Greetings to all our fellow LINCSters. Allow me to introduce myself. I’m Jeff Fossett, with the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission, your new LINCS chair. I started my career 36 years ago in TV news and sports. After 13 years in broadcast journalism, I “jumped the fence” to state government. And I’ve been doing video production for the Kentucky State Legislature since 1993.

While I had been an occasional participant in NCSL programs over the years, about six years ago I realized the benefits that it offered and deepened my involvement. The lessons I’ve learned, contacts I’ve developed and friends I’ve made in that time have been—and will continue to be—a great benefit to me in performing my job.

First, let me give a huge shout-out to K’Lynn Sloane Harris, our outgoing chair. K’Lynn did an outstanding job as chair and spearheaded probably the best LINCS PDS ever held this past October in Washington, D.C. K’Lynn has left the legislative branch to take a position covering the legislature for Montana PBS (talk about jumping the fence).

Her leadership and guidance will truly be missed. I’d also like to acknowledge our immediate past chair, Dennis Yoder, who will have the unique opportunity to hold that position for two consecutive years because of K’Lynn’s departure.

These two people have taught me quite a bit and have left some big shoes to fill. I hope I’m up for the challenge.

During my tenure, I plan to focus on outreach to legislative communication staffs across the country. I hope to identify key communication staffers in order to open up two-way dialogue to share everyday technical skills such as photography, videography and audio recording. As state legislators continue to leverage social media to spread their messages, communication staffers are being asked to master more technical skills in order to manage those social media accounts. And I want to share how each state is balancing these new demands while maintaining the fundamentals such as quality writing.

I will try to be in touch with as many communication staffers as possible over the next year by phone to develop a true give-and-take to make sure that LINCS expands its representation. I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the future.

Jeff

Jeff Fossett
Kentucky Legislative Research Commission
502-564-8100, ext. 599
Meet Your 2018 LINCS Executive Committee

**Chair—Jeff Fossett, Kentucky, Jeff.Fossett@lrc.ky.gov**
Jeff is video communications specialist for the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission, where he has worked since 1993. He has extensive experience in television news, working as a reporter, videographer and assistant news director for visual content. He received his bachelor’s degree in telecommunications from the University of Kentucky, where he was a cheerleader and cheerleading coach. Jeff is a husband, father and grandfather, and serves as a high school and college volleyball referee in his spare time.

**Vice Chair—Tim Bommel, Missouri, Tim.Bommel@house.mo.gov**
Tim has been serving as the staff photojournalist for the Missouri House of Representatives for nearly 20 years. His goal is to inform the public through journalistic, group, portrait and constituent photography. Prior to that he was employed for 15 years as a studio, wedding and commercial photographer. During that time he was also a member of the Missouri Army National Guard as a photojournalist.

**Secretary—Betsy Lynch, Georgia, Betsy.Lynch@house.ga.gov**
Betsy Lynch is the director of Media Services for the Georgia House of Representatives. Betsy joined the House staff in January 2012 as a session assistant and then served as deputy member press secretary, member press secretary and interim director of communications. In 2015, Lynch was elected by the members of the House of Representatives to serve as the House messenger for the 2015-2016 term, and was re-elected in 2017 for the 2017-2018 term. Lynch holds a bachelor’s degree in communications and a bachelor’s minor in Spanish from the University of Georgia.

**Past Chair—Dennis Yoder, Texas, Dennis.Yoder@senate.texas.gov**
Dennis, audio manager for 20 years, has boldly taken the Texas Senate on the journey from the analog to the digital age. From his early experiences with flipping and splicing tapes to today’s digital file acquisition and editing, he has helped the Senate keep pace with the rapid change of technology. He oversees archiving of all Senate events and coordinates logistics for remote hearings from Texarkana to Muleshoe. As someone who makes order out of chaos, he has helped the Senate evolve with his initiation and implementation of renovations and major upgrades to its audio and video systems. Dennis, an active member of LINCS, enjoys the camaraderie and collaboration of his fellow LINCSters. He is the recipient of NCSL’s 2016 Legislative Staff Achievement Award.

**Director—Lauren Hieger, Missouri, Lauren.Heiger@senate.mo.gov**
Lauren is the communications director for the majority caucus in the Missouri Senate. She is responsible for writing press releases and coordinating with local and statewide media. She previously worked as the new media director for Missouri Victory and the Romney campaign in 2012 and broadcast news anchor for KODE-TV in Joplin, Missouri. She was named one of the “Top 100 People in Politics” by The Missouri Times in 2013. Lauren graduated from the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism with a bachelor’s degree in broadcast news and a minor in political science. She is currently completing her master’s at Mizzou. Lauren grew up in Webster Groves, Missouri and currently resides in South St. Louis City, but she travels to Jefferson City every week.
Director—Clancy Smith, Mississippi, csmith@house.ms.gov

Clancy serves as House information officer for the Mississippi House of Representatives, where she is responsible for the communications needs of all 122 Mississippi representatives, as well as the House as a whole. She provides information to the Capitol press corps, responds to local news outlets on matters relating to legislation, sets up news conferences for representatives and writes weekly summaries of legislative proceedings. Clancy received her bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Mississippi and her master’s degree in public relations from the University of Alabama.

Director—Will Tracy, Arkansas, Will.Tracy@arkansashouse.org

Will Tracy is a production assistant with the Arkansas House of Representatives. He is involved in all aspects of the audio/visual communications team, specializing in video content and overall video streaming operations for the House committee and general session meetings. Will holds a bachelor’s degree in mass communications with a minor in film studies. He has more than nine years of production experience, which has taken him from filming local school plays all the way to California film sets. His work includes ad campaigns, short films, major motions pictures, live stream broadcast and web TV shows. Will enjoys spending time with his wife and two children, and is an avid home brewer and tennis player.

Director—Alison Kniker, Texas, Alison.Kniker@texas.senate.gov

As broadcast manager for the Texas Senate’s Media Services department, Alison supports 31 individual senators and the Texas Senate with their video and television needs. She oversees the equipment and personnel who provide the public a front-row view of official Senate business in the Capitol and around the state. Alison’s experience includes communications, public relations and television production with corporate, independent and government clientele. She has traversed six continents as an independent shoreside videographer and shipboard broadcast manager with a global cruise line, producing and programming 36 channels of content for varying demographics and channel line-ups in multiple languages. She looks forward to hearing about you at future LINCS gatherings.

Hello LINCSisters!

I hope everyone’s sessions are going well! Everyone is busy, which makes it extra challenging to find time to get involved in your professional association. But like all valuable things, investing the time makes them worthwhile. We hope you find that true of LINCS, as we continue to find ways to make it easier for you to be involved.

To that end, LINCS has created a private group page on LinkedIn. Participation in the listserv is declining so we want to meet people where they already are. Let’s use this forum to discuss whatever’s on our minds—problems we’re facing, solutions we can share. What better way to tackle tough issues than to find out how our colleagues in other states are handling them? Visit https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8606400 and ask to join.

NCSL held its first-ever Legislative Staff Week Dec. 4-8 with strong presence of staff profiles and stories on NCSL’s social media, magazine and website. Our goal is to highlight the great work being done by legislative staff across the country. Check out this blog, and I hope you caught the article about LINCS in State Legislatures magazine’s “What Staff Know” series. Look for more info on the next Legislative Staff Week, May 14-18.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions, or just to chat.

Cheers,

Jane Carroll Andrade, NCSL LINCS liaison, jane.andrade@ncsl.org, 303-856-1464
LINCS 2017 PDS a Rousing Success

Thought-provoking sessions, extraordinary networking opportunities and social events, and spectacular weather combined to make LINCS’ 18th annual professional development seminar in Washington, D.C., one of our most memorable. A special thanks to Rob Stoddard of NCTA, who arranged a VIP tour of C-SPAN and treated the group to the annual Fourth Estate Awards Gala at the National Press Club. In addition to sessions on media relations, crisis communications, graphics, storytelling, social media and more, LINCS members heard from keynote speakers David Chalian, political director for CNN, and Jeremey Gilbert, director of Strategic Initiatives for The Washington Post. You can find handouts from the sessions, including the Facebook Guide for State Legislators, on the LINCS PDS Resources webpage. Mark your calendars for the 2018 PDS, Oct. 10-12 in Lexington, Ky.
Video Professionals in the Volunteer State

When the Tennessee General Assembly is in session, Andre’ Carpenter spends much of his time in the control room for the House of Representatives remotely operating the cameras inside the chamber.

Carpenter, an audio video production specialist, often works alongside Mary Power. They are two of seven full-time employees that work in the Audio Visual Department of the legislature. Carpenter, Power, Lance Eastman and Ryan Prewett report to the Clerk’s Office of the Tennessee House of Representatives. Jesse Alvey, Raymond Temple and Billy Taylor report to the Clerk’s Office of the Tennessee Senate. Alvey also serves as the supervisor for the whole department. Carpenter said the unit is technically two separate departments, but it functions as a single non-partisan department in day-to-day operations.

The primary responsibility of the department is the pre-production, production and post-production of live multicamera gavel-to-gavel coverage of the committees and floor sessions of the Senate and House. The office broadcasts live to television via a statewide partnership of public television stations. Otherwise, live streams and archived content are accessible on the Tennessee General Assembly’s website at http://www.capitol.tn.gov.

During a session, the department’s staff swells to double the size with seasonal employees. Carpenter said the department might have five control rooms going in addition to broadcasting live to television from the master control room. When requested, the department also video streams state governmental department meetings.

The history of the department in its current form dates back to 2000 when the House enlisted Nashville Public Television (NPT) to assist in the broadcasting of House floor sessions, as well as in the installation of a television system in the House chamber. NPT continued with that assistance until the House system was fully installed and controlled by Audio Visual Department staff in March of the following year.

In 2001, the House began broadcasting every House session and joint convention to the televisions in the lobby outside of the House chamber. By 2002, House sessions were broadcast to a handful of news outlets across the state via the Internet through a video streaming test site. In 2003, the House began broadcasting its first committee meeting over the Internet through video streaming.

In 2004, the legislature entered into a partnership with local cable television stations and began broadcasting throughout the entire state. Following the House’s example, the Senate Clerk’s office began recording and distributing video of its floor sessions and committees in 2006.

Carpenter predicts the role of his department to continue to evolve with technology. “We ... occasionally have to find new solutions as standards for online delivery of content change,” he said. “In the past, online video players and codec standards changed from flash players and windows media codecs to HTML5 players and H.264 codecs. This required us to make significant changes to our infrastructure.”

Shared by Jim Hannah, Public Information Specialist for the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission

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It’s Awards Season at NCSL!

Each year, NCSL honors the hard work of legislative staff with two awards:

♦ **The Online Democracy Award**, which recognizes an outstanding legislative website. Deadline for entries if March 30. Click here for more information, and here to enter.

♦ **The Legislative Staff Achievement Award**, which honors legislative staffers who demonstrate excellence in supporting their legislatures and staff association. Click here for details. Nominate yourself or a colleague by emailing jane.andrade@ncsl.org by Friday, April 27.
Lawmakers Mentor Girls in Arkansas Through Social Media

On the fourth floor of the Capitol on the House side hangs a photo of 98 men and two women taken in 1923. The women are Frances Hunt and Erle Chambers, the first women to ever serve in the Arkansas House of Representatives. Every woman who has served in the House since that time has had these two women serving as examples.

That role model for leadership is the concept behind a new initiative recently launched by the 18 women who currently serve in the House. ARGGirlsLead is a movement to promote positive self image and leadership for young girls across the state.

This is an opportunity for female lawmakers to use their own experiences and stories to help the next generation.

The stories are being shared in person in their district sand through videos released on social media. Each of the women is asked to share what she wishes she would have been told at a young age. By sharing their stories, someone may see their own struggle and know those can be overcome.

There are some statistics in Arkansas we aren’t proud of. We have the seventh highest poverty rate for women in the United States. And we continue to be one of the top five states for teen pregnancy. While we look for legislative solutions to these problems, we can also serve as personal examples. Changing perceptions give hope. They can have an impact on reality. And that’s what we want to accomplish with ARGGirls Lead.

You can find all of the information regarding ARGGirls Lead on our website www.arkansashouse.org. We have also created an Instagram, Facebook and Twitter page. You can also search for the hashtag #ARGirlslead.

Shared by Will Tracy, production assistant with the Arkansas House of Representatives and LINCS director

LINCS is deeply grateful to Rob Stoddard and NCTA—The Internet & Television Association, for their ongoing friendship and support of legislative communicators in the laboratories of democracy.
April 6, 2018
Deadline to submit content for The Voice Spring issue

July 30-Aug. 2, 2018
NCSL 2018 Legislative Summit in Los Angeles

Oct. 10-12, 2018
LINCS Annual Professional Development Seminar, Lexington, Ky.

LINCS Officers
Chair: Jeff Fossett, Kentucky
Vice Chair: Tim Bommel, Missouri
Secretary: Betsy Lynch, Georgia
Past Chair: Dennis Yoder, Texas

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