

# THE COMMUNICATOR

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



## HUSKERS TO IMPLEMENT NEW PILOT CAPTIONING PROGRAM

After collaboration with NCDHH, the Nebraska Huskers will now introduce a new pilot captioning program to improve the fan experience for all Nebraskans and Husker fans alike in Memorial Stadium for the 2017-2018 football season.

All play descriptions, scoring, player information, referee and penalty announcements, in-game promotions, entertainment action, advertising videos, emergency message, and post-game messages will be transcribed. The information will be distributed to all fans via Twitter at @HuskerCaption. Fans who do not have devices enabled to access Twitter may check out iPads at the East and West Stadium Guest Services.



This comes on the heels of meetings NCDHH had with UNL after research on how other stadiums around the country are ensuring full communication access for all, including closed captioning.

“We are encouraged by the responsiveness the University has had to our concerns about communication access,” NCDHH Executive Director John Wyvill said. “We are hopeful and optimistic about the outcome of this pilot program.”

Following the football season, Nebraska Athletics and the ADA/504 Compliance Officer welcomes all fan input and will review information received on the program to conduct a fan focus group across the state before making decisions going forward regarding captioning via Twitter. **Fans are encouraged to share their game-day experience to the ADA/504 Compliance officer at [access@unl.edu](mailto:access@unl.edu).**

# Executive Director's Report

*John Wyvill, Executive Director*



It started with a visit to the Hearing Loss Association of America-Omaha Chapter, when some of the members asked why the 'third largest city in Nebraska on Saturdays' was not accessible to Nebraskans who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The above reference is to Memorial Stadium, where the Nebraska Huskers play home football games. After further research, it was discovered the stadium was not accessible, and didn't have other communication access features seen in similar collegiate stadiums. Captioning was also not provided on the big screens.

After consulting with the NCDHH Full Board, I was asked to reach out to the University's ADA/504 Compliance Officer, Christy Horn, to learn what kind of accommodations are made. During this quest, we gained the help and support of John Waldo, the Advocacy Committee Chair of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA). We also had help from Howard Rosenblum, the National Association of Deaf (NAD) CEO and Director of Legal Services, along with Dr. Pete Seiler of the Nebraska Association for the Deaf (NeAD) and NCDHH Board Member. Shortly after, UNL announced a Twitter captioning feed (via @HuskerCaption) for ticketholders, along with a pledge after the season to organize a focus group to glean feedback on positives and negatives of the feed. The feedback received will determine if the accommodations made are appropriate and adequate.

Thanks to the collaboration of a few individuals and cooperation of stakeholders successfully advocating for communication access, we were able to get the ball moving in the right direction. As you will see from our newsletter, we advocate on a number of different fronts. Please don't hesitate to contact us for support and collaboration to advocate for the change you want to see. It starts with one person to make a difference.

## Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness Day at the Zoo

The third annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day at the Henry Doorly Zoo was a wild success. We are so thankful to Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) President Heath Focken and organization for helping us plan such a great event! There were coloring contest and door prize winners, deaf connect readings by Carly Weyers and Vicki Campbell, and we all learned a little more about a common creature in the Midwest- opossums! Until next year!



More photos and scenes from our fun filled day at the zoo can be found on the Commission Facebook page- Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

# Know Your Commissioners

*Diane Scutt, Board Member*

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*The next upcoming newsletters, NCDHH will be highlighting our Full Board for our readers to get to know them, including some interesting facts you may not know about each Board Member.*

**Name:** Diane Elizabeth Schutt

**Occupation:** Technically, I am a retired Journalism and English teacher, but I am working part-time now as a copywriter for Lambert Vet Supply in Fairbury, NE.

**Tell us about your upbringing:** I was born in Manhattan, Kansas and moved to Fremont, Nebraska when I was 10 years old. I graduated from here and then attended college at Kearney State College and earned a Bachelors of Arts in Journalism Education. My one and only education job began and ended at Fairbury High School after 35 years of advising publications, teaching a variety of English classes, and of course, teaching all the journalism courses. Along the way I earned a Masters of Arts in Journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



**What is your favorite food?** Without a doubt, fudge brownies are my favorite food. That explains a great deal!

**What are you most proud of?** I would say I am very proud of all the connections I still have with my former students. With a 35-year teaching career, I had the pleasure and opportunity to work with so many great young men and women and I know they made a difference in me, just as I hoped I made a mark with them.

**If you could change ONE thing in the world, what would it be?** Not to sound like a beauty pageant candidate, but I would have to go with bringing world peace as the one thing I would change in the world. The people on this planet could accomplish great things if we could quit fighting.

**Biggest pet peeve?** I really am biased against lazy, unmotivated people. I find it hard to create a common ground with them in interactions.

**What is the best advice you've been given?** This advice was in a quote, but it basically said, "If you let praise define you, you will let criticism destroy you." It is important to remember when someone praises your efforts, it does not change you or make you better. You are still you. Humans will screw up more ways than they can think to accomplish this. The trick is to maintain a realistic perspective.

**What is your favorite quote?** My second favorite quote was given to me by a friend after my mother died 18 years ago. I wrote it on an index card and carry it in my billfold in my purse. It reads, "Suddenly in the midst of winter, I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer."



# 2017 Education Summit

*Jenny Corum, NCDHH Education Advocate*



NCDHH hosted its first annual Education Summit on October 21, 2017. Our guest for the event was Jon Levy from Orange County, with over 35 years' experience in the field of Deaf Education. After graduating from UCLA with a BA in Psychology, he attended California State University Northridge and received his teaching credentials and Masters in Deaf Education. After five additional teaching credentials, he became a teacher of the Deaf for over 9 years in Los Angeles. For over 26 years, Jon was a principal at one of the largest regionalized mainstream programs in the nation in

Orange County, California. He is currently retired and works part time at the National Technical Institute of the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology. Jon has been awarded the California Administrator of the Year by California's parent group and last year was honored with California Educators of the Deaf Lifetime Achievement Award. We were honored to have him bring his expertise and present at our workshop. There were over 60 attendees at our Summit.



Jon Levy

## Presentation Topics by Mr. Levy:

Interpreter Pam Duncan with Levy



The first topic he presented about was the Orange County Department of Education Regional Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program. This program has been recognized as a model of regionalized programming nationwide. The Orange County Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program is located within the Irvine Unified School District at Vendado Middle School and University High School, serving over 135 Deaf students living in 28 school districts throughout Orange County. The program provides a curriculum that is with the California State Standards, provides Special Day classes designed for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, opportunities to be mainstreamed in general education classes, and the ability to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports and student government.

Administrators, audiologist, counselors, paraeducators, school psychologists, sign language interpreters, speech and language therapists, and teachers are all trained in Deaf Education within this program.

The second topic he presented about was 'Creating a Language Rich Environment at Home and in the Classroom.' Jon stressed the importance of early intervention and language, while providing useful resources for educators, administrators and parents to use for home and in the classroom.

The last topic he presented on was 'The Roles and Responsibilities of Educational Interpreters.' This presentation included information on the interpreters' roles and responsibilities in a classroom, making sure the goal of the lesson is clear, what interpreters do, and how to evaluate interpreters.

We also received a personalized video from Gallaudet University President, Bobbi Cordano. Overall, the Education Summit was a great success. The attendees ranged from teachers, parents, administrators, teacher of the Deaf, interpreters, Deaf community, audiologists, speech pathologists and more. NCDHH is very excited to make this an annual event and we are looking forward to the Education Summit in 2018!

# Nebraska Representatives at National Leadership Conference

NCDHH Board Member Dr. Peter Seiler, Education Advocate Jenny Corum, Behavioral Health Coordinator Carly Weyers, Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) President Heath Focken, and other Nebraska representatives attended the National Leadership Training Conference in Oklahoma City this past October. The NAD Leadership Training Conference (NLTC) fosters the enhanced development of leadership within state associations, organizations, and corporations. As the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America, the NAD's mission is to provide guidance and support to the deaf and hard of hearing community to take on society's challenges and succeed in a more equal and accessible world.



NCDHH Behavioral Health Coordinator Carly Weyers, NeAD President Heath Focken, NeAD member Dr. Pete Seiler, and NCDHH Education Advocate, Jenny Corum

## NCDHH attends Husker Harvest Days 2017

NCDHH Executive Director John Wyvill, with Advocacy Specialists Aaron Rothenberger, Kathy Scusa, and Teresa Hevner



combines and harvesters, grain-handling equipment, and irrigation technologies. Watch and even participate in live demonstrations of these as well as new models of pickups and ATVs. Livestock handling demonstrations round out the learning opportunities.

NCDHH team members Aaron Rothenberger, Kathy Scusa, Teresa Hevner, and John Wyvill had a blast at Husker Harvest Days this year! Including a sighting with Lt. Governor Mike Foley. Celebrating its 40th year, the world's largest totally irrigated working farm show comes together once again in Grand Island, Nebraska. The show features the latest equipment, supplies and technologies available to today's producers. Field demonstrations and crop technology exhibits are geared to Nebraska and western Corn Belt agriculture. View the newest tractors,





# NCDHH's newest Advocacy Specialist

*Aaron Rothenberger*



Hello! My name is Aaron Rothenberger and I am the newest Advocacy Specialist for the NCDHH. I will be working in and around the Tri-Cities area of Hastings, Grand Island, and Kearney. Except for two brief stints in Lincoln Nebraska, I have lived in Kearney since the middle of the 8th grade. I graduated from Kearney High School and the University of Nebraska at Kearney, where I received my Bachelors in English. Before coming to the NCDHH, I worked under the Department of Health and Human Services with the State Unit on Aging in Lincoln. My first day with the Commission was on August 7th.

Since then I have been helping people from all over central Nebraska including stops in Minden, Franklin and Ravenna. I have made several house visits and traveled a few dirt roads.

I have worked booths at many different events including, Husker Harvest Days, the Nebraska State Fair, the Kearney Night Market, the Senior Prime Festival and the Rural County Health Fair. I have also given hearing loss related presentations in Hastings and Kearney with more scheduled in Roseland, Minden and Franklin. My favorite part of the job has been meeting the diverse people of the State. Everybody is different and they all have a story to tell. I look forward to the next story that comes along during my time here at the Commission.

## MECA Letter of Success

*Pamela Duncan, Interpreter Program Coordinator*



Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) works alongside Nebraska Association for the Deaf (NAD) to raise awareness in servicing accommodation requests by members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. To date there have been issues regarding available seating inside the designated sections for events; access to verbal announcements; as well as interpreting services at TD Ameritrade and CenturyLink Arena. John Wyvill, NCDHH Executive Director, Pete Seiler, Ph.D., Secretary-NAD, and I met with several members of operations of both facilities and MECA on August 14, 2017 to discuss the issues regarding accommodations. It was an informative process on both sides and the meeting went well.

MECA staff shared their website with us, which was easily found by using a simple Google search “CenturyLink ADA”. The website also lists other accommodations available by the venue and the process to request an interpreter by sending an email to [guestservices@omahameca.com](mailto:guestservices@omahameca.com) at least two (2) weeks prior to the event.

I am pleased to report that Century Link/MECA responded favorably to feedback presented to them during the previous meeting, after subsequent phone calls that took place with Jon Secunda, Director of Ticket Operations, On September 22nd, CenturyLink hosted a large headlining concert and there was a request for ASL interpreters. Initially, the request from the Deaf consumers was overlooked causing for a shortened turnaround (10 days) to honor the request; work to obtain interpreters; and get the appropriate seating for the consumers. Despite the short time frame, the venue was able to honor the request and the consumers stated this was the best show they had attended thus far. On the evening in question, the interpreters were met with friendly MECA staff whom were eager to work with the interpreters given some special circumstances with the performers. Overall, everything worked out as planned, leaving the interpreters with a very positive impression.

# Social Media in Society

*Carly Weyers, Behavioral Health Coordinator*

Life is often hard. I was in my bed scrolling through my Instagram before I went to sleep, I see this amazing quinoa cranberry salad, a beautiful leather jacket on this attractive woman, two best friends sipping some margaritas on the beach, a super skinny woman eating donuts and captioned it, “donut worry, the life is good!” Right away I thought to myself what the heck, I am not able to make the salad this pretty, I can’t pull off a black leather like this woman did, I do not have enough money to go out to the beach and have some margaritas with my best friend who, by the way, is in California, and if I eat a donut, it does not make my life any easier, not to mention I will gain the 5 pounds that I worked so hard to get rid of!



There is no way to deny the fact that social media plays a huge part in our daily lives. It is an amazing tool for us to use to connect to others, share our opinions, help build our careers, and many more. However, many of us use social media the wrong way. People would compare themselves to what they see on social media like what I basically did right before I went to sleep. I compared myself to this woman who seems to be in perfect shape and eating donut. Seeing that might be my motivation to run extra mile at the gym next day, or it could just crush my self-esteem.

Life is all about choices. You are the one who is in control of your life. Most people often forget that they are the ones with the power to make a difference in their lives. If you constantly compare yourself to other people on the social media, you probably want to reconsider your social media! You might use it too much that you start to compare yourself to others, or you would want to check the people you follow, and unfollow those models who kill your self-esteem. Again, you are the one who is in control of your life.

I happened to come across one article that I thought was really well stated: “How the hearing world must stop forcing deaf culture to assimilate” written by Sara Novic. When I was reading this article, in my head I thought it’s about the time someone decided that it is important to educate others about deaf culture, but then I scrolled down to the bottom to Facebook comments about this article... It was no surprise for me to say the comments were cruel. That brings me back to the fact that life is hard. I was not able to educate other people about deaf culture without getting some negative comments. This is when I have to remind myself that I am the one who is in control of my life, I can ignore those people who wrote those comments about deaf culture and move on to others who are open to learning about deaf culture.

I guess this is my way of saying that yes, life is hard but it is also all about the choices and decisions we make in life. Some people allow social media to run their lives; others use it to build their careers and their future. Others would take it and turn it to their motivation. It is up to us for how we want to use social media. Keep that in your mind so that next time when you are like me, laying in your bed scrolling through your Instagram and you’re having all of those “what the heck” thoughts in your head; try to get rid of those negative thoughts and change it to a positive. So now my “what the heck” thoughts could change to the “Aw yeah!” thoughts like so: “I should try this recipe and see if it tastes as good as it looks, this black jacket would go really well with my black boots that I just bought last week, I can’t wait for Thanksgiving week to see my best friend, and this donut looks good, but I need to eat more fruits!” I probably would have a better sleep that night!

# Holiday Tips for Hard of Hearing

*Teresa Hevner, Advocacy Specialist*



With the Holidays right around the corner, relatives are not far behind. Loved ones are a joy to have around, but with this busy time of year comes some communication challenges for many Hard of Hearing individuals. Between the little ones running around, banging and clanging in the kitchen and side conversations happening, distracting noises can become an issue. Devices such as hearing aids help significantly in many situations, but background noise can become amplified as well making it difficult to catch up with your loved ones. There are a few things you can do as a listener, or speaker in group situations that may ease a conversation.

Get the listener's attention BEFORE starting to speak, and stay close while conversing. By facing the listener before starting the conversation, the speaker can ensure they have the listener's full attention. Trying to talk to someone who is in another room, or is in a space which admits an abundance of noise, makes it a bit tricky to have a conversation with an individual who is Hard of Hearing. By staying within 3 to 5 feet of each other, the speaker and listener can carry on a conversation with more ease. If the person you are conversing with tends to utilize one ear over the other, it may be helpful to stay closer to the side the individual favors.

Always speak clearly and naturally. Lip reading can be a tool that Hard of Hearing individuals may utilize in group settings. In this situation, shouting is not the solution. It may cause more distortion for individuals who use hearing aids, and can sometimes make the words even harder to decipher. Speaking at a normal level, and at a speed which allows the listener to distinguish one word from another is more helpful than shouting or talking at an extremely slow speed. Keeping a natural speaking level and speed while enunciating properly keeps the speaker's mouth shape natural, which allows the listener to lip or speech read more easily. Avoid covering your mouth with your hands, or other objects when speaking. This eliminates, or reduces the ability of the listener to speech or lip read, making a conversation more difficult to have.

Using different words if your listener is misunderstanding. If you are having a conversation with a loved one or friend, and they are having trouble understanding a word or phrase, try to use different wording. Some words or phrases can be difficult to distinguish if the individual is lip reading. The "voiceless" sounds such as "th" or "sh" can be difficult for some Hard of Hearing individuals. By changing the wording or phrasing, the listener may be able to better facilitate a conversation.

Turn off or decrease background noise. When you are having a conversation in a group setting, background noise can take over a conversation. In those situations try to eliminate or decrease the background noise around you as much as possible. This not only allows the speaker and listener to focus on each other, but it also helps devices such as hearing aids pick up the speaker's voice more clearly. In areas where noise is prevalent, it may be beneficial to find ways to eliminate the background noise around you. However, if you cannot get rid of the background noise, you can still reduce the noise level as much as possible. For example, try sitting away from the kitchen, or another room which may inhabit lots of noise, with your back facing a wall. This helps to keep more noises in front of you, making it easier to carry on a conversation. Making sure the area you are in is well lit is also important. Avoid areas where there is a lot of light coming from behind you as well, as it may be difficult for the listener to see your face.



# Holiday Gift Ideas

*Kim Davis, Advocacy Specialist*

The holidays are around the corner! If you have a family member or dear friend who has challenges with hearing, here are some technologies that may make great gift ideas:



## **Personal Assistive Listening Devices**

Is the television playing too loud and disturbing others? A TV Listening System is something to consider that will assist with turning the television's volume down.

Does the person have challenges hearing a person speaking in a noisy room? A Personal Assistive Listening Device is great for those one-on-one or small group conversations in a room and helps block background noises and gear towards hearing the conversation more clearly. Special Note:

NCDHH has the Williams Sounds PockeTalker in our 90-day Equipment Loan Program. This is an alternative option to see a personal assistive listening device is of worthy purchase.

## **Specialized Telephones**

Trouble hearing or understanding on a standard telephone? The Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program (NSTEP) is available for deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech impaired Nebraskans who have challenges using a standard telephone. To name some of the popular specialized telecommunication devices this program covers are, as follows: audio-amplified telephones, voice-amplified telephones, captioned telephones, teletypewriter telephones (TTYs), wireless cellular or smartphones (through Verizon, Sprint Relay Online, US Cellular or Viera); as well as audio/visual/tactile telephone signaler devices that lets you know when the phone is ringing. NSTEP is free for applicants who meet the criteria and it is not income based. Once approved, applicants receive a voucher to obtain their specialized telephone and/or signaler. Additional information and application can be found on our website at <https://ncdhh.nebraska.gov/services/nstep>.

## **Signaler Systems**

Not answering the door? A doorbell transmitter sends a signal to a receiver to notify the family member or friend that someone is at the door. Concerns about doors or windows being accessed, a Door/Window Access Transmitter sends a signal to compatible transmitter and receiver when a door or window is opened. Can't hear the baby crying? A baby cry sound signalers or transmitters sends a signal to compatible transmitter and receiver when the baby makes noises or cries.

## **Emergency Signaler Systems**

Can't hear the fire alarm signaler? For those who live in regions that may not have this available, like Lincoln and Omaha has for their local residents. You may wish to follow up with the American Red Cross <https://getasmokealarm.org/> and they will connect your family member or friend with our Nebraska regional representative. It will need to be made clear that a special visual/tactile fire alarm detector is needed when the rep contacts your family member or friend. For Omaha, Millard and Elkhorn residents, visit <https://www.omaha-fire.org/fire-alarms-and-sprinklers/smoke-detectors-save-lives>. And Lincoln residents, visit <https://lincoln.ne.gov/city/fire/services/smokeDHH.htm>.

Concern about severe weather warnings? The NOAA Weather Alert Radio broadcasts warnings with a short text message on the display. Compatible external devices, such as visual or tactile components, transmitters or receivers, may be helpful if one cannot hear the radio sounding the alert. Additional information concerning coverage areas may be found at [http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/info/special\\_needs.html](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/info/special_needs.html).

## **Available Places to Shop**

Below are some available vendors on the market that sell products for individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing. There may be additional vendors available and one may wish to explore through a search engine via the internet.

- ADCO Hearing Products, [www.adcohearing.com](http://www.adcohearing.com)
- Fanstel Corporation, [www.fanstel.com](http://www.fanstel.com)
- Drown Manufacturing / CompuTTY, [www.krownmfg.com](http://www.krownmfg.com)
- Harris Communications, [www.harriscomm.com](http://www.harriscomm.com)
- Hear More, [www.hearmore.com](http://www.hearmore.com)
- HITEC Group International Inc., [www.hitec.com](http://www.hitec.com)
- HumanWare, [www.humanware.com](http://www.humanware.com)
- LS&S Group, [www.LSSproducts.com](http://www.LSSproducts.com)
- MaxiAids, [www.maxiaids.com](http://www.maxiaids.com)
- Silent Call Communications, [www.silentcall.com](http://www.silentcall.com)
- Teltex Inc., [www.teltex.com](http://www.teltex.com)
- Weitbrecht Communications, [www.weitbrecht.com](http://www.weitbrecht.com)

# Self Acceptance & Self Advocacy

*Beth Ellsworth, Advocacy Specialist*

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I've been reading articles on the stages people with a hearing loss go through to acceptance & I took a look back at my road to acceptance. It took me a long time to be able to admit to myself that I have a hearing loss!

Breaking through the stigma was a major milestone! From there I was able to say to others, this is what I need from you so I can follow the conversation. There are still times I get frustrated when I have to ask again to look at me or follow other communication tips that help. But I am comfortable now telling people I have a hearing loss and advocating for myself.

My hearing loss is one part of who I am. And that is perfectly okay!

Denial - I don't have a problem. You all just mumble. I would argue if someone said anything about hearing – even in general. I said to myself; “I'm just fine! Go bother someone else”. I just pretended I knew what everyone was talking about. ie. “Faking it”

## Stages of Minimizing

- MAYBE: slight though it may be, there is a slim possibility that I may be a SMALL part of the problem. I admitted to myself but no one else.
- Still no acknowledgment that it could be a hearing loss. This went on for several years. I was very defensive.
- Absolutely no way I would even consider wearing hearing aids. But I finally admitted to a friend that I wasn't hearing the phone ring. (She brought a flashing light to my apartment and hooked it up. When she called me the next day I answered her call for the first time).

## Stages of Acceptance

- I advanced to wearing ONE hearing aid IF the wind wasn't blowing. No way did I want anyone to know I had a hearing loss and if they saw my hearing aid they would know.
- Finally I wore my hearing aids. I still would not ask anyone to look at me when they were talking (or any of the other communication tips that are so helpful) but I had internal dialogue that I could have a hearing loss.
- Finally I admitted to myself that I had a hearing loss and gradually told my friends (they told me they had known all along).

This link is one of the great articles I read.

<https://www.hearinglikeme.com/how-to-feel-more-confident-with-your-hearing-loss/>

I'd love to hear from you! Below is my contact information.

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# Coming (or has been) to an Event Near You

*Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist*

As an Advocacy Specialist, one of my duties is to spread the word about the programs and services that the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides. One of ways that I am able to do this is by setting up booths to meet people at events throughout my Advocacy Specialist area. Out of the North Platte office I cover 25 counties. Those counties are: Cherry, Brown, Rock, Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Arthur, McPherson, Logan, Custer, Keith, Lincoln, Dawson, Chase, Hayes, Frontier, Gosper, Dundy, Hitchcock, Red Willow, Furnas and Harlan. In 2017 I have been to 17 sites to set up booths to meet people, talk about our programs and services, and of course hand out earplugs and other freebies! At these events I have handed out almost 12,000 pairs of earplugs to promote hearing protection. Booths that you may have seen me at include: Conferences like People First Nebraska, and Women in Agriculture. Health Fairs in Imperial, Gothenburg, Ogallala, North Platte and Atkinson. Fairs and Festivals including Husker Harvest Days, McCook Heritage Days, The Nebraska State Fair Older Nebraskan's Day Festival and Nebraska Land Days Kid's Fun Festival. I was at Farm, Ranch & Home shows in McCook and O'Neill. Other Agency events that I attended include Nebraska Respite Days of Caring in Hastings and McCook and Project Connect at the Salvation Army in North Platte.



I spend a lot of my time out of the office doing presentations for many different groups. I try to go to all of my area senior centers at least once during the year and usually twice. I also present information about our programs and services to conventions, assisted living centers, veteran's service officers and veteran's organizations, school groups, Foster Grandparents, Lions, Sertoma, Rotary, Eagles, Elks, Garden Clubs, Boy & Girl Scouts, and really any group that will invite me to their meeting. If you are interested in learning more about the programs and services that The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing offers, please contact me to discuss a time that I can come to one of your meetings. I am available for evening and weekend meetings! The more that I can get out there to talk about our services, the more people I will be able to help! Please contact me at my North Platte office phone number (308) 535-6600 or you can email me at [kathy.scusa@nebraska.gov](mailto:kathy.scusa@nebraska.gov). I look forward to meeting you and serving your club or group!

## 5 Tips for Traveling During the Holiday Season

*Brittney Isom, Advocacy Specialist*

The Holiday Season is vastly approaching, which means traveling for most. The holidays can be notoriously busy, expensive and stressful. These little tips should help make your holiday season less hectic, hopefully.

**Avoid the Peak Travel Dates-** The day before a holiday like Thanksgiving will most likely be the busiest; a lot of traffic or long lines at the airport. Depending on your schedule try to leave a few days before a big holiday.

**Shop around-** If you plan on needing plane tickets, hotel rooms even rental cars try shopping on different websites like Expedia, Kayak, Travelocity, etc. The different travel sites will show you many options. The holidays are expensive, so try to cut cost where you can.

**Map out your route-** It is important to be prepared while traveling; especially to some place new. Make sure you know exactly what exit you need to take. GPS is a great thing, but not when it takes you out in the middle of nowhere going around in circles for 2 hours wondering if that is the same tree you have drove past. Print out a map before you leave, just in case.

**Good Night's Sleep-** Getting a good rest the night before you travel will make your trip more enjoyable.

**Relax-** Traveling can be stressful, especially during the holiday season, after all this is the busiest time to travel. Other people on the road are probably just as stressed as you are. Frustration can lead to poor decisions and risky behavior behind the wheel. Take a deep breathe, keep your cool and remember that you will get to your destination.

