



Joint Administration and Regulation Appropriations Subcommittee

M.J. Dolan, Executive Director

RE: Regional Telecommunications Communications (RTCs) Appropriation

Collaborative coursework is on the rise in Iowa and the nation. Expectations of future workers are that coursework will be available at the speed, technical support, schedule and video demonstration they want. Iowa's Regional Telecommunications Councils (RTCs) are the backbone of a solid and reliable video-conferencing education system that serves as one economic development tool for the creation of Iowa's future workers.

- RTCs were established as part of the Iowa legislature's foresight to place fiber in the ground across the state 20 years ago.
- RTCs are the user supporting force that made the ICN the distance learning success it continues to be today.
- RTCs are more important than ever before to assist in meeting increasing expectations of equipment and support.
- RTCs provide the following services for ICN classrooms and ICN delivered coursework:
 - Technical support for classroom problems
 - Training instructors for effective ICN classrooms
 - Technical support for K12 computer networks/Internet
 - Technical support for classroom/equipment upgrades
 - Provide link and support for collaboration between K12, colleges and AEAs
 - Plan future use/design local area networks
 - Troubleshoot for local area networks
 - Promote ICN use
 - Regional Schedulers for ICN classrooms

Innovation is one of the keys to successful economic development and the creation of educated workers. More and more students demand and learn with video and interactivity in their classes. To simply illustrate the demand for high quality video and interactive classrooms--nearly 58,000 community college students took one, and advance or more online classes for over 413,000 hours of coursework in FY2011. The number of students is up 78% since 2007 and the number of credit hours is up 54%. Similar demands are being made on the ICN classrooms:

- For hard to staff, low volume, and advance classes.
- To provide unique learning opportunities.

RTC funding cuts means less support for users and repair and replacement of equipment. The community colleges and the AEAs are being required to dip into their program budgets to conduct maintenance and upgrades on the infrastructure as well as to provide the other necessary supports noted above. Reducing the RTCs funding is like removing mortar from the foundation of a building. Without the support of the mortar the foundation of Iowa's video-conference education system will crumble making the system unusable.

RTC Funding	
Since 2000	Since 2007
↓46.6%	↓20.0%

Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts today.



February 3, 2012

Iowa Communications Network
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: Support for RTC Appropriation

To Whom It May Concern:

As the chair of the Education Telecommunications Council, I'd like to contribute my thoughts relating to the need for continued legislative support for Regional Telecommunication Council (RTC) Appropriations.

The appropriation made to the RTCs is really the lifeblood for ICN operations at the community colleges throughout the state. The scheduling, training, and technical support, which is made possible because of the RTC Appropriation, are essential to the educational activities and learning which connection to the ICN enables. Without these services there would not be the means for the educational community to employ the ICN, and learning would certainly suffer as a result.

While a great resource, the ICN network alone, both the infrastructure and personnel, is only one part of the larger instructional picture. Also required are teachers trained to use the network, and support personnel available to schedule and maintain the ICN classrooms. These support activities which the community colleges supply are what I like to call "extra-campus." That is, they have an impact which is felt far beyond that particular college campus. As such, they are supplying a service to all of Iowa's citizens who may benefit from an ICN-delivered class, meeting, workshop, or other type of learning opportunity.

We all are well aware of the need to support and protect the items we value. That often implies "service after the sale." The RTCs are the ones throughout the state who make it possible for all of us to benefit from this significant state resource. They deserve statewide support for the statewide services they provide.

I thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter, and I'd be available to answer questions or discuss it further if desired. I apologize for not being able to make my case in person, but my teaching schedule requires my presence here.

Wishing you success,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth E. Colwell".

Kenneth E. Colwell, Ph.D.
ETC Chair
Professor of Communication & ICN Coordinator

RTC Funding History

FY96	\$	1,200,000	
FY97	\$	1,500,000	
FY98	\$	1,750,000	
FY99	\$	1,858,192	
FY00	\$	1,858,192	
FY01	\$	1,692,192	
FY02	\$	1,599,152	
Adjusted FY02 (less 4.3% and 1%)	\$	1,515,114	
FY03	\$	1,272,285	
FY04	\$	1,272,285	
Adjusted FY04 (less 2.5%)	\$	1,240,478	
FY05	\$	1,240,478	
FY06	\$	1,240,478	
FY07	\$	1,240,478	
FY08	\$	1,364,525	
FY09	\$	1,364,525	
Adjusted FY09 (less 1.5%)	\$	1,344,057	
FY10	\$	1,232,071	
Adjusted FY10 (less 10%)	\$	1,108,864	
FY11	\$	1,065,180	
FY12	\$	992,913	
FY13	\$	992,913	recommended

8D.5 Education telecommunications council established — regional councils established.

1. An education telecommunications council is established. The council consists of eighteen members and shall include the following: two persons appointed by the state board of regents; two persons appointed by the Iowa association of community college trustees; two persons appointed by the area education agency boards; two persons appointed by the Iowa association of school boards; two persons appointed by the school administrators of Iowa; two persons appointed by the Iowa association of independent colleges and universities; two persons appointed by the Iowa state education association; three persons appointed by the director of the department of education including one person representing libraries and one person representing the Iowa association of nonpublic school administrators; and one person appointed by the administrator of the public broadcasting division of the department of education. The council shall establish scheduling and site usage policies for educational users of the network, coordinate the activities of the regional telecommunications councils, and develop proposed rules and changes to rules for recommendation to the commission. The council shall also recommend long-range plans for enhancements needed for educational applications. Administrative support and staffing for the council shall be provided by the department of education.

2. A regional telecommunications council is established in each of the merged areas established pursuant to chapter 260C consisting of nine members, including one member each to be appointed by each of the appointing authorities under subsection 1. Additional ex officio, nonvoting members may also be appointed to the regional telecommunications councils. The regional telecommunications councils shall advise the education telecommunications council on the assessment of local educational needs, and the coordination of program activities including scheduling. The community college located in the merged area of a regional telecommunications council shall staff and facilitate the activities of the council. The community college and the council may enter into a chapter 28E agreement for such arrangement.

3. The community college in each of the merged areas shall be responsible for switching of Parts II and III of the network and for facilitating the organization and meetings of the regional telecommunications council.

94 Acts, ch 1184, §7