Dear LINCS members,

Like many (but not all) states, the Louisiana legislative session is winding down. This means LINCS is gearing up! We are in the midst of planning our 2014 PDS, which will be held in New Orleans in September. We secured a great room rate of $108 per night at the Westin New Orleans Canal Place and we are searching for stimulating speakers and session ideas. This year, we will be rejoining with our colleagues in the Leadership Staff (LSS) for some sessions and events, including a road trip to Louisiana’s capital city, Baton Rouge.

While we’re in the planning phase, we’d love to hear from you! What kind of insight and skills do you need to shine in your job? We are currently considering a wide variety of issues as session topics: the relevancy of news releases, the unique challenges of social media and the legislature, sharpening your writing skills, a reporters roundtable, managing time more effectively, creating compelling publications and taking a “photo safari.” We’d love your feedback on these and any ideas you’d like to contribute!

We had a great PDS in Washington, D.C. last October. Many thanks to past chair Bladen Finch from Virginia, former NCSL public affairs director Jon Kuhl and NCSL meeting planner Tricia Simmons for their efforts in planning thought-provoking sessions, tours and social events. Tricia will be with us again this year, along with our new NCSL LINCS liaison, Jane Carroll Andrade, director of public affairs in NCSL’s Denver office.

Please feel free to contact me at 225-342-6270 or Jane at 303-856-1464 with any questions or suggestions. We look forward to another great year of learning and networking! Hope to see you all in the beautiful Big Easy!

Morgan Blanchard, LINCS chair, 2013-2014

Register Now for the LINCS PDS in New Orleans!

Laissez les bons temps rouler! Who doesn’t love New Orleans? It’s a wonderful city for stimulating the brain and the senses. Please join us there September 14-17 for the LINCS and LSS 2014 PDS. We’ll discuss some of the critical issues facing legislative communicators and learn about new tools and technologies to use on the job. We’ll travel to Baton Rouge to visit the beautiful State Capitol and the Louisiana State Museum. And without a doubt, we’ll enjoy some of the best cuisine, music and culture this country has to offer. Registration is now open. See you in the Big Easy!
Meet Your 2014 LINCS Executive Committee

Chair – Morgan Blanchard, Louisiana, blanchm@legis.la.gov
Morgan is the communication specialist for the Louisiana State Senate. Serving 39 members, she maintains media guides, writes news releases and speeches, assists in publicizing Senate events, maintains issues analyses and organizes the Senate’s Back to School efforts. She has served the Senate for six years and has been a LINCS member for four. A proud graduate of Louisiana State University, Morgan majored in Mass Communications: Public Relations and minored in Business and International Studies: Global Diplomacy in Africa and the Middle East.

Vice Chair – Cory Stewart, Louisiana, stewartc@legis.la.gov
Cory serves as deputy communications director for the Louisiana House of Representatives, where he coordinates media relations; designs new marketing strategies to promote current and upcoming services; develops policies for producing media services; and coordinates civic education events. He recently oversaw a new in-house process for producing direct-mail marketing pieces for members, saving the House and state $500,000 over two years. Prior positions include endorsement clerk with the House and assistant press secretary to Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco. Cory is a graduate of Southern University and A&M College.

Secretary - Lauren Russell, Louisiana, russell@legis.la.gov
Lauren is a communication specialist for the Louisiana House of Representatives, where she facilitates media relations; researches, writes, and distributes news releases and speeches; acts as liaison for the media and public; and assists with photography and video requests. Lauren was recently appointed to the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education as the state coordinator of the Louisiana Legislators Back to School Program. In this role, she organizes Back to School visits for legislators and provides them with key materials. Lauren graduated from Louisiana State University, where she majored in Mass Communications.

Director – Sharon Scarborough, Texas, sharon.scarborough@senate.state.tx.us
Sharon 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 any time she’s had a question.

Director – Dennis Yoder, Texas, dennis.yoder@senate.state.tx.us
Dennis Yoder has served as the Audio Manager for the Texas Senate since 1997. Since then, his duties have grown to cover other areas, including coordinating audio archiving for all official Senate-sponsored events as well as serving as audio-visual coordinator for special events and media logistics coordinator for Senate field hearings. He develops and oversees major upgrades and renovation projects for audio and video systems in Senate facilities.
Director – K’Lynn Sloan Harris, Montana, ksharris@mt.gov
K’Lynn serves as the Audio Video Coordinator for the Montana Legislative Branch, overseeing the broadcasting and live streaming program, proudly making all legislative proceedings available to the public. She has been with the Montana Legislature since 2010, was a member of NALIT, and joined LINCS in 2012. A journalism and political science graduate of the University of Montana, K’Lynn was previously an election reporter for MTV, news director at 89.9 FM KBGA, worked for the United States Senate, and completed a White House Internship. She was recently elected to the state board of directors in Montana for Kiwanis International.

Director – Drew Volturo, Delaware, andrew.volturo@state.de.us
Drew has served as the communications director of the Delaware House Democratic Caucus since 2009. The caucus currently is comprised of 27 state representatives. Drew drafts press releases, opinion pieces and letters for members, and manages the caucus’ social media sites (website, Facebook and Twitter). Prior to that, he was a reporter for the daily Delaware State News for eight years. Drew is a native of Wilmington and currently resides in Newark, Del.

Legislative Staff Achievement Award Call for Nominations
Do you know a colleague who deserves recognition for outstanding work? Please let us know! LINCS is accepting nominations for the 2014 Legislative Staff Achievement Award. Honorees will be recognized at the NCSL Legislative Summit in Minneapolis. Click here for more information and nomination criteria. Please submit nominations to Jane Andrade by Friday, June 20.

2014 Legislative Summit—There’s Nothing Mini About It!
NCSL marks its 40th anniversary this year, and what better place to celebrate than with colleagues from across the nation than at the 2014 Legislative Summit in Minneapolis? For four decades, the Legislative Summit has brought together legislators and staff from across the aisle to tackle critical public policy issues, learning from the experts and each other. There are plenty of opportunities to interact with friends old and new, including a special networking breakfast for current and potential LINCS members from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 20. Register now, and we’ll see you in Minneapolis!