZ: FW: [rehabnet] 2006 Kennedy Foundation Public Policy Fellowships

05-13-05--Fullerton: Listening Link (sending budget information; has follow-up)

05-13-05--VZ: Helen Keller Awareness Week and Proclamation (has follow-up)

05-16-05--VZ: Lt. Gov. Tour change (now June 20, 1:30 to 3:30; has follow-up)

05-16-05--Jirak: Webmaster Report (has follow-up)

05-16-05--Loos: Anonymous Message (from NCBVI employee; has follow-up)

05-17-05--VZ: FW: Senate markup tomorrow (concerning reauthorization without WIA Plus; has follow-up)

05-18-05--VZ: FW: statistics (from Nebraska Center for the Blind; has follow-up)

05-18-05--Deaton: FY 2004 OIB & IL Demographics (has follow-up)

05-18-05--Deaton: List of VIPS Group Leaders Attached (updated May 18; has follow-up)

05-18-05--Deaton: OIB Report to Board of Commissioners Attached (focus report; has follow-up)

05-18-05--VZ: Email (change of address; has follow-up)

05-18-05--VZ: Donation from Friends (explanation of how \$5,000 donation was spent)

05-19-05--Peery: Response to anonymous note (has follow-up)

05-19-05--VZ: FW: Senate HELP Committee Passes WIA Reauth by unanimous consent (has follow-up)

05-19-05--Robinson: Anonymous Message (response to 5-16 message from staff; has follow-up)

05-19-05--VZ: Donations (to Friends of the Commission concerning United Way and CHAD)

05-20-05--VZ: Happy Anniversary (to Susan Roe)

05-20-05--VZ: NCBVI Staff Representation on Other Boards (has follow-up)

05-20-05--Loos: Fw: Newslite report (from Ryan Osentowski)

05-21-05--Loos: Fw: Letter from NFBN (concerning budget cuts)