

Nebraska Transit Trends

22ND ANNUAL NEBRASKA ROADEO

The Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers held their Annual Statewide Roadeo at the Nebraska Safety Center in Kearney on September 17. A total of twenty-four drivers competed in three divisions: small bus, mini-van, and regular van. Thirty-five volunteers, made up of transit managers and staff, Nebraska Safety Center staff, and others served as judges for the event. Jeff Baker, of Seward County Public Transit, and Cindy Sanders, of Guide Rock Public Transit, were once again co-chairs of the Roadeo.



After the Roadeo, everyone who participated Marcia Hardin & Sharon was invited to the Holiday Inn for an awards

banquet. During the banquet, drivers who had been accidentfree for the past twelve months were given a "Safe Driver" key chain. Drivers from all divisions were announced and presented with certificates for their participation along with red clipboards



Charlene Troudt, Rosemarie Edgar, Cindy Sanders and Rhobie Lechner take a break from judging.

that featured the NATP logo. Judges announced and thanked for their participation in making the event run smoothly. Roadeo Committee members were also announced and recognized for their hard work.

Committee members include Jeff Baker, Scott Bartels, Wayne Masek, Cindy Sanders, Denise

Smith, Corrina Duckworth and Neva Umstead. The committee met numerous times prior to the Roadeo to ensure a successful event.

The Roadeo competition consists of a written test, pre-trip inspection, wheelchair securement, and a driving skills course. This year's theme was Western/Rodeo. It was great seeing contestants and judges dress up in their cowboy hats, boots, and spurs! The first place drivers from each division and their managers are eligible to attend and compete in the CTAA National Roadeo in Tampa, Florida, in June of 2015.

First place winners of all three divisions won a \$250 check and an engraved clock. The second place winners received a \$150 check along with an engraved key ring that features the state seal.

(Continued on page 7)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Driver of the Year Diane Schaepe

Spirit Award Winner Marcia Hardin

Van Division Winner **Larry Vortherms**

Mini Van Winner Kily Gortmaker

> **Bus Winner** Diane Schaepe

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RYDE TRANSIT NEWS

RYDE Transit will be participating in the Prime Senior Festival in Kearney on Thursday, October 9 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. RYDE Transit will offer free rides to this event.

RYDE Transit will also be cosponsoring the Senior Festival in Hastings on Wednesday, October 15 from 1:00 to 3:30 pm at the Hastings Auditorium. RYDE Transit will offer free rides to this event.

As Election Day approaches, on Tuesday, November 4, RYDE Transit will offer free rides to the voting booths in all of our seven counties.

On Tuesday, November 11, RYDE Transit will be offering free rides to Veterans.

Karin Bennett - RYDE Transit - Adams County - Hastings

Hastings RYDE started a contract with Goodwill Industries in December, transporting their clients to work both morning and afternoon, and that is going well. We are in the process of training two more drivers and have been experiencing the usual increase in ridership that comes with the fall season. We have a great group of employees that all work together to get the people moving around in Hastings!

RYDE Transit - Dawson County - Lexington:

RYDE Transit is in their second year of operations in Dawson County – Lexington. Since December, the operation has moved to a 8:00 am to 5:00 pm active dispatch Monday through Friday. RYDE Transit is actively promoting rides in Gothenburg, Farnam, Cozad, Sumner, Eddyville and Overton as well as the increased ridership in Lexington and surrounding areas.

Linda Yelken – RYDE Transit – Franklin County – Franklin

Franklin RYDE Transit is privileged

to have four drivers covering the area including full-time drivers Marla Johnson and Linda Yelken and part-time drivers Susie Headrick and Karla Johnson. With the extended staff, we are currently working with a NDOR pilot project with Webster and Franklin Counties. goal is to coordinate rides and increase travel opportunities for passengers. This year we were pleased to add a second loweredfloor mini-van to our fleet of three. Drivers are attending training to keep current on rules and regulations with classes on passenger assistance and defensive driving. Along with transferring passengers, RYDE in Franklin also delivers daily noon meals in town. We strive to meet the agency goal of "helping people - changing lives."

RYDE Transit in Franklin is coordinating rides with Webster County Transportation Services and Village of Guide Rock Public Transportation. The goal of this project is to give Franklin County and Webster County residents more options to travel to Kearney, Hastings, and Grand Island. For questions about the Coordinated Transportation or Mobility Management Program or RYDE Transit's involvement, please call 308.865.5677 and ask for Charles.

Kim Archer - RYDE Transit - Hamilton County - Aurora

Life is good here in the Aurora area. Our summer was quite slow compared to the fall, but school has started and we are flying once again. We are transporting 20 preschool children this year compared to 32 last year, but we are still very busy. We have a new part-time driver, Chuck Andersen, and he fits well into our program. He is a great guy with a big heart.

Rhonda Nokes - RYDE Transit - Kearney County - Minden

Once again, the busy time of year is upon us. School started in

Minden on August 13 so we are picking up several kids in both elementary and middle school. Head Start will get underway next week. We deliver their breakfast that is prepared at the Senior Center each morning. We take children to daycare following Head Start. There are pickups for dinner at the Senior Center, trips to appointments, trips to Kearney, Holdrege, Grand Island and Hastings.

RYDE Transit - City of Ravenna

We currently have a temporary driver in our Ravenna Operation. RYDE Transit - City of Ravenna takes riders where they need to go in Ravenna and out of town including medical centers, courthouses, post offices, senior banks, centers and shopping areas. RYDE Transit is also participating in the "SHOP HOMETOWN RAVENNA" the the second Thursday of each month.

Jan Schmeekle – RYDE Transit – Gosper County – Elwood

RYDE Transit in Gosper County offers daily routes within Elwood Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 12:00 noon. Also offered is a scheduled route to Lexington each week on Tuesday at 12:30 pm. Routes to Holdrege, Cozad, and Kearney are available on an as-needed basis with a few days prior notification required.



NATIONAL RTAP SAYS GOODBYE TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

National RTAP's long-time Executive Director, Patti Monahan, has taken a position at Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates. She will be a Principal in the Boston office, working on mobility management. We have the highest respect for Patti and thank her for the guidance, management, and knowledge she has brought to the program. We

are thrilled that she'll continue to be actively involved in the industry, and wish her all the best in her new position.

Anyone interested in the open position should contact Cindy Frene by sending an email to cfrene@nationalrtap.org. The new Executive Director position



FTA NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

In the Federal Register, FTA is announcing the availability of approximately \$7.85 million for the Innovative Public Transportation Workforce Development Program. This notice solicits proposals that promote innovative public transportation workforce development models

and programs of regional and national significance, which invest in America's economic growth and promote ladders of opportunity for all Americans.

Proposals are due within 60 days of the publication of this notice.

Instructions for applying may be found on FTA's website at http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13070. html and in the FIND module of GRANTS.GOV

UPDATE FROM NDOR

Best Practices Maintenance Manual

A best practices maintenance manual is now available online at http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/rpt/pdfs/transit-forms/maint-manual-5311-5310.pdf.

The manual includes step-by-step instructions for vehicle acquisition, preventative maintenance and disposal. Scheduled maintenance templates are also available on the Asset Management Section of the Transit Section webpage.

Statewide Intercity Bus Study

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) partnered with the University of Nebraska at Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) to conduct a statewide intercity bus study. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) defines intercity bus service as regularly scheduled bus service for the general public that operates with limited stops over fixed routes. Intercity bus service in

Nebraska typically connects rural areas with larger urban areas and intermodal transportation.

To gather public input regarding current intercity bus service and unmet needs, CPAR and NDOR hosted a series of public meetings across the state and interviewed current providers. The information is summarized in the study and includes an action plan for NDOR to work with current providers to increase and improve intercity bus service in the state. A copy of the study is located on NDOR's website http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/docs/Intercity-Bus-Assessment-2014.pdf.

Managers Workshop Summary in *The Roadrunner*

An article with information about the 2014 Transit Managers' Workshop in North Platte was published in the NDOR newsletter, *The Roadrunner*. The online newsletter is distributed to state employees, elected

officials, professional consultants and other stakeholders. Follow this link to read the article in the August/September edition. http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/roadrunner/docs/Aug-Sept2014.pdf.

GREAT THINGS ARE COMING TO METRO!

On September 15, 2014, US Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx visited Omaha to personally announce that Metro was awarded a competitive federal TIGER grant for \$15 million dollars towards building a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Omaha.

Why is this a Big Deal?

TIGER grants are extremely competitive. Metro's project was selected as one of only 72 projects out of 797 eligible applications. During his speech, Secretary Foxx compared the competition for one of these grants to gaining acceptance to Harvard or West Point. Perhaps more importantly, we will soon have our first BRT, a completely new transit service never seen before in Omaha.

What exactly is BRT?

BRT is not just another bus. It is an innovative, high-capacity, lower cost public transit solution that replicates the performance, reliability and comfort of rail systems. BRT offers upgraded service with upscale passenger amenities including eight modern, uniquely branded vehicles, real time display, and pre-board ticketing. It provides faster service with limited stops at 14 station pairs and includes infrastructure investments such semi-exclusive quideway, queue jumps, level boarding, and signal prioritization to improve speed and reliability.

What does this mean for Omaha?

Broader Mobility - The eight mile BRT line will connect numerous destinations including Westroads, Crossroads, Midtown Crossing, UNO, UNMC, major employment centers and downtown on one convenient, frequent transit line. The BRT will operate seven days a week with ten minute peak

hour frequency and will cut 16 minutes of in-vehicle travel time from Westroads to Downtown. BRT will also connect with nearly every route in Metro's system, improving travel times to all areas of the Metro system.

Economic Growth - The BRT is projected to increase economic development by \$450 million and bring 1,350 new residents along the corridor. It will create 1,200 new jobs and additional short term construction jobs.

And More - This project will bring numerous benefits to the city as a whole. These include, but are not limited to, \$2.4 million in reduced greenhouse gas emissions; reduced congestion, reduced water quality damage and traffic accidents; and improved pedestrian and bicyclist conditions.

Timeline

The BRT is projected to begin operations by the end of 2018.

Metro would like to thank Mayor Stothert; Randy Peters, Director of NDOR representing Governor Heineman; Ken Cook, President of East Campus Reality; representatives from Senator Johann's, Senator Fischer's and Congressman Terry's offices; and the numerous other stakeholders and elected officials that joined Metro and Secretary Foxx in support of the TIGER 2014 grant award and the future of mass transit in Omaha.



Dollars and Cents

This \$15 million TIGER 2014 grant along with the \$5.9 million in grants already secured by Metro for this project, including a generous \$1 million grant from the Nebraska Department of Road's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Fund, will enable Omaha's first BRT to move forward. The total project cost is \$30.5 million and Metro is already preparing local match funds and reaching out to foundations and others to help support this project.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Phelps County Public Transit - Denise Smith

Tucked away in a corner office of the Phelps County Senior Center, you'll find Denise Smith working hard as the manager of the center. Like most managers of smaller transit systems, Denise is in charge of more than just transit. She also oversees the day-to-day operations of the Senior Center.

Denise has been with the senior center since 1998. She applied for the dispatcher position and was quickly utilized as the bookkeeper. Learning quickly, she was assigned to the assistant manager position where she served in most capacities. In 2005, Denise took over the manager position and has been in that position ever since.



History of Phelps County Public Transit

The public transportation aspect of the city of Holdrege started in 1975 with one van. They operated out of a small, one-room facility. The system later moved to an old grocery store which was renovated in 1993. The transportation services then combined with the senior center.

Phelps County Public Transit currently operates as a demandresponse system. They serve the entire county and also make trips outside of the county for an additional cost. Riders wishing to utilize public transportation call to make appointments during the regular operating hours of 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. The friendly staff are very accommodating and know what they are doing. Under Denise's supervision, the staff works together to provide excellent service to citizens in Holdrege and the surrounding communities. Phelps County currently has two full-time drivers and one driver on call.

Highlights

One highlight that came to mind for Denise was when a local teacher asked them to present to her young students. Transit staff taught the children how to utilize public transportation. This is a great idea to encourage younger generations to utilize their local public transportation.

Denise also indicated that their elderly riders are very appreciative of the services that the system offers. It is always a great feeling to know you have such a positive impact on their lives. The local board members really see what a service the transit system provides and that really helps Denise do her job.

Challenges Facing Phelps County Public Transit

Denise indicated that one of the challenges they have faced recently is loss of ridership because of issues with IntelliRide Services (previously AMR). Many managers currently face challenges with IntelliRide, whether they utilize

their services or not. Phelps County currently not work does with IntelliRide because of long waiting times phone on the causing people to get upset and stop scheduling rides through IntelliRide (AMR).

A n o t h e r challenge Phelps County Public Transit faces is overcoming the stereotype that the local public transportation system is only for the elderly or disabled. It can be especially difficult to overcome this stereotype when the transit system is located in the senior center.



Trying to obtain additional funding and even staying within the current assigned budget can also be a challenge. Like most managers, Denise operates within a strict budget and watches every expense in order to stay in the black.

Benefits of Belonging to NATP

Being a member of NATP gives Denise the opportunity to network with other managers from across the state. Managers often discuss how they have handled certain situations and freely offer advice to others. It is good to see that there are other transit managers out there who are in the same boat as you – or should we say bus?



Pictured are Denise Smith, Marian Rabum, Barb Green, Peggy Mondt and Iris Smith. Not pictured is Bruce Felty.

LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NATP staff and members recently exhibited at the Nebraska League of Municipalities Annual Conference on September 25-26, at the Sandhills Convention Center in North Platte.

NATP Associate Director Tiffany Fougeron, board members Carol Prince and Charles McGraw, and member Marilee Hyde were on hand to meet with key municipal delegates from across the state to inform them of what services NATP members provide to citizens across the state.

Items featuring the NATP logo were given out to attendees along with an informational brochure.

Conferences and meetings like this are a great opportunity to meet with key individuals who can assist with transit programs in your community. NATP plans to be present at the upcoming Nebraska Association of County Officials meeting in December.









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2014 ROADEO (CONTINUED)

Winners of the small bus division were Diane Schaepe of Seward County Public Transit, first place, and Ardis Niederklein of Saline County Public Transit, second place.

Van division winners included Larry Vortherms of Avera Creighton Hospital, first place, and Sharon Brown of Hitch & Hay Public Transit, second place.



2014 Safe Drivers



Neva Umstead presents Kily Gortmaker with the first place prize for the mini van division



Eric Pearson provides a Braun lift maintenance demonstration.

The mini-van division winners were Kily Gortmaker of Webster County Public Transportation, first place, and Ronald Munyon of Saline County Area Transit, second place.

The Driver of the Year Award went to Diane Schaepe of Seward County Public Transit who had the highest score of the day. She earned 767 out of a possible 1000 points. Diane received a

\$50 Visa gift card as her prize and also took home the traveling trophy for winning the bus division.

For the fourth year, the Roadeo Committee honored a driver who exemplified good sportsmanship and also participated in the theme. Marcia Hardin of

Sheridan County Public Transit took home this award, which consisted of a Husker cooler and various goodies.



Neva Umstead presents Larry Vortherms with the traveling trophy for winning the van division

On Tuesday, the Nebraska Safety Center provided numerous educational sessions which allowed attendees to fulfill some or all of their requirements for the year. The training took place at the Younes Center.

Classes offered included Passenger Service & Safety Training, Defensive Driving Training, Emergency Procedures, Emergency Evacuations, Dealing with Difficult Passengers, and Distracted Driving.



The Roadeo is a great time to catch up with friends and show off photos of your family!

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Eric Pearson from the Braun Corporation provided a Braun lift maintenance training for attendees. This was a great opportunity for some hands-on learning and Eric was willing to answer questions.

Thank you everyone for your participation! We hope to see you next year! Make sure to check out the Facebook page for more photos.



Jeff Baker presents Diane Schaepe with the traveling trophy for winning the bus division



After the competition, attendees gathered for the Awards Banquet.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION NIGHT AT SALTDOGS BASEBALL GAME

NATP held a Public Transportation Night at the Saltdogs baseball game on August 29.

Public transit employees, their families and friends, and other transit supporters sat in reserved seating for the game against the Sioux City Explorers. The seats gave attendees close up access to the coaches and players and a few lucky fans took home game balls.

Homer, the Saltdogs mascot, made a special trip to visit the group and took photos with everyone.



NATP staff was onsite to hand out giveaway items to attendees.

The Saltdogs were victorious, beating the Explorers 11-4.

NATP is looking for ideas for future outings. If you have a suggestion, please contact the office.







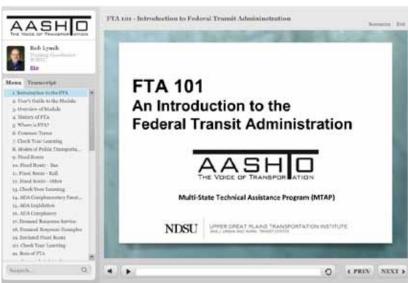
FTA 101

RTAP offers a new online course that covers the basics of the Federal Transit Administration. They have partnered with various agencies to produce FTA 101, which is a brief guide to the history and grant-making activities of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

This may assist you in understanding the roles that national and state governments play in assisting urban and local transportation providers. It is a slide show you can review at your own pace. I thought this may be helpful and informative to new managers and good review for those more experienced. It gets more informative as you proceed.

View the guide online by using the following link: http://web. transportation.org/fta_pres/fta2/ presentation.html

Jonnie Kusek, Member at Large NATP



NATP STAFF MESSAGE

Happy fall everyone! I hope you are enjoying the cooler weather, changing colors, and of course – Husker football! The NATP office has been busy with various events. Thank you to everyone who attended the Roadeo this year. Once again, the weather was perfect for the outdoor event. Congratulations to all drivers who participated. This is an excellent opportunity to sharpen your driving skills while networking with other drivers and managers from across the state.

In August, NATP was invited to join Senators Avery and Crawford on a conference call to discuss issues relating to unfunded mandates that perhaps the state has missed. Jeff Baker, Scott Bartels, Jonnie Kusek and I were on the call. Jeff noted that there have been issues with IntelliRide. Jonnie raised a concern that NDOR should be a part of the Aging Task Force created by LB 690. The Senators and staff took everything into consideration and were eager to learn more about specific issues.

It is imperative that everyone establish a relationship with their elected officials - whether that be local or state. Watch for information coming soon regarding working with your elected officials.



My nephew enjoyed meeting Homer!

On August 29, we held a Public Transit Night at the Saltdogs baseball game in Lincoln. It was a great crowd and everyone enjoyed the close seats! We hope to continue events like this in the future.

On September 25 & 26, I headed to North Platte to exhibit during the League of Municipalities Annual Conference. It was an excellent opportunity to reach out to various city officials and let them know what NATP is all about and what great work our members provide for their communities! We encourage all of you to establish a great working relationship with your local board members and other city/county officials.

I hope by now you know about the NATP Facebook page (have you "liked" us yet?!). What a great (free) way to show the state what's going on in public transportation. If you would like to share local events that your transit system participated in, we would love to share it on the Facebook page as well as in the newsletter. We want to know what you're up to! Also, if you run across some news or helpful advice that you think other transit systems would be interested in, share it! Please feel free to email or call us in the office any time.

Be sure to check out the Member Spotlight. We hope to visit various transit systems in the future. Thank you Denise Smith for being my "experimental" first spotlight!

Thank you for all you do for your association, transit system and local communities. Keep up the great work!

Tiffany Fougeron Associate Director

NATP'S 2014-2015 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all,

As summer is flying by and coming to a close, I hope everyone has been able to enjoy it. It has been a productive season with all the NDOR – UNL sponsored Title VI, Defensive Driving, PASS, and Bus Safety trainings and introduction of a new invoicing system.

We had a very successful state managers conference this July. Kathi Schildt, Tiffany Fougeron, Marilee Hyde and everyone who assisted did an excellent job of organizing and hosting the event. Thank you very much.

Even Congress managed to authorize a short-term fix for the Highway Trust Fund in August, keeping it solvent until May, 2015. Unfortunately that legislation strips the Bus and Bus Facility funding, meaning capital for purchases by bus transit systems will be scarce. That is why it is so important for each of us to contact our elected officials to

let them know our concerns and advocate for Bus and Bus Facility funding to be restored.

It was great seeing everyone in Kearney for training and networking opportunities at the Roadeo.

Until next time, safe travels everyone.

Scott Bartels NATP President

HOW 'SAFETY BLITZES' HELP TEST BUS OPERATORS FOR COMPLIANCE

This article was reprinted from the METRO Magazine online blog. View this blog and more at www. metro-magazine.com.

by Louie Maiello, August 13, 2014

This month, in our continuing coverage of bus operator training tips, we will cover the topic of safety blitzes.

What exactly is a safety blitz?

Think of a safety blitz as seeking confirmation that bus operators are in compliance, or non-compliant, with your standard operating procedures during an unannounced "spot check" of a specific skill set. A blitz may also be initiated in response to a sudden spike in unsafe actions being reported, observed or indicated by video review.

Why a safety blitz?

The goal is to gain an accurate account of what's going on in your system.

There are several reasons you might want to consider initiating a "blitz." Let's take a quick look:

- Customer complaints regarding operator's use of cell phone while operating their bus.
- Operators have been observed using one hand to steer the bus.
- Operators failing to utilize their directional signals when entering a bus stop.
- Operators accelerating to cross intersection during yellow and red signal conditions.

- To establish that an "unannounced randomly selected" blitz can occur at any given time.
- To ensure that any unsafe act will not go unnoticed by management.
- To acknowledge and recognize those operators that continue to demonstrate safe consistent operation of their bus on a daily basis.

How can a safety blitz be implemented?

- Select the skill set to be observed for compliance.
- Identify the locations to position personnel to gather your information.
- · Set a start and finish time.
- Agree on what verbal corrective action/remedy will be utilized for operators found to be noncompliant.
- Schedule a follow up blitz.
- Provide incentives for compliant operators.

When should it be conducted?

- Randomly, to see whether compliance is the standard operating procedure.
- During the probationary period of an operator in addition to onboard observation rides.
- After a spike in a particular collision or complaint.

Who will conduct the blitz?

- Supervisory-level personnel, preferably training department personnel.
- In cases where training deptartment personnel and safety department personnel are on the same page with standard

operating procedures — and this should always be the case — it can be a joint training and safety effort.

How to know when your trainees are ready to roll.

I mentioned incentives for those operators found to be compliant during the "safety blitz." I knew of an agency that would provide patches, pens, lapel pins, hats, etc., to those individuals that were observed doing their jobs to the agency's standards.

It would work like this: let's say the blitz focused on the proper use of directionals entering a bus stop. An operator that was observed to be compliant in this particular skill would first be approached by the person conducting the blitz and made aware of his/her good actions. The operator would be given a ticket stub to turn in to supervision at the end of their tour. Upon turning in the stub they would be given the predetermined item selected as a reward during that particular blitz.

This is easy to implement, you can be creative as you want and most importantly unsafe behavior is quickly identified and can be dealt with in a constructive manner that will protect the operator, the agency and your loyal customers.



NATP 2014-2015 LEADERSHIP

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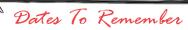
Next newsletter deadline is **December 1, 2014**

Please send your articles and pictures for the Nebraska Transit Trends newsletter to the NATP office by **December 1, 2014**.

We want to know what all of our members are doing throughout the state. Also, if you see something newsworthy, be sure to let the office know. Submit your typed articles via email (as a word document) to the NATP office at tfougeron@youraam. com. You may include pictures if you like, but be sure to save them as a .jpeg file or they may not be included in the newsletter. Documents received after the deadline will appear in the next newsletter.

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October

26-29 TRB Conference Monterey, CA

December

10-12 NACO Annual Conference Omaha. NE

January

TBD Legislative Day Lincoln, NE

June. 2015 May 31- June 5



