

# History

**NET today is the sum of more than 50 years of history – visions that have become reality through the hard work of hundreds of people.**

**This chronology shows the evolution of NET and the services that it provides. It also serves as testament to the vision of the people of Nebraska who made it possible.**

## Year By Year

### 1951

The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to reserve UHF channel 18 for noncommercial educational use in Lincoln.

### 1953

The University created the position of director of television within the Department of Public Relations.

### 1954

Cornhusker Radio and Television Corporation, a subsidiary of Fetzer Broadcasting Company, acquired licenses to operate channels 10 and 12 in Lincoln. Company President John Fetzer offered the channel 12 license as a gift to the University, subject to FCC approval. Lincoln banker Byron J. Dunn was named trust officer to operate channel 12 on a noncommercial basis until the University could assume control of the station. The FCC approved the trust arrangement and changed the educational TV channel allocation for Lincoln from UHF channel 18 to VHF channel 12.

KUON-TV Channel 12 began operating November 1, using studios and equipment of KOLN-TV Channel 10, Lincoln. The station was on the air mornings only, Monday through Saturday.

### 1955

KUON-TV, in cooperation with the State Department of Education, the University of Nebraska and Lincoln area schools, began an extensive series of experimental instructional telecasts that spanned five years.

### 1956

The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska assumed control of the KUON-TV Channel 12 license.

The John E. Fetzer Foundation presented to the University a transmitter, transmission line, an antenna and studio equipment valued at \$135,000.

The Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education granted the station \$100,000 to buy equipment and assist with studio activation.

### 1957

KUON-TV Channel 12 began operating in the fall from renovated space in the University of

Nebraska's Temple Building at 12th and R Streets in Lincoln. Nighttime broadcasts were added five times per week.

### **1959**

University Television was recognized as a separate department of the University of Nebraska, reporting to the Office of the Chancellor.

### **1960**

Six Nebraska school districts were incorporated as the Nebraska Council for Educational Television to develop instructional television curriculum resources for use in their classrooms.

The Nebraska Council for Educational Television, Inc., petitioned the FCC to reserve channel 4 in Kearney, channel 3 in Bassett, channel 8 in Albion, channel 9 in North Platte and channel 13 in Alliance for noncommercial educational purposes.

### **1961**

The Nebraska Legislature adopted a resolution urging a study of the feasibility of a statewide educational television network. Governor Frank B. Morrison appointed the Nebraska State Committee on Educational Television to conduct the survey.

Five VHF channels – the largest number ever approved for use in one state – and three UHF channels were allocated by the FCC to the Nebraska Council for Educational Television, Inc.

### **1962**

The Great Plains Regional Instructional Television Library was established at the University of Nebraska as an experimental videotape exchange project under the National Defense Educational Act Title VII grants from the U.S. Office of Education.

The Nebraska State Committee on Educational Television completed its statewide educational television survey in December. The report detailed network feasibility and recommended its prompt activation.

### **1963**

The Unicameral enacted two bills implementing the recommendations of the statewide survey. One, the Nebraska Educational Television Act, created the Nebraska Educational Television Commission with responsibility to develop and administer a statewide network. The second bill appropriated \$600,000 to construct the first phase of the network. Funding was also provided through the federal Educational Television Facilities Act.

### **1964**

The University of Nebraska was awarded a \$309,583 grant from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare under the Educational Television Facilities Act for full-power activation of a KUON-TV transmitter at Mead.

### **1965**

The KUON-TV Channel 12 transmitter was moved from Lincoln to the University of Nebraska Field Laboratory at Mead. KUON-TV went on the air from its new location January 18.

Two additional stations were completed. KLNE-TV Channel 3, Lexington, began operation

September 6. KYNE-TV Channel 26, Omaha, began broadcasting on October 19.

Federal grants totaling more than \$140,000 were received by the Commission to finance further network development.

The Nebraska Video Nursing Council (later redesignated the Nebraska Television Council for Nursing Education, Inc.) was organized to provide programs via the Nebraska Educational Television Network to nursing schools in Nebraska and western Iowa.

## **1966**

The Commission appointed a panel of citizens from throughout the state to serve as a Program Advisory Committee.

KTNE-TV Channel 13, Alliance, began operation September 7. KPNE-TV Channel 9, North Platte, went on the air five days later.

The Nebraska Educational Television Council for Higher Education (NETCHE) was incorporated in May as the nation's first statewide all-inclusive collegiate educational television organization. An initial federal grant of \$145,000 was awarded to NETCHE, Inc., to acquire television equipment for member colleges. (Subsequent yearly federal grants were awarded through 1973 for the development of college-level instructional television lessons.)

The Great Plains Regional Instructional Television Library changed its name to the Great Plains National Instructional Television Library (GPN) and became a self-supporting operation.

## **1967**

The Legislature approved two additional stations for the Network – one at Merriman and the other at Hastings. The 1967-69 biennial budget included \$250,000 to plan a telecommunications building to house all Lincoln-based educational television activities.

The Network grew to seven stations. KMNE-TV Channel 7, Bassett, began operation September 1. KXNE-TV Channel 19, Norfolk, went on the air in early November.

The Commission was awarded federal grants totaling nearly \$220,000 to help finance continued development of the statewide network.

## **1968**

The eighth and ninth stations of the statewide television network were activated. KHNE-TV Channel 29, Hastings, began transmission on November 18. KRNE-TV Channel 12, Merriman, began operation December 9. The first of the Network's translators was put into service on November 1 to serve the Fairbury area.

## **1969**

Network stations began offering broadcast service seven days a week beginning with the 1969-70 broadcast season.

The Nebraska Legislature passed measures authorizing construction of a telecommunications building.

Land at 1800 North 33rd Street in Lincoln was acquired as the site for the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center. The land was deeded from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) to the City of Lincoln. The Nebraska ETV Commission signed occupancy agreements with both the City and University.

A translator to serve the Beatrice area was activated October 14.

## **1970**

Ground was broken for the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center and construction began.

Translators to serve the communities of Chadron, Benkelman and McCook were activated.

## **1971**

Responsibility for elementary-secondary instructional television was vested by the Legislature in the State Department of Education, and the first appropriation for school television was provided.

The Commission received a \$209,973 matching fund grant from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare for the Network's Bassett station, KMNE-TV Channel 7. A second grant of \$223,622 was awarded for KXNE-TV Channel 19, Norfolk.

Nebraskans for Public Television, Inc. (NPTV), a nonprofit citizen support organization, was formally incorporated and a charter membership campaign began.

The "Program Previews" newsletter that had been sent to viewers was expanded to a magazine format program guide and renamed "Choice."

## **1972**

The Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center was dedicated June 4. Representatives of all national public television organizations attended.

On August 15, the Network assumed responsibility for feeding several hours of programming each week to more than 20 Central Educational Network stations in 12 Midwestern states.

## **1973**

The FCC approved the Nebraska ETV Commission's application to remotely control KXNE-TV

Channel 19, Norfolk; KYNE-TV Channel 26, Omaha; and KHNE-TV Channel 29, Hastings.

### **1974**

The Nebraska Legislature approved a bill assuring a permanent Nebraska Heritage Television Library to preserve programs considered of unusual significance to Nebraskans.

A federal grant of \$165,000 was awarded to the Nebraska Educational Television Council for Higher Education, Inc. (NETCHE), to expand its activities and start a cooperative program of instructional improvement and development.

On October 1, KYNE-TV Channel 26, Omaha, began broadcasting selected programs from the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus. KYNE-TV temporarily broke away from the Nebraska ETV Network schedule while it “simulcast” these programs of interest specifically to the metropolitan Omaha audience.

The Commission approved a contract with Northwestern Bell Telephone Company to provide audio and video connections between the Mead transmitter and the KYNE-TV Channel 26 transmitter in Omaha. That link also provided two-way communication between the University of Nebraska College of Nursing at the Medical Center in Omaha and Lincoln campus classrooms.

GPN provided programming for a Satellite Technology Demonstration Project in the Rocky Mountain states – the first widespread use of a satellite-based telecommunications system for educational purposes.

### **1975**

The first statewide legislative hearing broadcast live on Nebraska television was held February 25 in the Network studios. The hearing featured the Nebraska Legislature’s Judiciary Committee deliberations on correctional reforms.

The Commission received a \$25,000 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to study the feasibility of a statewide public radio service in Nebraska.

### **1976**

The Network’s first major program series to be produced for national distribution by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) – a 20-program poetry series entitled “Anyone for Tennyson?” – premiered on 110 PBS stations. The series, coproduced with the New York-based Great Amwell Company, continued over three public television seasons for a total of 50 programs.

The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) announced a new corporate symbol on New Year's Day that was identical to the Nebraska ETV Network logo. Amidst extensive national press coverage, the Commission filed suit against NBC in February for trademark infringement. An out-of-court settlement accepted by the Commission gave the Network a color mobile unit and new equipment valued in excess of \$800,000 in exchange for discontinuing the use of the look-alike "N" logo. An additional cash settlement of \$55,000 reimbursed the Network for costs of designing a new logo, eliminating the old logo from all program content and other materials, legal fees and other related costs. A new Nebraska ETV Network logo was unveiled May 25.

A \$25,000 grant was announced in April from John E. Fetzer, chairman of the board of the Cornhusker Television Corporation, to enable Network participation in the proposed satellite interconnection system for the national distribution of public television programming. Later in the year, PBS selected Lincoln as a transmit and receive site for this satellite communications/program distribution system.

On August 18, the Commission recommended the phased development of a statewide public radio network.

Television translators were activated to serve the communities of Neligh, Trenton, Culbertson, Verdigre, Stratton and Decatur.

GPN passed the \$2 million mark in royalties paid to educational television production centers in the United States whose materials were distributed by GPN.

### **1977**

The Nebraska ETV Network began broadcasting Legislative committee hearings in addition to regular session coverage.

Network translators were activated to improve reception for the communities of Blair, Wauneta and Niobrara.

The Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium (NAPBC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the expression of the Native American heritage, established headquarters at the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center.

### **1978**

The 14th Network translator was activated at Falls City. Land for a 15th translator was purchased at Pawnee City.

The 1,499-foot KTNE-TV Channel 13 tower near Alliance collapsed on February 6 during an ice storm. The Nebraska Legislature appropriated \$917,644 to build a new tower. Installation was completed by mid-October and full service restored to the Panhandle area on October 20.

In March, KUON-TV Channel 12, Lincoln, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln received a CPB grant to investigate the potential of videodisc technology for instruction for the hearing-impaired. A second CPB grant in August funded an investigation and demonstration of videodisc technology for American instructional and public television.

The Nebraska ETV Network was linked to public television's new satellite program distribution system on April 27 when the newly constructed receive/transmit Earth station was activated.

The John E. Fetzer Nebraska Satellite Center was dedicated on June 16.

The U.S. Office of Education awarded a series of grants in November for a new transmitter and antenna for KYNE-TV Channel 26, increasing the coverage area in metropolitan Omaha.

The Nebraska Legislature renamed the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center the Terry M. Carpenter Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center in honor of the late state senator from Scottsbluff.

### **1979**

The 15th Network translator was installed to improve reception in the Pawnee City area.

NETCHE, Inc., became the official name of the consortium originally known as the Nebraska Educational Television Council for Higher Education.

The Videodisc Design/Production Group, formed at KUON-TV Channel 12, Lincoln, under a CPB grant project, presented four pilot instructional videodiscs – each geared toward a different educational level – at the National Association of Educational Broadcasters meeting in Chicago.

### **1980**

A 1,000-watt translator replaced the ten-watt translator that had served the Beatrice/Fairbury viewing area since 1969.

EduCable, a cable program service which included gavel-to-gavel coverage of state Legislature activities, was begun for Lincoln CableVision subscribers.

The Network initiated a satellite teleconferencing service in April 1980 with a national teleconference originated for the American Council on Education.

The first-of-its-kind national symposium on videodisc production was conducted October 8-10 at the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center. Leading designers and producers from across the country made presentations to 160 participants.

“Life on the Mississippi,” coproduced by the Nebraska ETV Network and the Great Amwell Company, premiered nationally on PBS in November.

### **1981**

“Hidden Places: Where History Lives,” a three-part series produced by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Department of Television’s Cultural Affairs Unit, premiered nationally on PBS.

The 14-year-old KXNE-TV Channel 19 transmitter serving Norfolk and northeast Nebraska was replaced. The project was funded in part by a \$250,000 grant from the federal Public Telecommunications Facilities Program.

### **1982**

Sunday morning broadcasts began for the first time on the Nebraska ETV Network with programs for children and for adults enrolled in college credit telecourses.

A \$450,000 grant from The Annenberg School of Communications and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting project initiated development of interactive videodisc lessons to provide an alternative to conventional college and university laboratory science instruction.

HI-VIS, a new statewide Hearing Impaired Video Information Service employing the line 21 communications technology, was officially dedicated September 21 by Governor Charles Thone as a cooperative project of the Nebraska Commission for the Hearing Impaired, the Nebraska ETV Commission and UNL Television.

### **1983**

The National Association of Public Television Stations presented a special award to the Nebraska Legislature for the 15th consecutive year of public television coverage of Unicameral sessions and hearings via the Nebraska ETV Network.

A second application of the line 21 communications technology, AGRI-VIS – the Agricultural Video Information Service – was officially dedicated on June 15 by Governor Robert Kerrey as a service for Nebraska farmers, ranchers and agribusiness representatives.

“Reading Rainbow,” a children’s reading series coproduced by GPN and public television station WNED-TV, Buffalo, New York, premiered nationally in July on PBS stations.

### **1984**

The Network began a new marketing service, offering for purchase videocassettes of programs produced by UNL Television.

The Network’s 16th translator was activated February 7 in Crawford to improve reception in that area.



A three-year, \$2 million Challenge Grant Campaign to ensure funding for Nebraska ETV Network television production equipment and programming was launched by the University of Nebraska Foundation, Nebraskans for Public Television and the Commission. The first \$500,000 was provided in a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In revised legislation introduced by State Senator Bill Harris, Lincoln, the 88th session of the Legislature changed the name of the Nebraska Educational Television Commission to the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) Commission and expanded its responsibilities to include telecommunication technologies.

### **1985**

In February, the Network tested stereo sound, considered the most important technological advance in television broadcasting since color.

The Network received a Public Telecommunications Facilities Program grant of \$291,400 toward replacement of the KMNE-TV Channel 7 transmitter at Bassett.

### **1986**

The Network joined forces with the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service to conduct AgReach '86, a month-long outreach project examining issues confronting farm and ranch families and rural communities.

Two colleges of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln joined the Division of Continuing Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Television and the NET Commission to inaugurate Nebraska CorpNet, a corporate training network for on-site delivery of college graduate and undergraduate courses and seminars to company worksites. Eight Omaha and Lincoln corporations were charter clients.

The Nebraska Legislature directed the NET Commission to establish and operate a statewide public and educational radio service, but provided no funding.

The Nebraskans for Public Television (NPTV) board of directors announced formation of an NPTV Trustees Council comprised of distinguished Nebraskans who have provided major support during the course of development of the statewide Nebraska ETV Network.

The Nebraska ETV Network joined with four other public television licensees to form the Public Television Outreach Alliance (PTOA) to produce national programming and outreach campaigns addressing important social issues.

The Public Radio Nebraska Foundation (PRNF), Inc., an outgrowth of a former Nebraskans for Public Radio group, was formally chartered to assist with planning and fundraising toward the phased development of a statewide public radio network.

The 1,524-foot tower for KMNE-TV Channel 7, Bassett, collapsed during a severe ice storm on December 2, leaving much of north-central Nebraska without a public television signal.

### **1987**

Governor Kay Orr approved emergency deficit funding legislation that appropriated nearly \$1.5 million to replace the Bassett tower. Temporary service to residents within a 32-mile radius of the Bassett transmitter was provided immediately. Full service was restored in October 1987 when the new tower was activated.

The successful conclusion of the three-year, \$2 million Nebraska ETV Network Challenge Grant Campaign was publicly announced January 14.

GPN completed its 25th year of operation and announced gross annual revenues topping \$1 million for each of the past 15 years. Royalty payments to producers of GPN-distributed materials totaled more than \$4 million.

### **1988**

The 25th anniversary of the passage of the Educational Television Act, which created the NET Commission and Nebraska Educational Television Network, was observed.

Funding totaling \$88,261 was appropriated by the Nebraska Legislature to plan a statewide public radio service.

A new Schools TeleLearning Service was developed jointly by the Nebraska Department of Education and the NET Commission.

A U.S. Department of Education Star Schools grant (\$546,609) was received by Nebraska. Nebraska's participation was a result of the new Schools TeleLearning Service agreement. Nebraska's initial satellite production was an interactive introductory Japanese language course. Four schools were selected to participate in the pilot project: Crawford, Medicine Valley-Curtis, Beaver City Schools and the Grand Island High School. In April, Nebraska had 24 schools with satellite capabilities in addition to three educational service units. A SERC (Satellite Education Resource Consortium) grant resulted in the construction of a Ku-band satellite uplink to be located at the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center.

Nebraska CorpNet, which provided closed circuit instructional courses to business work sites, grew to nine corporations participating in Omaha and five in Lincoln.

The Nebraska Public Radio Network Study Report, an overall plan for public radio development, was completed by Carr Communications and approved in October by the NET Commission.

Public radio station KUCV/90.9 FM MHz was relocated from Union College in Lincoln to the NET Center in July. The station transmitter and antenna were moved from Union College to a Hallam, Nebraska, site. KUCV's studios were dedicated on October 10th. A Community Advisory Board was established for Station KUCV, Lincoln.

A premiere of "The Trial of Standing Bear," produced by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Television for broadcast by the Nebraska ETV Network, was held June 30. The first PBS nationwide distribution of the program was on July 4.

### **1989**

In April, Nebraska established satellite communication links with 24 schools and three Educational Service Units.

In June, KLNE-TV Channel 3, Lexington, KYNE-TV Channel 26, Omaha, KHNE-TV Channel 29, Hastings, and KUON-TV Channel 10, Lincoln, began transmitting in stereo.

Nebraska ETV broadcast special coverage of President George Bush's June visit to Lincoln.

A Public Television Facilities Program grant of \$660,738 was received from the U.S. Department of Commerce for four new radio transmitters.

### **1990**

"Profit the Earth," an hour-long documentary about creative solutions to environmental problems, was produced by UNL Television/Nebraska ETV Network as the cornerstone production for the Public Television Outreach Alliance 1990 year-long outreach campaign, "Operation Earth."

Following incorporation in Nebraska, a new Agricultural Satellite Corporation (AG\*SAT) began with 27 land grant university charter affiliates following an organizational meeting in November. Nebraska served as the satellite operations center and headquarters for AG\*SAT operations. AG\*SAT institutions shared resident instruction and cooperative extension and research programs.

On June 22, a formal dedication of NEB\*SAT, was held at Air Park West in Lincoln, with Governor Kay Orr, NET Commission members and NET administration attending.

The mobile television unit received by the Nebraska ETV Network as part of a 1976 legal settlement with the NBC was replaced. A new 45-foot mobile trailer housing remote production equipment was delivered in the spring, and \$832,393 worth of existing mobile unit production and control equipment was moved to the new trailer.

Public radio station KTNE/91.1 FM, Alliance, was dedicated May 3. KLNE/88.7 FM, Lexington, was dedicated May 4. KXNE/89.3 FM, Norfolk, was dedicated May 29. KHNE/89.1 FM, Hastings, was dedicated June 15.

### **1991**

Nebraska Public Radio Network station KPNE/91.7 FM, North Platte, was dedicated July 2, and KMNE/90.3 FM, Bassett, was dedicated July 3. KRNE/91.4 FM, Merriman, and KCNE/91.9 FM, Chadron, were both dedicated August 29.

Dedication of the entire Nebraska Public Radio Network (NPRN) was held October 8 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus, as part of a program featuring a special concert by the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra. The concert was broadcast by NPRN and simulcast on Nebraska ETV.

A live, two-hour national radio broadcast of Garrison Keillor's "American Radio Company" program originated from Red Cloud, Nebraska, on December 7 commemorating Nebraska author Willa Cather's 116th birthday.

The Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Facilities Corporation was established to facilitate lease/purchase of the GTE SpaceNet 3 transponder.

The Legislature approved addition of a technical community college representative to the NET Commission effective July 1, 1991. Harold F. McClure of Kearney was appointed by Governor Ben Nelson.

"Reading Rainbow" was found to be the most used and viewed children's television program in the United States during the 1990-91 school year, according to a Corporation for Public Broadcasting study, "Study of School Use of Television and Video."

## **1992**

The Descriptive Video Service (DVS) began as a free service on some public television programs broadcast by the Nebraska ETV Network.

In July, television translator K08LN, UHF Channel 8, Harrison, was activated to serve the Harrison area.

GPN celebrated 30 years of operation in March.

National dedication ceremonies were held June 12 for AG\*SAT on the grounds east of the NET Center.

## **1993**

NAPBC's American Indian Radio on Satellite System received a three-year, \$460,000 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to produce programming and coordinate efforts with the Native Canadian Broadcasters.

The 40th anniversary broadcast of public television's longest running continuing local series, "Backyard Farmer," aired in August.

NET's Closed Captioning Center completed its first real-time captioning contract, a three-part series for the University of Kentucky. "Big Red Play-by-Play" became the first live local television production to be live captioned for broadcast on Nebraska ETV.

Nebraskans for Public Television reported members from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Canada, as a result of the NEB\*SAT satellite distribution system.

“Statewide,” the Network’s weekly magazine series, was launched.

### **1994**

“Mysteries in the Dust,” a production of University of Nebraska-Lincoln Television originally broadcast on the Nebraska ETV Network, was rebroadcast nationally as an episode of “NOVA,” PBS’ premier science series. “NOVA” re-titled the program, which is about the state’s Ashfall Fossil Bed, “Buried in Ash.”

NET General Manager Jack McBride was elected chairman of the Board of Trustees for the American Program Service (APS). APS is a national coalition of public television stations that acquires and distributes programs.

Governor Ben Nelson named McBride to the Nebraska Commission on Information Technology.

Control for transmitters for KUON-TV Channel 12 in Mead, KTNE-TV Channel 13 near Alliance and KLNE-TV Channel 9 near Lexington was transferred from the sites to Network headquarters in Lincoln.

### **1995**

“Fate of the Plains,” an hour-long documentary about the economic and environmental limits of the Great Plains, premiered on Nebraska ETV. The program was later picked up and broadcast nationally by PBS.

Nebraska ETV began the transition to the digital era of television when it received a grant of three digital video production systems from Abekas Video Systems of Redwood City, California. The equipment was valued at \$250,000. NET also purchased two digital videocassette recorders (VCRs) to record images digitally.

The Public Television Facilities Program (PTFP) awarded \$70,810 to NET to replace translators at Pawnee City and Beatrice. The NET Commission matched the funds. Nebraska Public Radio Network received a \$15,750 grant from PTFP to replace its 15-year-old master control console and router switching system. The Public Radio Nebraska Foundation matched that grant.

NEB\*SAT reached a milestone August 23 when it aired the first voice-activated interactive class connecting classrooms in Lincoln, Kearney, Grand Island and Norfolk.

Nebraska Public Radio Network translators went into service at Harrison (89.5 MHz), Max (93.3 MHz) and Culbertson (92.7 MHz).

### **1996**

“In Search of the Real Jesse James,” a documentary produced by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Television, premiered on the Discovery Channel. The broadcast marked the first time that a UNL-produced program premiered on commercial television before airing on Nebraska ETV or PBS.

“In Search of the Oregon Trail,” a two-hour documentary co-produced by the Nebraska ETV Network and Oregon Public Broadcasting, premiered on PBS. The program was one of the 10 most-watched programs on PBS that year.

Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, housed at NET headquarters, was re-named Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT).

Jack McBride retired after 43 years at the helm of Nebraska Educational Telecommunications. McBride was replaced by Rod Bates.

"Fate of the Plains," a documentary about the Great Plains originally produced by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Television for broadcast on Nebraska ETV, was rebroadcast nationally by PBS.

In one of the most far-reaching technological changes in its history, NET changed the way it transmitted signals to and received signals from its orbiting satellite transponder. The conversion allowed NET to "compress" the signals used to transmit Nebraska ETV, NPRN, EduCable and other educational telecommunications services via satellite and make room for additional transmission channels.

EduCable, the cable television service of Nebraska ETV, expanded its broadcast schedule to 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

### **1997**

The Mountain Time Zone delay center for the Nebraska ETV Network was eliminated.

Nebraska Public Radio began a weekly live remote series, "Live From The Mill."

"Around the World in 72 Days," a Nebraska ETV-produced biography of pioneer journalist Nellie Bly, premiered nationwide as an episode of "The American Experience."

### **1998**

"Reading Rainbow" won Daytime Emmy Awards in the categories of Outstanding Children's Series and Outstanding Live and Direct to Tape Sound Mixing.

### **1999**

On February 10 and 24, NET Online experimented with webcasting two Nebraska Women's basketball games live across the Internet.

The Nebraska Legislature pledged \$43.9 million in funding over ten years to cover the cost of replacing satellite transmission capacity, purchasing digital television transmission equipment and covering debt service.

In late December, NET received grants totaling \$786,656 from the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program (PTFP) to begin the transition to digital broadcasting by replacing or upgrading equipment used to produce and broadcast programs on Nebraska ETV and the Nebraska Public Radio Network.

### **2000**

Nebraska Public Radio began real-time audio streaming on NET Online.

The Nebraska Legislature authorized an increase of ten compressed video channels on NEB\*SAT 3, bringing the total to 30 channels available for video and audio signals between

origination and reception sites.

The Nebraska Public Radio Network celebrated its 10-year anniversary.

In October, EduCable, NET's cable television service, officially changed its name to NETV2.

## **2001**

NET partnered with UNL's Teacher College to jointly manage the newly established National Center for Information Technology in Education (NCITE).

The Media Division of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded NET a \$500,000 grant to fund a documentary on the life and career of early 20th century radical Emma Goldman. The NEH also awarded NET \$30,000 for research and initial development of a film biography of Nebraska writer Willa Cather.

The Nebraska Public Radio Network (NPRN) expanded its schedule to 24-hour broadcasting, launched its new website and changed the KUCV frequency from 90.9 FM to 91.1 FM.

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Public Telecommunications Facilities Program (PTFP) awarded NET a \$1.5 million grant to continue Nebraska ETV's technical transition to digital television. PTFP also gave NPRN a \$15,300 grant to upgrade equipment at its Chadron transmitter.

NET received a \$10,000 grant from the National Center for Outreach to support the scheduling of weekly Spanish language programming blocks on NETV2.

## **2002**

Nebraska ETV's production "Monkey Trial" was broadcast nationally as part of the PBS series "American Experience."

The Nebraska ETV production "Polka Passion" was also broadcast nationally as a pledge program.

"Next Exit," a video journal about the unexpected in Nebraska, premiered as a regular series on Nebraska ETV.

NET received \$15 million from the Legislature to fund necessary renovations of the Terry M. Carpenter Center at 1800 North 33<sup>rd</sup> Street in Lincoln.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) announced a \$500,000 award to support NETV's production of a national TV biography of Nebraska writer Willa Cather.

The NET Commission received a \$1.6 million federal grant to assist the Nebraska ETV Network in its conversion to a digital signal.

## **2003**

NET launched a series of monthly programs and associated outreach activities addressing issues of importance to Nebraskans entitled "Nebraska Connects."

The Nebraska ETV production "Monkey Trial" won a 2003 George Foster Peabody Award.

"Backyard Farmer," the nation's longest-running, locally produced series, celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

On April 23, 2003, NET officially launched its digital broadcast service with four digital program services available over-the-air. Datacasting was also made possible via digital. The total project cost for NET's DTV conversion was estimated at \$44.3 million, which included \$30.7 million appropriated or reallocated by the State of Nebraska and \$4.5 million in grants from the federal government.

NETV's contribution to the national PBS project "By The People" culminated with the airing of the PBS broadcast.

The final year of the Schools Telelearning Service (STS) concluded in May. In the fall NET launched NET Digital Classroom ([netdigitalclassroom.org](http://netdigitalclassroom.org)) a new statewide K-12 educational portal.

The Nebraska ETV Network aired a one-hour special, "Frank Morrison and Bob Kerrey: A Conversation."

## **2004**

NET celebrated its 50-year anniversary (KUON-TV Channel 12 was launched November 1, 1954).

The broadcast day was reduced by one hour on the Nebraska ETV Network – to 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. – as a result of budget constraints.

The Nebraska ETV Network produced local documentaries "Solomon Butcher: Frontier Photographer;" "Hear That Train A Comin'" and the "Lewis and Clark Concerto."

The NETV documentary "Emma Goldman: An Exceedingly Dangerous Woman" premiered nationally as part of the PBS series "American Experience."

The Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission received two grants totaling \$272,440 to replace one transmitter and five translators in the statewide Nebraska ETV Network system.

NETV's "NOVA: Ancient Refuge in the Holy Land" premiered nationally on PBS.

## **2005**

The Nebraska Public Radio Network (NPRN) and the Nebraska ETV Network (NETV) were renamed NET Radio and NET Television. Nebraskans for Public Television (NPTV) and the Public Radio Nebraska Foundation (PRNF) were renamed the NET Foundation for Television and the NET Foundation for Radio.

NET Radio premiered "Fresh Air," the Peabody Award-winning daily magazine series hosted by Terry Gross.



NET Television produced local documentaries “Frontier University Dreams,” “Omaha’s First Families,” “Ted Kooser’s Poetic World” and “Charles Thone: A Conversation.”

NET completed its \$15 million building renovation.

“The Verge,” a new “crossover classical” music program, premiered on NET Radio.

A four-year contract with NET Learning Services and the Nebraska National Guard was completed, resulting in a total of 70 online courses created for “Project Alert.”

NET Television’s “Willa Cather – The Road is All” premiered nationally on PBS as part of the “American Masters” series.

The 1,065-foot tower that provided television and radio service to south central Nebraska (NET Television KLNE Channel 3 and NET Radio Channel 88.7 FM) was destroyed when a single-engine airplane crashed into the tower.

NET Sports delivered live coverage of Nebraska’s NCAA Volleyball Tournament from the UNL Coliseum.

## **2006**

NET Television’s “The Canteen Spirit” premiered nationally on PBS.

NET Television’s “Buffett & Gates Go Back to School” aired nationally on PBS.

NET Television produced local documentaries “Don’t Touch That Dial” and “The Creightons: Building the Dream.”

NET3 was re-launched as “Create,” a 24-hour-a-day how-to, travel and lifestyle channel.

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents approved the sale of the University’s share of “Reading Rainbow” to WNED in Buffalo, N.Y. The Board also approved the sale of GPN to Educate, Inc. Together the sales totaled \$3.5 million.

NET Radio’s weekly arts and humanities series “Live From The Mill Statewide” was renamed “Friday Live.”

NET began podcasting select NET Radio programs.

NET Television and the University of Nebraska State Museum were awarded a \$1,168,014 grant from the National Science Foundation to produce “Antarctica’s Icy Secrets” as part of PBS’ “NOVA” series and for related community outreach activities.

## **2007**

NET Television’s documentaries “At Close Range with National Geographic” and “Most Honorable Son” aired nationally on PBS.

NET Television premiered local documentaries “Hard Times Swing,” “Afghan Journey,” “On the Frontline,” “The Price of Water,” “Saving Nebraska’s Treasures,” “Murder House,” “Nebraska

Veterans Honor Roll," "Dream Like a Champion," "State of the Arts: A Nebraska Connects Special," "Fighting for the Arts" and "Crane Song" ("Crane Song" later aired nationally on PBS).

NET Television and NET Radio aired "Meth in Nebraska," a television documentary and series of radio reports.

NET Television and NET Radio presented special reports, plus a call-in and documentary program, "Drowning in Noise: A Nebraska Connects Special," exploring the problem of noise-induced hearing loss.

NET Radio produced and aired the following local series/specials: "Great Plains, Great Books;" feature stories about Nebraska World War II veterans to complement PBS' Ken Burns' "The War" and the "Live Jazz Special with the Darryl White Group," performed and broadcast live across the state.

NET completed construction of the KLNE tower near Holdrege, replacing the transmission tower that was destroyed in a November 2005 aviation accident.

NET reached more audiences nationally and globally by posting video spots of programs like "At Close Range," "Crane Song," "Murder House" and local sports broadcasts on YouTube and GoogleTV.

## **2008**

NET Television began airing the PBS World channel on NET2, featuring documentaries, public affairs (including live coverage of the Nebraska Legislature) and news programs.

NET Television premiered the local documentaries "Beef State," as well as "'68: The Year Nebraska Mattered;" "Nebraska's Senate Race: The Primary;" "Electing a President: Nebraska Voter Diaries" (as part of NET's extensive web, Radio and Television "Campaign Connection" resources); "The Ethanol Maze;" "Your Kids Are Drinking" (a collaborative project between NET Television and NET Radio); and "Your Verdict: Affirmative Action on Trial."

NET received four grants totaling nearly \$100,000 to support outreach and community engagement, including statewide activities related to the national broadcasts "Caring for Your Parents," "Depression: Out of the Darkness" and "The Truth About Cancer" and the local special "Smart Investing: A Nebraska Connects Project."

Broadcast hours on NET Television were restored to operate daily from 6 a.m. to midnight CT (broadcast hours had been reduced one hour in 2004 as a result of budget cuts). Also in 2008 NET1 and NET-HD unified program schedules, meaning more viewers were able to receive their favorite NET programs in high-definition.

The "Inspire Nebraska" theme line was incorporated in the NET logo in print and on-air media to precede the launch of the Foundations' Inspire Nebraska Campaign. The print campaign won a NETA (National Educational Telecommunications Association) Award.

NET Radio launched the series and website "Smart Investing," offering information on investor protection.

In 2008 NET launched a comprehensive digital transition communications strategy to inform Nebraskans of the impending change, which was originally scheduled nationally for February 17, 2009 (the federal government later extended the deadline). Initiatives included: “Ready for DTV?” – a special NET Television program; a comprehensive website: [netNebraska.org/dtv](http://netNebraska.org/dtv); a viewer hotline staffed by customer service and engineering experts to answer questions; a statewide postcard direct mail campaign; and comprehensive outreach activities, including public information sessions, numerous partnerships with organizations like Nebraska AARP and Community Action of Nebraska and a partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension 4-H to help educate Nebraskans statewide. NET received praise from the FCC, the Nebraska Broadcasters Association and United Way of the Midlands for its leadership in communications and customer service and support in the DTV transition.

In June a sell-out crowd attended NET Radio’s live jazz broadcast of the Darryl White Group in Grand Island.

The NET Television-produced segment “Clash of the Mammoths” aired nationally as part of “NOVA scienceNOW” in July.

In July NET’s founder, Jack McBride, died of complications related to surgery. McBride had served as NET General Manager from 1963 until his retirement in 1996.

With the launch of NET Public Media, a new community partnership programming service, NET partners reached thousands of individuals via NET2 and the NET Public Media website. Programs included several lectures in the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues, as well as “Exploring the Wild Kingdom,” a production of UNL’s College of Journalism and Mass Communications, and the Hagel-Kerry Health Forum.

## **2009**

All nine statewide transmitters officially completed the FCC-mandated switch from analog to digital transmission as of February 17, 2009. Viewers now have three over-the-air digital channels available – NET1/HD, NET2/PBS World and NET3/Create – offering a mix of programming to viewers previously unavailable with a single analog signal.

With the switch to digital the statewide Radio Talking Book Network (RTBN), a service for visually impaired Nebraskans, could no longer be broadcast via NET Television, so NET engineers reworked the system so RTBN could be transmitted via NET Radio’s signal.

NET’s “Nebraska Capitol Live” provided live streaming on the web from 11 different government venues, including the main legislative chamber, seven committee hearing rooms and the Nebraska Supreme Court. Coverage online and on NET2 included the Unicameral’s Judiciary Committee hearing on the death penalty in January.

In 2009 NET Television produced several local programs, including “Ragtime Cabaret;” “Carl Sandburg: Prayers for the People;” “Homemade Astronaut: The Clay Anderson Story,” which debuted at the NET 2009 Governor’s Premiere event at the Strategic Air and Space Museum; “Walk Ons: Huskers’ Edge,” which was screened at events in Grant, Lexington and Omaha; and “The Recipe Box,” which was spotlighted at Metropolitan Community College events in Omaha and also featured an accompanying cookbook.

To address issues related to the economy downturn, NET Radio and NET Television aired a series of specials about the recession and its effects in Nebraska, including: “Smart Investing, Safe Investing,” “Nebraska’s Economy Update, radio call-in shows and “Nebraska’s Economy 2010” (in March 2010).

NET Radio aired a live call-in show in early September on the effects of the H1N1 flu virus on the rise across Nebraska.

NET Television’s monthly series “Nebraska Stories,” chronicling personal tales of contemporary and historical Nebraskans and Nebraska life, debuted in September.

Grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the U.S. Commerce Department were used to replace and upgrade the aging transmitters at KHNE/Hastings, KXNE/Norfolk, KTNE/Alliance and the KLNE/ Lexington, Holdrege and Kearney.

Former Nebraska Senator Chuck Hagel was elected to a three-year term on the national PBS Board of Directors in November.

In November the NET Foundations launched the active phase of the Inspire Nebraska Campaign, which aimed to raise \$25 million in membership and planned gifts over five years.

## **2010**

In January, NET Radio kicked off its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year with a live concert by Lincoln’s Third Chair Chamber Players in Studio One (the concert was also broadcast live statewide).

In January, the National Endowment for the Humanities offered the NET Foundation for Television a half-million dollar grant to support humanities programming. NET was required to raise \$1.5 million in nonfederal contributions to receive the full award.

NET Radio and Television received a grant in March from The Corporation for Public Broadcasting to enhance local news coverage of agriculture.

The Oscar-nominated “POV” episode “Food, Inc.” aired on NET Television in April, followed by “Food, Inc. – A Nebraska Point of View,” hosted by NET General Manager Rod Bates and featuring additional commentary by a panel of Nebraska food producers.

Live coverage on NET Radio and online of the April 5<sup>th</sup> shuttle launch marked Nebraska astronaut Clayton Anderson’s last trip for NASA.

Getting inside the criminal mind to prevent crime was the basis for “Mind over Murder,” a locally produced NET Television documentary that premiered in May.