

NEBRASKA BIT MOBILE

2006 Year End Report



Background Information

Small towns and rural areas are where many Nebraskans choose to live and work. Because of the quality of life and the many characteristics of being rural, it is where they want to be. However in this day and age, they want to be and have the opportunity to be connected to the entire world.

Rural living does isolate people and distance poses a challenge to do business and stay in contact. Through technology the connectivity gap can be bridged and rural Nebraskans are excited about getting connected to the rest of the world. More and more business owners and economic developers are realizing the importance and opportunities the Internet and technology brings to them.



A new educational tool, the Nebraska BIT Mobile brings has proven to be valuable in educating people across Nebraska. It is a fully self-contained mobile classroom complete with 14 computer stations and an instructor station. Laptop computers and an overhead projector and screen make it an excellent tool for conducting educational workshops in rural areas of Nebraska.

During its first year, IT Extension Educators have taken the BIT Mobile from one end of the State

- Open House - UNL Ag Hall
- Kimball - eBay/eKnowledge/Podcasting
- Sidney - eKnowledge/eGovernment/Podcasting
- Harrison - Internet Safety 4 Kids/eBay
- Oshkosh - eGovernment/eKnowledge
- Chappell - eGovernment
- Alliance - Introduction
- Hemingford - Introduction
- Bartlett - eGovernment
- O'Neill - eGovernment/eBay
- Tekamah - eKnowledge/eBay
- Lincoln - National 4-H Technology Conference
- Kearney - Women in Ag
- Statewide Extension Conference
- Norfolk - NEDA Conference
- Ainsworth - Rural Institute
- Bridgeport - PREC District Conference
- Butte - eGovernment
- Burwell - eGovernment/eBay
- Falls City - eGovernment/eKnowledge/eBay/eBusiness
- Osceola - eGovernment
- Ainsworth - eBusiness/Podcasting
- Rushville - eGovernment
- Mullen - eBay
- South Sioux City - Podcasting
- Harrisburg - eGovernment

Impacts:

Beginning its journey in March 2006, the Nebraska BIT Mobile has reached over 500 people in 24 communities. People of all walks of life have learned from a variety of educational workshops taught in this mobile classroom.

As the Nebraska BIT Mobile travels across the state – attention is drawn to University of Nebraska Extension. Many questions and new contacts have surfaced as a result of this unit and Extension Educators being in small communities. It is a very welcome and received tool for rural residents to receive training right in their community. Many of the communities do not have facilities to conduct such training.

Workshop evaluations prove that people are learning and implementing information learned from numerous workshops taught during the first year. They are using it in their everyday lives, businesses, farming, ranching, education, and governmental operations.

People in rural communities appreciate our bringing information technology programming to them instead of them having to travel miles to a larger community to get similar training.



Operations:

A Business Plan complete with operating guidelines was created to ensure success and financial sustainability of the BIT Mobile. A financial, marketing, and customer plan is in place and is revised as we learn about the operations, maintenance, and operating expenses associated with keeping it on the road.

IT educators have built a partnership with the Nebraska Telecommunications Association who has provided not only financial support but also Internet connection in the communities where they provide Internet service.



In addition, \$49,050 has been raised from other resources to provide training, equipment, and support for the Nebraska BIT Mobile. Resources have come from a USDA RBEG Grant, Network Nebraska and Buckley Trust from Chappell.

The Business Plan outlines six regions of the state where the BIT Mobile is scheduled to be on a monthly rotating basis. IT educators are responsible for planning, scheduling, marketing, and teaching educational workshops while it is in the counties within their region. They work closely with local educators and other contacts in the communities in which they are conducting workshops.

CIT staff has been invaluable in helping get the BIT Mobile equipped with computers, software, and Internet connectivity. They have everything set up so that it has been basically trouble free for the IT educators as they move and “plug in” from community to community. They have been extremely helpful with trouble shooting when problems have come about.

Evaluation:

Evaluations are conducted after each educational workshop - eKnowledge, eGov, eBusiness, eAg to determine how the programming enhances participants' teleliteracy skills and how they plan to implement them in their business and everyday lives. Results are also used to determine future educational needs of various audiences of Nebraska residents.

Evaluation of the financial records and costs is ongoing to insure financial stability and future program delivery with the BIT Mobile.

Marketing

To market the BIT Mobile - a website has been created, brochures have been printed, and a video has been created. CIT staff and Dave Ostdiek, PREC have been instrumental in getting this done.

Testimonials

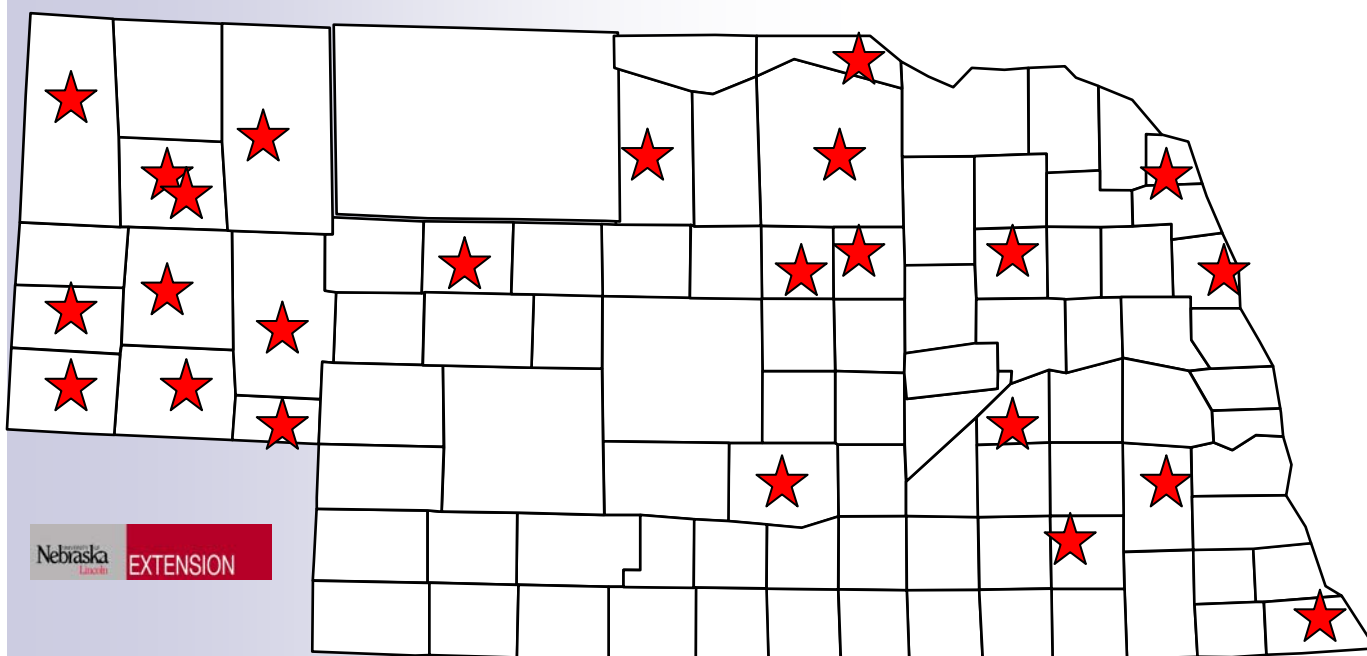
"How perfect it was to have the BIT Mobile come to our community parked right in front of the courthouse. If you were to come back I feel sure you would have a full class."

"I think that the BIT Mobile was good for the lessons. We weren't worrying about jumping up to answer a phone or attend to a customer, as we would have if we would have had the lesson in one of the offices."



BIT Mobile Communities

Reached during first year on the Road



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