Kreuscher finds ideal job as telecommuter.

Every weekday morning, Kristi Kreuscher gets up and prepares herself for another day in the office.

She gets her children Aaron and Andrew off to school or summer activities and bids farewell to her husband John.

Then she heads to work as a senior business analyst for the court administration office, a branch of the Nebraska Supreme Court.

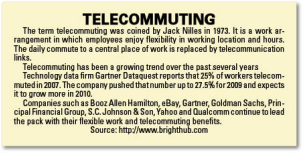
It’s a job based in Lincoln, 195 miles away. That would be quite a daily commute.

But instead of climbing in her car for a three-hour drive, Kreuscher walks past the kitchen and the washer and dryer to her desk.

Kreuscher works from the comfort of her home office with a wall of legal books and file cabinets full of information.

She's one of five state court employees who work from home doing computer training and answering questions through a telephone help line.

"I spent five years driving back and forth to Lincoln," Kreuscher said. "Now I can do pretty much everything I need to do right here at home."



TELECOMMUTING

The term telecommuting was coined by Jack Nilles in 1973. It is a work arrangement in which employees enjoy flexibility in working locaiton and hours. The daily commute to a central place of work is replaced by telecommunication links.

Telecommuting has been a growing trend over the past several years

Technology data firm Gartner Dataquest reports that 25% of workers telecommuted in 2007. The company pushed that number up to 27.5% for 2009 and expects it to grow more in 2010.

Companies such as Booz Allen Hamilton, eBay, Gartner, Goldman Sachs, Principal Financial Group, S.C. Johnson & Son, Yahoo and Qualcomm continue to lead the pack with their flexible work and telecommuting benefits.

Source: http://www.brighthub.com

High-speed internet and a Blue-tooth ear piece are Kreuscher's most-used tools.

"Technology is a great thing," she said.

She can even manipulate another computer miles away using a software program called Ready Talk.

"It's amazing sometimes what you can do from so far away," she said.

Kreuscher started her career in the court system in 1986 as the clerk magistrate in Perkins County.

When she and John moved to Gothenburg in 1989, her experience in the courts led her to the job she has now but it didn't become a telecommuting position until 1994.

Kreuscher chose to work from home several years before she and John had children. Now, it's an arrangement she hopes will last as long as she's working.

“I never want to move to Lincoln and have to go into an office building every day,” she said.

Working barefoot or in sweatpants, if she chooses, is much more appealing.

And there’s no office politics to deal with at home.

But there are some ground rules Kreuscher has set for herself and her family.

“It’s important to keep home time and work time separate,” she said.

In the early years of her position, Kreuscher worked as an independent contractor rather than an employee. She said during that time, she worked probably worked more hours than she should have.

Now with a family at home, she has no difficulty shutting down the computer at the end of the work day.

“I don’t have a problem walking away from it,” she said. “It will always be there tomorrow.”

Working at home has plenty of perks.

For one, Kreuscher’s mother was able to rehabilitate in Gothenburg after heart surgery last winter rather than Kreuscher staying in her mom’s Republican City home.

“I could continue to work and still keep an eye on my mom,” she said.

Kreuscher also doesn’t feel the need to get dressed up or wear makeup for work most days.

“I could probably work in my pajamas if I choose,” she said. “I don’t but I could.”

And she’s always close by if her children need her.

There are a few down-sides to a remote office, Kreuscher said.

“You never get a snow day,” she said.

There also is no tech support person down the hall to help when things aren’t working right.

“Usually my tech problems are pretty short lived but you learn who you can contact for a quick fix,” she said.

All five remote offices work together, she said, with the same or similar hardware so they can help each other.

“For me, it’s an ideal work situation,” Kreuscher said, “but I’m sure it’s not for everyone.”

It takes a certain kind of discipline to keep home and work separate.

Kreuscher said it makes a difference being an employee as opposed to owning a home business.

“I have a commitment to someone else. It’s not hard for me,” she said. “If I had the option to clean house or work, I would rather work,” she said.