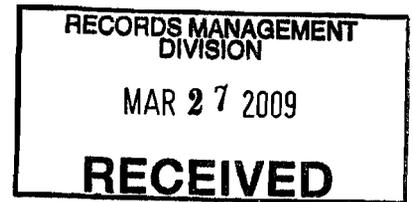


Office of
Thomas County Clerk
Clerk of District Court ~ Register of Deeds
Election Commissioner ~ Assessor
P.O. Box 226 ~ Thedford, NE 69166
Phone 308-645-2261 ~ Fax 308-645-2623
Email ~ clerk@thomas.nacone.org



March 24, 2009

Cathy Danahy
Nebraska State Records Board
440 S 8th St., Suite 210
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Cathy,

Enclosed please find our application for the State Records Board Grant to Improve Access to Public Information. We feel that our office would benefit greatly with funds from this grant. Thank you for giving us consideration in the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorissa Hartman".

Lorissa Hartman
Thomas County Clerk/Assessor

**Nebraska State
Records Board**
440 S 8th St Ste 210
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 471-2745

John A. Gale
Chairman



APPLICATION FOR STATE RECORDS BOARD GRANT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION (Local Government Agency)

The Nebraska State Records Board is sponsoring a grant program for county and municipal governments for the development of programs and technology to improve electronic access to public records by citizens and businesses. The grants may be used for the creation or enhancement of electronic access and delivery of government services and information, but not to fund ongoing operations. One of our highest priorities is to encourage collaboration and projects which can ultimately be used in multiple jurisdictions with minimal modification. Collaborative projects may be awarded grants in the amounts not to exceed \$25,000.00; single jurisdiction projects have a \$10,000.00 limit.

A collaborative grant must have more than one jurisdiction involved or be a project or application that can readily be shared and utilized by more than one jurisdiction. A single jurisdiction, in order to qualify as a collaborative grant, must provide a plan of how the application will be made available and shared with other jurisdictions at no charge.

Grant Criteria

Projects requesting funding must meet criteria #1-3. In addition, criteria #4-6 will be considered when reviewing funding requests:

1. Enhance the delivery of local government agency services and improve access to those services.
2. Meet the state's technology access clause for providing equal access to services for persons with disabilities. A copy of the technology access clause is available at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html> under 2. Accessibility Architecture.
3. If the project or service created or improved pursuant to the grant application involves the licensing, permitting or regulation of businesses, then the project or service must allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal at: <http://www.nebraska.gov/index.phtml?section=business> and the One-Stop Online Business Registration System at: <https://www.nebraska.gov/osbr/cgi/domestic.cgi?/OSBRApplication/init/init/None>

4. Improve the efficiency of agency operations.
5. Facilitate collaboration between local, state and federal agencies and other public institutions (if applicable).
6. Support public/private partnerships in the delivery of public services through the Official State portal, Nebraska.gov.

Grant applications will be considered by the Board at their quarterly meetings. For application due dates, Board meeting dates and any other questions about the process, please contact Cathy Danahy, Executive Director, at cathy.danahy@sos.ne.gov or (402) 471-2745.

Local Agencies desiring grants from the Nebraska State Records Board for projects to create or improve electronic access to government information must complete the following application and follow any procedures outlined.

NOTE: All successful candidates will be required to submit a written project report to the State Records Board at the conclusion of their project.

If you need additional space for your answers please attach any documentation necessary. *Applications not completed in full will be returned to the requesting agency for completion and resubmission.*

I. GRANT SUMMARY

1. **Name of agency applying for grant** Thomas County
2. **Title of project** Thomas County Land Record Information System Enhancement and Web Access
3. **Brief description of project:** Thomas County has plans of creating a web page, which will include modernized land record information, taxation information and other related data (planning, zoning, floodplain, voter registration, etc) in a web based format. The goal is to have digitized maps and property information available to anyone with Internet access.
4. **Grant request amount** \$ 25,000
5. **Will there be a fee for accessing records associated with this project? If yes, provide any statutory reference or authorization for fee.** No

II. GRANT DETAIL

1. Please describe the project in detail (you may attach this description).

Thomas County has begun the design and construction of a county wide GIS foundation. The initial portion of the project focuses on the construction and update of land records information. Future phases of the project involve integrating other county departments and other local government agencies in the county. Information and content delivery will be by the World Wide Web, ensuring fast easy access for the public and partners alike. Thomas County has contracted with GIS Workshop, Inc., (GISW) of Lincoln, NE for GIS design and implementation services. The cost for the project is \$30,000 plus \$1,500 for the software. Because of budget restrictions for the county, Thomas County has entered into a three-year financing option with GISW. GISW will be assisting Thomas County in making their data readily available to the public. The initial phase of this project will free up valuable time for the County Assessor's office and make taxation and valuation information available via the Internet to all partners. As the project progresses other department and agency data will be loaded onto the web site.

GISW will provide hosting services for the system, negating the need for Thomas County to expend a large capital outlay on hardware and software. Users will be able to access information and search for information by name, address, parcel ID, and other factors.

The initial phase of the project to update and enhance land records information will benefit the residents of Thomas County, Village and Town offices, other county offices, and real estate professionals by making these data available 24/7.

2. Please describe who the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be and projected activity for access or use of the proposed service.

Beneficiaries include:

1. Thomas County tax paying public. The general public will be able to access land record and associated information 24/7.
2. Other county and village/town agencies and offices will be able to access and share information without the need to provide paper copies or visit each others' offices.
3. Real estate professionals (realtors, appraisers, banks and insurance companies) will be able to access information vital to their day to day operations at any time.

Currently, we have frequent calls asking for valuations and assessment information along with the question of whether or not our information is available on the internet. Once our website is up and running, notification would be sent out informing residents and business personnel that the information is readily available.

3. Timeline for implementation (*a specific completion date (MM/YYYY) must be provided*). *Grant funds lapse if not expended prior to completion date.*

Thomas County is approximately 80% complete with the land records update for the entire county. Within a few months we expect to start making these new data available via the Internet. We expect the initial land record modernization and web site to be complete and readily accessible by December 2009.

4. Subdivision contribution to project (labor, equipment etc.).
Thomas County will be investing \$1,500 in the software to allow more efficient use of time in the land record modernization phase. The Clerk/Assessor's office staff will be trained to compile the needed information and will continue updating education to keep the information accurate and up-to-date. GISW is assisting in the planning phase, implantation phase and final web site build and hosting phase, while supporting Thomas County staff for maintaining the records.

5. Is other funding available for this project (explain)? No. The Thomas County Commissioners voted to purchase this program over a three-year period due to the fact that the Cadastral maps for Thomas County were severely out of date and deadlines for soil conversions were already in place.

6. Does the project require additional statutory authority (explain)? No

7. Specify (in detail) what the grant money will be used for. Include a complete cost breakdown of the project. Please attach bids from vendors (if applicable).
Grant money will be used to make final payments for purchase of the GIS equipment.

GIS Workshop Financing:
July 2008-----\$10,000
July 2009-----\$10,000
July 2010-----\$10,000

Annual fee of \$4,500 per annum due 12 months after project initialization to cover web site hosting and GIS data maintenance.

8. Why is the grant money needed for the project, and, if applicable, how will the service be sustained once the grant money is expended?
Grant money would be utilized to offset the initial cost of the GIS program to help Thomas County budget. The service will be sustained with taxpayers' monies once the grant money is expended.

9. Please describe how this project will enhance the delivery of agency services or access to those services.
This project will enable the general public to quickly and easily access land record information without the need to visit the courthouse. Other county and town/village departments will be able to share and retrieve information without having to visit other offices and make copies. Finally, real estate professionals will be able to access information important for their day-to-day operations without having to call county staff or visit the courthouse..

10. Please describe how this project will improve the efficiency of agency operations.
The project will allow County personnel to maintain updated information with less time involved once all of the maps and layers are brought up to date. It will also

save County personnel time to perform other duties instead of spending time researching valuations for the general public and especially real estate professionals.

11. Please describe how this project will facilitate collaboration among other local, State and federal agencies and other public institutions.

Other offices within Thomas County will benefit from this project. The County Clerk, County Treasurer, Weed Department, Road Department, Sheriff's Department and others will be able to utilize this program for land records information. Other local entities outside of the Courthouse such as the villages of Thedford, Seneca, and Halsey, the school district, the Fire Districts, NRCS, the National Forest, and many others will also be able to utilize this program.

12. Please describe how this project will support public/private partnerships in the delivery of public services through the Official State portal, Nebraska.gov?

The project will support public/private partnerships through the delivery of public information services via the official state portal via the Property Assessment Division (PAD). PAD lists and makes available links to all county information sites on its page at <http://pat.nol.org/counties/index.html>.

13. Does the project involve the licensing, permitting or regulation of business? If yes, explain how the project or service will allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal and the One-Stop Online Business registration system.

No.

III. TECHNICAL INFORMATION

1. Describe the hardware, software, and communications needed for this project and explain why these choices were made.

Thomas County chose to have GISW host the primary web system. This choice means Thomas County does not have to make a large capital investment in web hardware, software and personnel to maintain the system.

2. Address any technical issues with the proposed technology including:

- Conformity with general accepted industry standards. Projects which interface with other state systems (such as distance learning systems) must meet NITC technical standards and guidelines (NITC standards and guidelines are located at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/>).
- Compatibility with existing institutional and/or statewide infrastructure.
- Reliability, security and scalability (future needs for growth or adaptation).

The GIS and web site will be constructed to meet the Nebraska GIS guidelines for Land Record Modernization. All hardware and software systems will be constructed

using ESRI based technology, the common GIS technology in use by state and local agencies in NE today.

3. **Describe how the project will comply with the State's Technology Access Clause:** <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html> under 2. **Accessibility Architecture.**

This project meets the applicable standards for GIS technology (metadata and mapping standards) as described in the Clause.

4. **Describe how technical support will be provided.**

GIS Workshop, Inc. will provide our technical support for the program and website. GIS utilizes certified instructors for training the county staff, and for follow-up telephone support. The county will supply monthly data base changes to GIS for GIS to maintain the application.

IV. CONTACT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE

Contact person for any questions regarding this application:

Lorissa Hartman or Pat Neben

Phone **#308-645-2261**

E-mail **Lorissa: clerk@nacone.org or**

Pat: deputyclerk@nacone.org

Signed this 24 day of March, 2009

Lorissa Hartman, Thomas County Clerk/assessor
Agency Director

Please return to:

Cathy Danahy
Nebraska State Records Board
440 S 8th St. Suite 210
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 471-2745

(Last updated 04/28/2008)