Gearing Up for Awards Season

Spring is around the corner—we know because the groundhog Punxsutawney Phil did not see his shadow. Among the many gifts spring brings is awards season at NCSL! Each year LINCS and the National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT) have the honor of presenting the Online Democracy Award to a legislature, legislative chamber or caucus whose website helps make democracy user-friendly. *Nominations are open now!* To enter, [click here](#).

Last year the Tennessee General Assembly’s website won, so this year Tennessee LINCSters Russell Humphrey and Andre Carpenter, along with Utah’s Ric Cantrell ([Utah won in 2014](#)), are serving on the selection committee. The award is presented each year at NCSL’s annual [Summit](#). This year’s meeting will be held Aug. 8-11 in Chicago.

Also this spring, LINCS will be accepting nominations for the 2016 Legislative Staff Achievement Award, an annual tradition started by the NCSL Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee in 1997. The award recognizes those who demonstrate excellence in supporting the work of their state legislature and strengthening the legislative institution, as well as contributing to their staff section. Start thinking about who you would nominate and look for details in your Inbox and on the LINCS Web page and Twitter site.

Want to contribute?

Are you working on an interesting project? Have you learned something you want to share with your colleagues? Do you want to explain issues related to your work for the legislature? We need your tips, photos or articles for the next newsletter. Please email your contribution to the newsletter editor by [Friday, May 13, 2016 at 5pm MT](#).

Late submissions will be considered for future issues.

**Newsletter Editor**
Jane Carroll Andrade
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Please include *Newsletter* in the subject line.
Howdy from Texas! I hope everyone is doing well and making it through the interim or session. As we begin 2016, I want all of you to know how hard your LINCS Executive Committee and NCSL Staff Liaison are working for you.

We recently completed our first conference call and we discussed the need to update our membership roster. Committee members agreed to conduct a state-by-state analysis to update the information that NCSL compiles. Please update your information with Jane so that we can keep our roster up-to-date. The committee discussed the need for more articles or short stories for The Voice; other topics included our Twitter account (follow us @NCSLLINCS), Phoenix PDS survey report and the upcoming Online Democracy Award criteria.

I hope everyone will be able to attend the Legislative Summit held in Chicago Aug. 8-11. LINCS plans to sponsor a session and a meet and greet during the summit. The details are still being finalized.

The committee is also laying the groundwork for our professional development seminar (PDS) held in Austin this Sept. 25-28. The committee welcomes your suggestions on topics and guest speakers for the PDS. We will be using the promotional hash tag #LINCS2016, so join the conversation on Twitter.

Your Texan hosts hope you fall in love with Austin and central Texas. Whether it’s a friendly vibe, a creative culture, or an active community, there’s something special for everyone in Austin, the Live Music Capital of the World®. More about Austin in upcoming issues of The Voice.

To make the best staff section even better, we need your ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Dennis

Follow and Retweet Us! @NCSLLINCS

I hope all LINCSters are having a positive and productive 2016 so far! With most states’ sessions in full swing, NCSL staff are busy answering information requests and planning our big meetings, including our annual Legislative Summit in Chicago and the staff section professional development seminars in the fall. LINCS’ PDS will be held Sept. 25-28 in awesome Austin, Texas, so save the dates!

NCSL offers another wonderful learning opportunity designed specifically for legislative staff. The Legislative Staff Management Institute (LSMI) is the nation’s premiere leadership and management professional development experience for senior state legislative staff. Applications to participate in the 2016 edition of the LSMI—which will be held July 23-30 in Sacramento, Calif.—opened March 1 and close May 2. Class size is limited so send your application soon! Click here to apply.

Finally, our Twitter account, @NCSLLINCS, is gaining followers at a pretty steady clip. Please follow us, retweet our posts and send me links to your work (videos, projects, etc.) you’d like to share with your colleagues around the country. And please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions or suggestions. I look forward to another great year with my favorite peeps. ☺
When a reporter calls:
• Get the name of the reporter and media organization.
• Understand the story and how you play a role.
• Allow enough time to prepare for the interview, even if it means calling the reporter back.
• Ask if the interview will be live or taped.
• Return the reporter’s call before the deadline.

Before the interview:
• Set a goal: What do you want the public to know or learn?
• Prepare three key message points that include facts and statistics.
• Anticipate tough questions.

During the interview:
• Speak clearly and slowly and avoid jargon.
• Stick to your areas of expertise.
• Keep answers short.
• Offer solutions when asked about a problem.
• Correct misinformation.
• Stay positive.
• Be yourself.
• Ask for clarification if needed.
• Acknowledge if you don’t know the answer, but promise to get the reporter the information and follow through.
• Tell the truth.

1. Get physically closer to your subject to fill your frame - editing out the background. We use this technique when photographing our legislative members on the microphone or at their desk.

2. Move farther away from your subject: If two legislators are debating on the floor, include them both in the photograph to give it context.

3. Use caution when shooting in front of a bright window unless you want a silhouette. If outdoors, spotty light or uneven shade can throw off your light meter - try and find some full shade or diffused sunlight.

4. If you are photographing people, be aware of how you are framing them. You can frame them from the waist up for a close up or the entire body, feet included!

5. Take lots of photographs: Move around your subject, try different perspectives. Finding the best photograph happens when you are editing.

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New York City - The New York Public Library offers free access to their online Digital Collection. This website is a living database featuring photographs, maps, manuscripts, streaming video, and more. Viewers can download and use materials without cost, restriction or copyright license. These images can add inspiration or historical accuracy to your projects.

The “Photographic views of the United States” is one of the many collections available. Check out traditional photographic and stereoscopic files of historic buildings, statues and local scenery from across the country.

For more views of the United States, click here.

Frankfort - Jeff Fossett announced that the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission, “LRC” has just launched the LRC Capitol Connection on YouTube. Jeff and his team produce and post two videos each week. To date, their programs include “A Look at the Kentucky General Assembly,” “State of the Commonwealth Reaction” and weekly wrapups. The content has become a useful resource for lawmakers, schools and civic organizations.

Austin - While the Texas Senate meets biennially in the Austin capitol, the interim is a busy time for senators to hold hearings for constituents in their districts. Senate Media is tasked with providing both sound reinforcement and recording of all committee proceedings. Their equipment is road tested and ready for travel to any one of 31 districts across the state. Portable systems range from single handheld recorders to 24 channel public address systems, depending on room size and number in attendance. Over the years, they have returned many hours of meeting audio to the archives for future use.

Montana State Capitol, Helena. c. 1860-1920

This remarkable photograph of the Missouri capitol was taken from an airplane during the dedication ceremonies, which was attended by 20,000 Missourians at Jefferson City, the state’s seat of government. The new building, which cost $5,300,000, replaced the one which was destroyed by fire several years before. c. 1918

Map of the United States c. 1875

To find photos of your state capitol interiors and exteriors click here

Texas Senate Media’s Ty Liddell monitors sound levels during a remote committee hearing.
In the next issue of The Voice...

- 5 Tips: PowerPoint
- Summit: Chicago / PDS: Austin
- On the Record

Save the Date

April 29, 2016
Deadline for Online Democracy Award entries

May 2, 2016
Deadline for applications to Legislative Staff Management Institute

May 13, 2016
Deadline for submissions to The Voice’s Spring Issue

May 20-21, 2016
NCSL Spring Executive Committee Meeting | Minneapolis

Sept. 25-28, 2016
LINCS/LSS Annual Professional Development Seminar | Austin

This is the newsletter of the Legislative Information and Communications Staff (LINCS), a staff section of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

LINCS Officers
Chair: Dennis Yoder, Texas
Vice Chair: K’Lynn Sloan Harris, Montana
Secretary: Anne Marie Moy, Missouri
Immediate Past Chair: Cory Stewart, Louisiana

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