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Supt. of Schools

Whether it is Nebraska football or technology, we know things are changing. We hope these changes are for the better as there is a realization that keeping things the same may not lead to progress.

Since assuming the position of TVDEC director in July of 2001, there has been an ongoing conversation at the state level for a statewide connection of video/audio and data consortiums. The reality of that connection has not yet been accomplished but as the demands for bandwidth continue to rise, one thing is for sure that the need for a statewide connection to carry data including video/audio is imminent.

What impact would a statewide video/audio/data network have on the TVDEC. Questions from such a change would be:

- What benefits would a statewide network have on the Tri-Valley consortium?
- Would there be technology system upgrades for distance education and internet equipment?
- Would there be some upfront costs or ongoing costs and where would the money come from?
- When would this all happen?
- Would all members have to participate in this evolution?

On last Tuesday, April 29, the Executive Council held a special meeting to discuss these issues. The need for this meeting was prompted because grant funds from the Southeast Nebraska Distance Learning Association (SNDLC) were made available to TVDEC south schools for the purpose of a system upgrade which would lead to new video/audio/data benefits for our students - ie a mini statewide network.

At this time, the Executive Council can not endorse the use of these funds for an upgrade as each school must individually approve acceptance of such a proposal. The executive council does feel that all TVDEC members including Tri-Valley north schools should attend a special meeting to review the benefits and costs of a system upgrade, determine what we have for services, where we need and would like to go with these services, and how this might impact the progress of a statewide backbone.

Such a meeting has been scheduled for Monday, May 19th - 10 am to 2 pm. The meeting will be held at the UNK - Communications Center. The agenda of the meeting includes:

- 10-12 Proposed distance education changes - benefits and costs
- Lunch (School district cost \$8 per person)
- 1-2 Determine current and future distance education needs
- For those interested in additional discussion - golf at Meadowlark course. (Nine holes with cart \$22 per person)

As these grant funds will only be available to the TVDEC through June, it is of utmost importance that each school's superintendent or representative be in attendance. For such an upgrade to take place, each school district would need to vote in support of the upgrade. As your board of education makes that final decision, the executive council also feels it would be beneficial to have a member of that board attend this meeting.

A member of the executive council will be calling you during the week of May 5-9 to confirm your attendance and answer any questions you might have concerning this meeting.

Tri-Valley Distance Education Consortium

During this time of tightening budgets, it is time to answer the questions of the value your distance education including data network is toward meeting your educational needs. We may not be able to answer all these questions but we do feel that this meeting will provide us the necessary direction regarding the future of a data network that includes video, audio, and internet transport.

Educationally yours

John Stritt - TVDEC Director
TVDEC Executive Council

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