

NETV Commission:

Study, recommendations made for public radio.

The Nebraska Educational Television (NETV) Commission subcommittee on public radio at a news conference Wednesday announced its recommendations for a Nebraska Public Radio Service, which is proposed as a confederation of educational licensees representing postsecondary educational institutions in Nebraska.

Commissioner Edwin C. Nelson, Chadron, chairman of the subcommittee which has been studying the public radio question for the past year, said that a confederation of independent licensees, working together with NETV, could provide programs of local interest as well as programs with statewide and national interest. The Nebraska Public Radio Service would provide instruction in schools and colleges and for homebound students, the subcommittee's report said.

Nelson said the subcommittee's study clearly showed that public radio service does not duplicate commercial radio services available in the same areas. Public radio caters to a wide range of specialized interests rather than to broad general interests of the public, the study said.

The subcommittee's recommendations include a three-phase implementation of the public radio service, which, when completed would be nine full-power FM stations developed over a period of time and utilizing the existing NETV transmitter locations.

The first phase of the proposed plan to provide public radio service in Nebraska, calls for the Educational Television Commission to seek authorization and financing from the Legislature to activate and operate the first of the proposed stations. The first station, according

to recommendations, would be at Mead, and would be the flagship station of the Nebraska Public Radio Service.

The second phase would be activation of stations at postsecondary education institutions already serving their particular areas.

Capital construction costs for the total plan of nine FM-station public radio service is estimated at over \$1.3 million. Almost \$1 million of this cost would be provided by the federal government. Other costs would be met with state funds, the subcommittee proposed.

At 1976 cost estimates, cost of operating the total system would cost Nebraskans about \$656,000 annually. Federal costs would be \$89,500 each year.

Based on a nationwide study of public radio, the public radio subcommittee report cites seven reasons for recommending the establishment of a public radio service in the state:

- Public radio is an accepted and useful service, which is supported by the public in 40 states and in almost 200 communities across the country.
- Public radio programming does not duplicate commercial radio services available in the same area.
- Few Nebraskans are now able to receive a public radio station frequency though surrounding states are expanding public radio service.
- Radio has a high potential for use in instruction, especially useful in remote geographical areas.
- Certain highly specialized educational needs can be served through the FM multiplex channel (SCA). Service

can be offered to persons unable to read by a special "reading service" on an SCA receiver while the main FM channel is simultaneously broadcasting general audience programs. This offers in-service training potential for doctors, nurses, pharmacists, law enforcement officers and other professionals.

-Federal funds are available to assist in financing both capital costs and operating expenses.

-FM frequencies for noncommercial educational use in Nebraska are available now, but may quickly become scarce as neighboring states proceed with their public radio development plans.

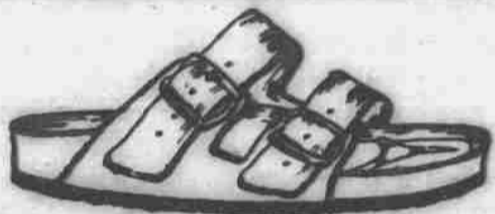
The Commission subcommittee includes Nelson, president of Chadron State College; James Johnson, Kearney, general manager of the Nebraska Television Network and Alvin Gilmore, Omaha businessman.

A public hearing on public radio in Nebraska is scheduled for Tuesday, July 20, at 8:30 p.m. The hearing will be at the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center, 1800 N. 33rd St.


At the hearing, the Nebraska ETV Commission will hear statements from individuals and organizations either supporting or opposing public radio in Nebraska.

The hearing will be broadcast live on the NETV Network, and viewers will be able to call in questions or statements concerning public radio.


Written opinions or questions about the proposed public radio service in Nebraska are being accepted by the NETV Commission.



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