

# State housing offices get 'surprise' grant

BY JAKE BLEED  
Senior staff writer

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded \$822,431 to public housing authorities throughout Nebraska Tuesday to fight drugs and drug-related crime.

Lincoln's Housing Authority received a \$70,381 grant.

Sen. Bob Kerrey's office announced the grants Tuesday. Kerrey's communications director, Michael Tucker, said the senator's office helped push the grants through HUD.

"We worked to shepherd the applications through the process," Tucker said. "It's really a paperwork process."

Anti-drug money is often sent to urban public housing programs, Tucker said, leaving rural public housing neglected.

"It's not just a problem in Nebraska: It's a problem all across the country. Many times rural areas are overlooked," Tucker said.

The grant money was provided as part of the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program.

Lincoln's Housing Authority received the grant even though the public housing organization's director said he never applied.

A HUD representative said the grant money required an application to be sent by Oct. 14.

Larry Potratz, director of the Lincoln Housing Authority, said the grant was "a bit of a surprise" and did not know what it would be used for.

"We're really on a blank page right now as to what we're going to be doing with those dollars," Potratz said. "It's kind of an automatic grant right now."

Drugs are not a large problem in 320 federally subsidized homes in

Lincoln, Potratz said.

"We have a zero tolerance policy, and we enforce that," Potratz said. "We aren't without problems, but they aren't major."

The grant money will probably go to pay for stronger security at an elderly housing unit in the Havelock neighborhood, Potratz said.

Sharon Meier, director of the Hall County Housing Authority, said she did not apply for the grant and that she was first informed of the \$86,437 gift the authority received from an article in a local newspaper.

"No one has formally notified us other than through the newspaper," Meier said. "It's kind of embarrassing."

Meier said the money was needed and would be put to good use. It will probably go to increase security around Hall County's 392 federally subsidized homes, Meier said.

The Omaha Housing Authority

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LARRY POTRATZ  
director of the Lincoln Housing Authority

has received anti-drug grant money for three years, Director Dave Odenius said.

Omaha received the lion's share of Nebraska anti-drug public housing money with a \$595,397 grant.

The money will also pay for bicycles for Omaha police, Odenius said.

Housing authorities in Douglas County, North Platte and Scottsbluff also received anti-drug grants.

Odenius said the majority of the money would go to pay off-duty police officers to patrol public housing complexes in Omaha. Although violent crime is rare in the complexes, other crimes, such as vandalism and domestic abuse, are problems, Odenius said.

"They are not issues that are necessarily life threatening, but they are issues that need to be worked on,"

## Jury deliberates Jasper case

JASPER, Texas (AP) - The jury in the case against the third white man arrested in the dragging death of a black man began deliberating Wednesday after a prosecutor ridiculed Shawn Allen Berry's claim that he was just a horrified bystander.

Prosecutor Pat Hardy disputed Berry's claim that he wasn't driving when James Byrd Jr. was dragged behind a pickup truck down a country road. And Hardy said Berry knew exactly what his friends had in store for Byrd.

"If I sound biased about some of this, please don't think I'm not deadly serious about this case," the prosecutor told the all-white jury. "It's hard to keep from getting that way when you're lied to, and it's easy to see."

He added: "A progression of events ... show Shawn Berry knew what was going on."

Jurors met for about 9 1/2 hours after attorneys presented before retiring for the night. The panel was sequestered at a local motel.

Berry, 24, could get the death penalty if convicted in the murder and kidnapping. Byrd, 49, was chained by the ankles and dragged to pieces last year in one of the nation's ghastliest racial crimes in decades.

"This was Mr. Berry's show as much as the others. That man right there was the worst of the bunch."

PAT HARDY  
prosecutor

Two friends of Berry's, avowed racists Lawrence Russell Brewer and John William King, were convicted and sentenced to die in separate trials earlier this year.

In closing arguments, defense attorney Joseph C. "Lum" Hawthorn said Berry made "terrible" decisions after the killing - not calling the police, washing off his truck and the chain, and lying to investigators.

But Hawthorn said: "The two people who killed James Byrd have been tried, convicted and have been given a death sentence."

On the witness stand Tuesday, Berry testified he tried to stop the attack but backed off when King warned him that a "nigger lover" could meet the same fate that awaited Byrd. Berry said he was so scared

that he wet his pants and made no further attempt to intervene.

He said he watched his two friends kick Byrd, spray-paint his face and chain his feet to the back of the truck. Berry said King drove the truck while the black man was being dragged.

The prosecutor, however, said it was Berry who convinced Byrd he had nothing to fear as they rode in the truck. Hardy also reminded the jury that prints from the shoes of King and Brewer were found in the dirt on the passenger side of the vehicle, meaning that Berry must have been driving.

"This was Mr. Berry's show as much as the others," Hardy said. "That man right there was the worst of the bunch."

## Man dies in train accident

From staff reports

A man was killed Wednesday afternoon after being hit by a railroad car in northwest Lincoln, Lincoln Police Capt. Al Soukup said.

Union Pacific employees were

changing rail cars on a track near the intersection of N.W. 12th and W. Adams streets at 12:42 p.m. when the man was struck by the car, cutting him in half, Soukup said.

Police are not releasing the man's name or age until his relatives can be notified of the accident.

## Three student groups OK'd

BY VERONICA DAEHN  
Staff writer

ASUN

Committee reports took up the bulk of Wednesday night's ASUN meeting.

The body also approved three new student groups.

Vice President Rachelle Winkle urged senators to attend the electoral commission meeting Friday at 3:30 p.m. in the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska office.

Winkle said the electoral commission will be proposing changes this year that senators will vote on at their next meeting Dec. 1.

After a year without party names on the ballots, Winkle said the electoral commission will recommend they be added again.

The commission will also change the wording on the ballots to read he/she and him/her instead of he and him.

Second Vice President Trisha Meuret told senators that there would be a parking meeting this Friday at 3

p.m. University of Nebraska-Lincoln staff members will be asking for lower-priced parking rates because they are not paid as much as faculty members, Meuret said.

Communications Committee Chairman Heath Mello said he and Arts and Sciences Senator Natalie Hoover recently met with members of the Mexican American Student Association.

MASA members told Mello that ASUN is not visible enough on campus, and it needs to do more to reach out to students.

In new business, ASUN approved the recognition of three student organizations by acclamation.

The Neihardt Council, Sigma Alpha Agricultural Sorority and Extreme Devotion were approved for recognition.

## Presentation explores history of cross dressing in America

BY DANE STICKNEY  
Staff writer

The UNL Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Concerns is sponsoring a presentation about the history of cross dressing women in Western America today at Love Library.

The presentation, titled "Cross Dressing Women of the West," is the first in a symposium series aimed at educating the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the city about GLBT issues.

Lisa Pollard, a UNL graduate student in history, will be presenting stories about women of the West who dressed and lived as men.

Barbara DiBernard, a UNL English professor and organizer of the symposium series, said Pollard will present the cross-dressing issue with a humanitarian view.

"She'll present a lot of stories and pull as many photographs as she can find," DiBernard said. "It will be really neat because she will be using the women's real voices and lives instead of staying within an academic frame."

DiBernard said Pollard will tell stories of women who lived a good portion of their lives as men. Many women posed as male ranchers and cowboys in the early days of the Western Frontier.

The presentation will be at 3:30 p.m. in Love Library.

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