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Preliminary Approvals Announced for First Round of Biofuels Infrastructure Grants *Nebraska Energy Office Accepting Applications for Remaining Grant Funds*

LINCOLN – [Access Ethanol Nebraska](#) (AEN), a grant program administered by the Nebraska Energy Office, has given preliminary approval to the first round of Nebraska recipients for installation of ethanol blender pumps under US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Biofuels Infrastructure Program (BIP).

“We have a few items to finalize, but we feel very good about the locations across the state that will be able to increase their offering of ethanol enriched fuels thanks in part to the BIP grants,” Nebraska Energy Office Director David Bracht said. “Our committee members selected applicants based on pre-determined criteria at sites we feel will increase the sale of ethanol in Nebraska. The good news is we have additional funds available to disperse for further infrastructure improvements and are accepting applications for the second round.”

Once final agreements are signed with retailers, it’s expected that 14 sites will begin necessary steps to install equipment that will allow dispensing of E15 and/or E85 blends of ethanol at those outlets. Seven locations have been selected in Omaha, two in North Platte, and locations in Grand Island, Gretna, Norfolk, Papillion and Winnebago. The funds will be used for 64 fuel dispensers and two underground storage tanks to give Nebraska motorists increased access to E-15, E-85 and other high-ethanol blends.

Access Ethanol Nebraska is a grant program administered by the Nebraska Corn Board, Nebraska Ethanol Board and Nebraska Department of Agriculture, with the Energy Office as the lead agency. Nebraska’s federal award of approximately \$2.3 million for the AEN program came from the USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation’s Biofuel Infrastructure Program. USDA rules require that the USDA funds be matched dollar for dollar with funds from state, private industry or foundations. Matching funds will come from the Nebraska Corn Board through the state corn checkoff funds paid by Nebraska corn farmers and from the Nebraska Environmental Trust approved funding of \$500,000 for each of the next two years. Matching funds will also come from contributions made by individual ethanol plants and “Prime the Pump;” a non-profit organized and funded by the ethanol industry to improve ethanol infrastructure.

Including the USDA grant funds and matching funds, a total amount of approximately \$6.0 million is expected to be available to reimburse Nebraska fuel retailers for ethanol infrastructure improvements. Total improvements made by the first round recipients receiving awards are expected to total approximately \$2.7 million.

Interested parties can visit www.neo.ne.gov to review grant requirements. Applications must be completed and submitted by June 30, 2016 to be considered in the next round of applications reviewed.

Nebraska ethanol plants produce around 2 billion gallons of ethanol a year, of which over 95% is shipped to other states or countries. In 2014, Nebraska motorists used an estimated 77 million gallons, or approximately 10% of the 764 million gallons and Nebraskans consume over 77 million gallons of ethanol meaning there is an abundance of a Nebraska made product to sell to other states creating economic development/prosperity for the state. This collaboration reflects Governor Pete Rickett’s mission to *Grow Nebraska* with employment and economic development through a variety of areas highlighting Nebraska’s best resources. It also will further the Energy Office’s mission to “promote the efficient, economic and environmentally responsible use of energy.

The Nebraska Energy Office was created in 1977 to promote the efficient, economic and environmentally responsible use of energy. It is an authoritative voice and comprehensive resource center for energy issues in the State of Nebraska, and plays an important role in fostering new growth in our renewable energy industry. For more information, please visit www.neo.ne.gov. *Join the Energy Office on Facebook and follow on Twitter.*