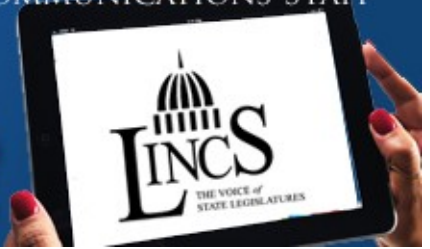




LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICERS AND COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

LINCS THE VOICE



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Welcome to the Revamped Issue of The Voice!

Welcome to **The Voice**, the newsletter of the Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section (LINCS).

LINCS members include public information officers, press secretaries, radio and television producers, photographers, civic educators and all those who

serve as the external liaisons between the nation's state legislatures and their constituents.

Membership in LINCS is open to any legislative staff whose primary responsibility is to communicate the legislative process to the general public or news media.

Have a question about LINCS or are interested in becoming a member? Please e-mail Meagan Dorsch at meagan.dorsch@ncsl.org

Also visit the [LINCS homepage](#) to receive updates on upcoming meetings and events.

Meet Your LINCS Executive Committee

Chair – Jay Pearson, Virginia

Jay Pearson serves as Manager for the Virginia House of Delegates Legislative Education and Development Office. He has worked with the House of Delegate's Clerk's Office since 2002. Jay's responsibilities as Manager include scheduling and coordinating chamber presentations; researching, compiling, revising, and producing General Assembly demographic resource materials; handling inquiries and conducting legislative research; supervising the production of copies of legislation for members' use on the House Floor in coordination with the daily House Calendar; and compiling and preparing for Clerk's certification requested statutes, Acts of Assembly, and legislative records.



Vice Chair – Bladen Finch, Virginia

Bladen Finch works primarily with the Senate Page Program, Constituent Services and visiting school groups at the Virginia State Capitol. He spent five years in higher education as an Associate Director of Admissions at a small, private college in Virginia Beach where he managed recruitment for 39 states and various on-campus programs for prospective students. Since joining the Senate Clerk's Office staff in 2008, he's been an integral part of the LINCS staff section.



Secretary – Morgan Blanchard, Louisiana

Morgan Blanchard is the Communication Specialist for the Louisiana State Senate. Serving 39 members, Morgan's responsibilities include compiling and maintaining media guides, researching and writing news releases and speeches, preparing and distributing information to the media, assisting in publicity for Senate events, preparing informational material and maintaining issues analyses. Morgan has served the Senate for four years and has been a LINCS member for two years. She proudly graduated from Louisiana State University in 2010 where she majored in Mass Communications: Public Relations and Minored in Business and International Studies: Global Diplomacy in Africa and the Middle East.





LINCS Executive Committee

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Director – Cory Stewart, Louisiana

Cory Stewart serves as Public Information Specialist for the Louisiana House of Representatives. Mr. Stewart originally joined the House in 2002, as an intern and began working full-time four years later. In his current role, he coordinates media relations efforts, including production and distribution of news releases, speeches, and online communications. He also designs new marketing strategies to promote current and upcoming services; develops policies for producing media services and coordinates civic education events. Prior to joining the House Public Information Office five years ago, he served as an Endorsement Clerk with House and later as Assistant Press Secretary to Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco. Mr. Stewart is a graduate of Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



Director – Stefanie Graves, Kansas

Stefanie currently serves as Director of Communications to Kansas Senate Democratic Leader Anthony Hensley, a position she's held since 2007. In this role, she oversees all communications, speech writing and media relations for the Senate Democratic Caucus. Stefanie previously worked in the Office of the Kansas House Democratic Leader as Communications Director, and at the University of Kansas as a research assistant. Stephanie is also a member of the Aaron Douglas Art Fair Executive Committee, the Association for Women in Communications and the Kansas Association of Public Information Officers. She holds a bachelor's degree in strategic communications and a master's degree in journalism from the University of Kansas.



Officer – Sharon Scarborough, Texas

Sharon Scarborough works for the Texas Senate as the Media Director. She loves her job because it involves audio, video, the web, and photography, and she has an extremely talented staff. There is never a dull moment. She has been a member of LINCS since 2001. From the first time she attended a meeting, she knew the organization was for her. The organization has provided education, camaraderie, and support anytime she's had a question.



Officer—Mike Murphy, Alabama

Mike Murphy has worked at the Alabama Senate for 28 years and has been the Public Information Officer since 1984. He handles all of the press credentialing and assists the press with their duties. He and his wife, Joy, have three children - Cort, Justin and Merritt - and four grand children. Mike has been involved in LINCS its inception and has previously served as LINCS chair.

Top 12 Issues February Webinar Series

Each year, NCSL develops an annual list that examines some of the most pressing issues on legislative agendas. The Top 12 of 2012 is not meant to cover every issue states will tackle during the legislative session, but rather to highlight some of the program areas that will command the attention of policymakers.

[Register here](#) for our upcoming webinar series which will explore each of these issues in depth. Each webinar is free for legislators and staff.

- February 6: State Budgets, Federal Deficit, Pensions and Jobs
- February 10: Health Reform and Medicaid—

the States' 800 Pound Gorilla

- February 13: Putting Election Laws to the Test
- February 17: Corrections, Juvenile Justice and Drugged Driving
- February 20: Transportation Funding, Natural Gas and Environmental Regulations

- February 24: Funding Education in a Climate of Cutting





Save the Date!

The 2012 LINC'S Professional Development Seminar will be held **October 8 - 12** in Madison, Wisconsin. This "super PDS" will be held in conjunction with other staff section meetings to increase the opportunities to interact with legislative colleagues from around the country. More details to come in the next edition of The Voice!



2011 LINC'S Professional Development Seminar

The 2011 LINC'S Professional Development Seminar was held October 12 – October 15 in Richmond, VA. Attendees heard from many notable speakers including Former Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder; Former FCC Chairman Michael Powell; Steve Scully, senior executive producer at C-SPAN; Kevin Hall, communications director for Senator Mark Warner of Virginia; and Paul Reagan, chief of staff for Senator Jim Webb also of Virginia.

LINCSTERS also learned valuable lessons in many topics areas including crisis communication and social media. This year's PDS was an informative and intense boot camp focused on communicating during a crisis, led by Jennifer Miller of Rockford Gray Communications.

Attendees toured Thomas Jefferson's Virginia State Capitol and visited the U.S. Capitol, C-SPAN and the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

LINC'S would like to thank the Virginia Host State Committee for hosting a wonderful PDS, especially the Clerk of the Senate, Susan Clarke Schaar, and Clerk of the House of Delegates G. Paul Nardo who welcomed our group to the capitol and provided an elegant dinner at the Virginia State Capitol.

In addition, LINC'S welcomed back our platinum sponsor, the National Cable and Telecomm Association, for a second year in a row. NCTA and Rob Stoddard were instrumental in helping to coordinate our day in our nation's capitol. Thank you



for a wonderful program at your headquarters and dinner at the National Press Club. It was an experience many of us will not soon forget!

We know travel budgets are still tight in many states and we appreciate LINC'S members who are able to attend our annual professional development seminars. We hope to see many of you this fall! If you have an idea for a session or a topic that you would like to see covered at our upcoming PDS, please [let us know!](#)

Thank you to our Sponsors:

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- Virginia Automobile Dealers Association
- Virginia Cable Telecomm Association
- Virginia Sheriffs' Institute





News from the States: SCOUT Service Allows Citizens to Better Follow the Legislature

As the 2012 legislative session begins, citizens in Washington state who want to better track public policy issues will now have a free new tool to use from TVW – the state version of C-SPAN.

The public service, called [SCOUT](#), gives users the ability to easily access and track video and legislative documentation. Rather than having to search through TVW’s archives, SCOUT users can enter their individual search preferences and SCOUT will do the tracking and send them the relevant data. Users then have the ability to save videos or legislative documents in a personal library, and can share media

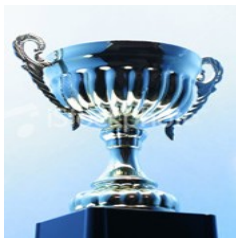
with their social networks. TVW hopes this resource will help all citizens stay better informed about political issues and the legislative process.

*Have an interesting story from your state legislature? [E-mail](#) it to us and we'll feature it in the next edition of *The Voice*!*



Online Democracy Award

Do people “like” your website? Does your legislature’s website blow other states out of the water? Then you should enter to win the Online Democracy Award!



The LINC'S/NALIT Online Democracy Award is given each year to a legislature, legislative chamber or caucus whose website helps make democracy user-friendly. The award will be presented to the winning state at the NCSL Legislative

Summit in Chicago, Illinois this August.

This year, Erich Ebel, Public Information Officer for the Washington Senate Republican Caucus and Jennifer Waldref, Communications Specialist for the Washington House Democratic Caucus Media Staff will serve as judges for LINC'S on the 2012 committee. One additional LINC'S member will be appointed by our chair, Jay Pearson, in the coming months.

Please review [the eligibility requirements](#) and decide if your legislature or caucus should enter to win this prestigious award! Good luck!

Media Access in the Legislature

The issue of credentialing members of the media has remained a topic of discussion in several states. With the demise of many newspapers across the country, bloggers and social journalists continue to fill seats once held by traditional newspaper reporters. NCSL has polled members of the LINC'S staff section to see how each state credentials media and social journalists. LINC'S members were also provided the opportunity to add any thoughts or recommendations on how to provide

media credentialing. The responses are available on the [NCSL website](#). If you don't see your state listed or would like to correct or update information, please contact us [via e-mail](#).



NCSL and You: Opportunities and Resources

As one of the nation's 30,000 plus [legislative staff](#), you are automatically a member of NCSL. For policymakers and staff, NCSL provides unmatched services. Visit our [State Contacts](#) page to view the complete list of NCSL researchers and experts who track various legislative

issues and can provide non-partisan, 50 state data. Also visit our [e-newsletters page](#) to browse the list of topics and find the latest updates on the issues that matter most to you. Be sure to check out our blog, [The Thicket](#), for the latest legislative news.

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The Voice

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