

Attaining Our Vision

By John L. Craig

Director, Nebraska Department of Roads



John L. Craig

As I look back at my past communications with people here at the Nebraska Department of Roads and with others representing cities, counties, consultants, contractors

and trucking companies throughout the state, common themes have prevailed. They are still at the forefront, with some variations. Our vision is to be the premier state transportation agency in the country. If we stay on course and follow the established plan, I believe we can accomplish great things. Here, then, are a few of my thoughts on what we've done and where we're headed as we continue to work together to achieve this vision.

First, it is important to realize that trying to get the word out about who we are, what we do and where we're headed is harder than one might think. For this reason, we've expanded from the regular channels, including NDOR's newsletter and industry journals to videos, public speaking, and NDOR's web site, which has evolved to a transportation portal. Another avenue is employee outreach. We haven't reached our full potential here, but increasingly, we're getting

our employees out to the university and public schools to talk about transportation, attend science fairs, participate as mentors and contest judges, and a plethora of other activities, depending on the community and the individual. I think continued outreach by our employees and other channels of communication will increase that recognition.

Strategic Plan

Some time ago, we published a strategic plan with six major emphasis areas: workforce development, equipment management, capital facilities management, leveraging technology, construction and maintenance management, and more efficient business practices. In the past two years, I believe we have made significant progress on most of these, and we must increase capability on the others. I will briefly discuss each of these areas.

1) Workforce development. We've discussed a lot of possibilities here, including developing a "transportation university" to connect NDOR with the industry, cities and counties. Much work remains to be done.

2) Equipment management. As we put more money toward equipment, in the next two or three years, we should start saving over \$1 million of taxpayers' money, as costs of replacement and repair start to decrease. We'll be able to put that money toward other items, including construction. That's a "good news" story, as much effort has been devoted to accomplishing this.

3) Capital facilities management. We've gained a lot in this area and continue to work on achieving our building and maintenance needs. If funding is approved, in the next five years, we plan to increase our capacity to store salt from 40 percent to 100 percent. Last winter we spent over \$1.3 million for salt; if we had purchased it in the summer, it would have cost \$300,000. There is the

potential for over \$1 million savings each year for a one-time initial cost.

4) Leveraging technology. We now have a transportation technology section at the Road's Department and a computer network that connects all of our sites, which we're upgrading for increased speed and efficiency. We're looking at a variety of other technologies, including fiber optics, transportation management centers, and joint transportation management centers. Future developments will be exciting.

5) Construction and maintenance. The construction program will gain from many of the initiatives previously mentioned. We have reached the point that there really isn't a distinction between construction and maintenance—they are literally joined at the hip. This is a good thing. We've just started thinking about what we need to do to optimize the balance towards maintaining our infrastructure, and pavement is our big dollar item. We will gain a lot from that.

6) More efficient business practices. We have done a variety of things in this area, including improved financial systems and utilizing the Voyager card for electronic fuel purchases. This credit card electronic billing system has worked flawlessly and has gained widespread acceptance. We want to continue doing more of these kinds of cost-saving activities in the future.

Related Areas

As we continue to address these strategic areas of emphasis, we will also work toward increasing our capability in four related areas.

1) Research. We have established the Nebraska Transportation Research Council, which is a collaborative effort between NDOR, the university, contractors, consultants, cities, counties and the private sector. This is providing a forum for those who have a vested interest in transportation. We are also in the process of forming a Nebraska Transportation Center with the University of Nebraska. This will provide dividends for the state for decades to come.

2) Transportation Technology. Our new transportation technology section is beginning to develop trans-

the Roadrunner

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portation management centers which will impact the entire state. That section will also be crucial for us to develop a joint operations center for the state, which will represent NDOR, the Nebraska State Patrol, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and other agencies and organizations relative to joint operations. Within the next few months, we will implement the #SAFE system, which will allow people to access travel information—including roadway, construction and weather information—anywhere in the state. This will greatly increase cost savings and efficiency. We've built the momentum to use technology to our advantage and it will be exciting to see future developments.

3) Maintenance. We have a lot of work to do in this area, because it is an important part of maintaining our infrastructure. In the past, we haven't given enough credit to maintenance activities relative to our pavement management system, and that needs to be fixed. As the line between maintenance and construction activities has become increasingly blurred, this will create a positive avenue for change.

4) Long-range collaborative planning. We have a vested interest in long-range planning in this state since roads run everywhere and the economy runs on the roads. For a smoother relationship with cities, counties and private-sector business, we are trying to get those parties signed up to the department's standards first and then develop around that—this saves money and potential conflict. While the center of gravity for this planning is at the local level with cities, since we have a vested interest, we represent a catalyst for these activities. This is a difficult issue but we can achieve positive results in the long term.

Special Topics

In addition to these key areas, there are several other topics I wish to address. As we continue to grow our program in the areas of highway, rail and public transportation, it is important to develop efficiencies and continue to educate our Congressmen and Senators and get the word out

True North

The Frame of Reference

"You lead people and manage things and it's all about people."

Initial Strategic Direction
Build the Team
Partnering
Strategic Management

Transportation System is safe, seamless, intelligent, economically synergistic, environmentally benign and user-friendly.

Department Vision: The Nebraska Department of Roads is the premier state transportation agency in the United States.

Mission: To provide and maintain, in cooperation with public and private organizations, a safe, efficient, affordable, and coordinated statewide transportation system for the movement of people and goods.

Agenda

Strategic Investments/Azimuths:

- Workforce Development
- Equipment Management
- Capital Facilities Management
- Construction and Maintenance
- More Efficient Business Practices

Increase Capabilities in:

- Research
- Transportation Technology (e.g. Operations)
- Long-range Collaborative Planning
- Maintenance

Leadership/ Management

(e.g. Exec. Office Meetings)

Corporate & Industry Forums

(e.g. DREC)

Programs

Congruency & Consensus

Strategic Plan Annual Goals Performance Measures Individual Performance Plans

Pipeline for work: Planning Design Construction Maintenance Operations

for increased federal funding to meet these needs.

There is a multi-million dollar price tag associated with improving railroad grade crossings. To attain the necessary resources to accomplish this work, we are working with the railroads to develop a joint program. Also, we're in the process of building a coalition to get additional federal dollars.

Truck parking along Interstate 80 continues to be a big issue. A summit was held last year and another recently to identify a plan between NDOR and our rest stops, private rest stops, truck stops and in conjunction with the trucking industry to try to find additional truck parking. Recently, the University of Nebraska finished an analysis of truck parking along the Interstate and recommendations for what needs to be done to fix it.

Much good has been accomplished for our employees through the labor contract. We've given serious efforts

towards improving salaries and working conditions. Leaders in the department, the union and everyone else who has helped deserve to be complimented, as many of the issues are challenging.

Safety continues to be our "number one" issue and we do a good job; however, we want to do better. In the last two years, we've reduced the number of fatalities 13 percent over the last two years, compared to 1998. That's a big deal. That's 40 fewer people killed in the last two years than in 1998. We're at a lower rate this year than we were last year. We're headed in the right direction. This has happened because of hard work by many people. Designers have designed the safest roads possible. Rumble strips on the entire rural Interstate system are now halfway finished and should be complete by the end of this year. Although there is no clear cause and effect, these things make a difference.

(See Attaining Our Vision on page 14)

Ogallala Partnering Project Wins Award

NDOR received an Honorable Mention award from the American Road & Transportation Builders Association's (ARTBA) "Pride in Transportation Construction Award" Year 2000 Competition. The award, in the Public-Media Relations/Education category, recognized NDOR's involvement in bringing together the community of Ogallala, their business leaders and others during the reconstruction of Highway 26/61, which directly impacted the downtown business district as well as access to Lake McConaughy.

Richard Morrell, District 6 Highway Project Manager, was instrumental in keeping communication lines open between the city entities, NDOR, the contractor and the businesses. Active involvement of community business leaders resulted in the implementation of many innovative promotional ideas that were incorporated in the video "In this Together—How Your Business Can Survive and Thrive Through Roadway Reconstruction."

Fourteen states received an Honorable Mention for this category. Established in 1999, this special annual award recognizes extraordinary efforts by an individual or organization that demonstrably improves the image of transportation construction or highlights the contributions our industry makes to the American economy or quality of life. Awards were also given in four other categories: Community Relations; Safety; Work Force Development; Other, or "The Extra Mile." ♦

Bridge, Construction Employees Receive Extra Mile Award

Nine NDOR employees received Extra Mile Awards at the quarterly Rewards and Recognition ceremony held recently at Central Headquarters in Lincoln.

Seven Bridge Division employees were honored for their contributions to the successful and timely completion of the prestressed concrete girder bridge alternate design for the Cornhusker Highway Interchange project: Mark Ahlman, Engineer V; Max Antoine, Engineer III; Roe Enchayan, Engineer III; Fouad Jaber, Engineer IV; Mike Robbins, Hwy. Bridge Detailer II; Steve Sabra, Engineer IV; and Ron Schreiner, Hwy. Bridge Designer II.

According to their nominator, Lyman Freemon, Bridge Division Engineer, members of this group initially worked on a steel girder bridge design for the project. When the project was pulled from the January 2001 letting a few days before the project was to be let so that a prestressed concrete girder bridge could be designed and submitted as an alternate to the steel design, they went beyond what was expected to have the bridge completely designed, detailed, checked and ready to be let in the next month's letting—three weeks time.

According to Freemon, "Many worked extra hours to ensure they generated a complete product of high quality. By doing so, this team worked together to produce a design that would be economically competitive with the steel bridge design."

Two Construction Division employees, Jim Ferguson, IT Business Systems Analyst, and Nancy Loos, Hwy. Contracts Supervisor, were instrumental in spearheading the group of employees and their activities in putting together the Electronic Bidding System (EBS), which NDOR is now using for contracting their highway construction program.

Nancy worked on issues regarding how and when to conduct contractor training, coordination and assignment of tasks, as well as troubleshooting to get the system up and running. Jim was the group's computer expert. He worked diligently in training the group, training the contractors and answering contractor questions during start-up.

According to their nominator, Karl Fredrickson, Contracts Manager, "Jim and Nancy truly showed their talents and dedication at bringing the group together and successfully implementing the EBS. All of this was done while maintaining their existing duties." ♦



Pictured, l to r: Deputy Director Monty Fredrickson, Mark Ahlman, Max Antoine, Ron Schreiner, Mike Robbins, Fouad Jaber. *Not pictured:* Steve Sabra, Roe Enchayan, Nancy Loos and Jim Ferguson.

Service Awards

Congratulations to these dedicated individuals for their work and continued service with the Department of Roads. They celebrate their service dates in June and July.

40 Years

Jerrold Gardner, District 5
Gary Prey, District 1

30 Years

Arless Allen, Bridge
Lu Anne Goldsmith, Trans. Planning
Lonnie Huebert, Roadway Design
Vickie Lange, Transportation Planning
Jerel Lytle, District 6
James Schurr, Project Development
Joyce Sporhase, Rail & Public Trans.
David Vondra, Controller

20 Years

Gerald Bartek, Roadway Design
Ilene Butler, District 4
Carol Hanson, Construction
Leonard Makousky, District 3
Bruce Malsbury, District 6
Jeffrey Oehm, District 1
Cynthia Raridon, Materials & Research
Robert Rice, District 1
Terry Tracy, District 7

10 Years

Gerald Handy, District 2
Joanna Dodson, Materials & Research
Jeffrey Francis, District 3
Robert Mills, District 5
Todd Parrott, Roadway Design
Keith Rabe, District 3
Ted Ross, District 8

A Rewarding Thought

*"People want to feel
what they do
makes a difference"*

*- Frances Hesselbein,
The Drucker Foundation*

**Brought to you by the Rewards &
Recognition Agency Panel.**

Nomination forms can be found on the
Intranet at <http://www.dor.state.ne.us>
on the Human Resources page.

Rewards & Recognition

January, February, March 2001

Employees & Managers of the Quarter

Employees

Managers

OE 200 Divisions

Kevin Jameson
Transportation Planner II
Transportation Planning Division

Denise Wallman
Administrative Assistant I
Logistics Division

OE 300 Divisions

Delfs Linder
Hwy. Urban Off-System Coordinator
Roadway Design Division

None

District 1

Theresa Cebuhar
Hwy. Maintenance Worker Sr.
Lincoln

Dewaine Knutson
Hwy. Project Manager
Lincoln

District 2

Lee Limbach
Auto/Diesel Mechanic
Blair

Arnold Wehmeyer
Hwy. Maintenance Supervisor
Fremont

District 3

Timothy Urwiler
Hwy. Maintenance Crew Chief
Laurel

Roger Becker
Hwy. Project Manager
Hartington

District 4

Rick Meyer
Hwy. Construction Tech III
Hastings

Clarence "Sonny" Sekutera
Hwy. Maintenance Supervisor
Loup City

District 5

Karl Witt
Hwy. Construction Tech III
Chadron

Scott Rajewich
Hwy. Maintenance Supervisor
Scottsbluff

District 6

Richard Huhman
Hwy. Maintenance Crew Chief
Broken Bow

None

District 7

David Merklin
Hwy. Maintenance Worker Sr.
Benkelman

Raymond Walrod
Hwy. Maintenance Supt.
Imperial

District 8

Peggy Jackson
Hwy. Construction Tech II
O'Neill

None

Awardees receive a certificate, pin and a
monetary award of \$250 before taxes.

The Khaki-Colored Caravan

In the summer of 1919 thousands of Nebraskans greeted an Army convoy with curiosity, patriotic cheer and generous amounts of food and drink as its 250 men and 81 vehicles took 10 days to crawl across the state on the Lincoln Highway.

Excerpted from November 1999 NEBRASKAland article by Tom White

On a fair, warm August morning in 1919, the solid-looking prairie road unexpectedly gave way and trapped the Army convoy. Sunk to the wheel tops in sandy-gumbo, soldiers and machines toiled seven hours to loosen the earth's grip and move themselves 200 feet.

That day in western Nebraska, Lt. Colonel Dwight D. Eisenhower, on the cross-country caravan as a 28-year-old observer from the Tank Corps, learned the value of hard-surfaced roads first hand. Thirty-five years later Eisenhower, then the 34th President, initiated the Federal Highway Trust Fund that built today's 46,000-mile interstate highway system.

"The old convoy had started me thinking about good, two-lane highways, but Germany had made me see the wisdom of broader ribbons

across the land," Eisenhower wrote in *At Ease*, his 1967 memoir.

Fittingly, the last link in Interstate 80's nationwide ribbon was completed in western Nebraska in 1974. Fifty-five years earlier, the historic army convoy needed 10 hard days to cross the state; by the time I-80 was finished, the trip had become an easy day's drive.

Officially the Transcontinental Motor Convoy of 1919, the caravan was composed of 81 Army vehicles, 37 officers, more than 200 enlisted men and numerous non-military autos and trucks, including one carrying the Goodyear Rubber Company's 15-man band.

Over 62 bone-jarring days, they traveled 3,251 miles, crossing the country from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco. The route had been proclaimed the Lincoln Highway in 1913, but six years later it still included more than 1,800 miles of dirt road.

In Nebraska the Lincoln Highway, which later became U.S. 30, paralleled the Union Pacific rail line from Omaha to Kimball and beyond, and was all dirt, save for some city streets and three demonstration concrete "seedling miles" near Kearney, Grand Island and Fremont. In stretches west of Lexington, it was little more than a rutted trail in 1919.

The field secretary for the Lincoln Highway Association, Henry C. Ostermann, first proposed the convoy to promote improvements to the road. In February 1919 Capt. Bernard M. McMahon looked at Ostermann's idea and saw military purposes for such a convoy. He was responsible for the initial planning and eventually served as the second officer on the truck train.

The expedition was to determine the military value of assorted new trucks, cars and motorcycles that the Army had acquired, but had not put into field service before World War I ended. Until 1916, the Army was tied to the mule and horse. The war had shown the promise of motorized vehicles. They offered speed and greater flexibility than rail routes, if the Army could increase their reliability and develop tactics to use them effectively on varied terrains.

In the end the convoy was a road test, a war game, a recruiting drive, a campaign for the Lincoln Highway and the future of long-haul trucking and, not incidentally, a parade seen by more than 3 million people in 350 towns and cities across 11 states.



Photo courtesy of National Archives (156-TMC-64221)

On July 30 a circus-day crowd at the flag-decorated corner of 27th Avenue and 13th Street in Columbus greets the convoy and the city provides the soldiers a warm welcome that includes showers, hotel meals and a dance in a park until midnight.

... Lt. Colonel Charles W. McClure was put in charge of the convoy on July 4. He was an experienced commander who had recently returned from France. But many of his soldiers were new recruits with little driving experience and less military bearing. With scant time to prepare, the soldiers needed the first week or 10 days on the road to achieve convoy march discipline. By that time one truck had been destroyed, tumbling down a Pennsylvania mountain. Luckily, the seven soldiers aboard jumped off and no one was killed.

Twenty-two days into the journey, on July 28, and with nearly all the hard-surface road behind them, soldiers and machines had developed reasonably dependable patterns as they arrived on schedule at Council Bluffs. The only serious grumbling was about the quality of the food and the dust.

... During the caravan's first four days in the state, thousands of Nebraskans greeted the convoy with curiosity, patriotic cheer and generous amounts of food and drink at every stop.

Private cars joined the parade and the mayor welcomed the soldiers in downtown Omaha on July 29, before they moved on to Fort Omaha, located at 30th and Fort Streets. With the temperature reaching 97 degrees, it was good day for the troops to spend pressing on new tires (most solid rubber) and making repairs...

The truck train routine started the day with reveille at 4:45 a.m. The tent city was broken down and stored and the convoy was on the road by 6:30.

...The dust-weary train stretched out over two miles when the lead car arrived at North Bend, whose citizens watered the streets as a welcome. As a noon dinner was served to the troops, dozens of farm families left field work long enough to come to town to glimpse the strange sight.

By 4 o'clock, the convoy had covered 83 miles and was on the sandy east edge of Columbus where a week earlier Supervisor Fred Bean had dressed the road with 100 loads of dirt from cellars being dug in the area.

Columbus gave the soldiers the keys to the city that evening...

As usual, after inspection, the convoy was on the road headed west by 6:30 a.m. July 31.

Though the caravan used supplies from civilians along the way, it was equipped to be self-sufficient for an extended

period. Among its 39 heavy and 14 light trucks, there were numerous cargo trucks, including three with four-wheel drive, two machine shop trucks, a blacksmith shop vehicle, two trucks loaded with spare parts, an ambulance, four kitchen trailers, gasoline and water tankers and the searchlight truck. There were 10 military cars and eight motorcycles, four with sidecars. Manufacturers represented included Packard, Dodge, General Motors, Mack, Riker, White, Garford, Indian and Harley-Davidson.

The indispensable machines for pulling vehicles out of ditches and mud were the Militor, a four-wheel-drive tractor, and a five-ton crawler carried on a flatbed trailer. The crawler was the responsibility of Eisenhower and fellow Tank Corps officer Major Sereno Brett.

The five-and-a-half-ton Militor was a forerunner to today's heavy equipment technology. Built at a then-astronomical cost of \$36,000 and equipped with a large, four-cylinder Wisconsin motor, the Militor used a combination of low-geared power, a strong winch and sure-footedness to pull conventional trucks out of ditches or mud again and again. Once, west of Gothenburg nine trucks, chained together, were unable to move in the mud under their own power. But when attached to the chain, the powerful Militor pulled them through. It trailed the convoy, attracting the attention of the crowds as it towed the disabled, often two or three at a time, into camp.

Civilian vehicles included: Goodyear's three-and-a-half ton Packard truck equipped with large pneumatic tires, 44x10s on the back and 38x8s in front; the official Lincoln Highway Packard, painted red, white and blue beneath its dust coat; and several Willys mystery cars, so named because they were not yet released for sale.

Ideally moving at 12 m.p.h. with the vehicles 20 yards apart, the convoy advertised that it used 100 gallons of oil and 1,400 gallons of gas on a typical day.

On the last day of July, it clanked into Grand Island at 3 p.m. after covering 64 miles and made camp in an open field southeast of the city. Three thousand people came to see the trucks that evening.

... From his seven-passenger, khaki-colored Cadillac, Colonel McClure, who

(continued on next page)

1919 Transcontinental Army Convoy

In the summer following the end of World War I, an 81-vehicle Army convoy needed 62 days to travel 3,251 miles from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco via the Lincoln Highway. The caravan's 10-day trek across Nebraska was a severe road test for the trucks of that day.

July 29 - The soldiers spend their first day in Nebraska at Fort Omaha repairing vehicles. In the evening they are greeted by 200 women and girls for a dance at Krug Park.

July 30 - The truck train travels 83 miles from Omaha to Columbus with stops in Fremont and North Bend. The troops receive a warm welcome from Columbus citizens who provide showers, hotel meals and a dance.

July 31 - The convoy arrives in Grand Island after covering 64 miles. Soldiers receive their pay for the month and are entertained at a dance held at Liederkrantz Hall.

August 1 - The caravan journeys 82 miles from Grand Island to Lexington. Dinner is served at noon at Kearney High School, and hundreds of Nebraskans look over the trucks at the Dawson County fairgrounds in the evening.

August 2 - Rain and sandy, rutted roads slow the truck train. As it moves 30 miles from Lexington to Gothenburg 25 trucks, lacking chains for their front wheels, slide into the ditches.

August 3 - The convoy strains to move 34 miles to North Platte. Every truck needs a tow on the rutted road at some point during the day.

August 4 - Exhausted and in need of time to repair the vehicles, the expedition lays over for a day in North Platte.

August 5 - In 17 hours the caravan moves 53 miles from North Platte to Ogallala. It takes the train seven hours to traverse a 200-yard stretch of quicksand.

August 6 - The soldiers cross 22 miles and camp outside Big Springs overnight.

August 7 - The convoy enjoys an 86-mile day as it travels from Big Springs to Kimball with a stop in Sidney for a noon meal.

August 8 - After 10 days in Nebraska, the truck train crosses the Wyoming line with nearly another month's travel ahead before it reaches San Francisco.

Caravan

(Continued from page 7)

by this time was decidedly unpopular with his enlisted troops because of inattention to details they considered important, told the Grand Island Independent: "We're right on schedule. Only the ordinary amount of trouble has been experienced... While we have been in sand all the way since we hit Nebraska, the sand is better than mud."

On August 1, he was looking ahead at 82 more sandy miles to Lexington. In the morning, outside Grand Island, a liberty truck slid into a four-foot ditch burying its axles. It took two hours for the Militor to free the truck...

Kearney citizens hosted a noon dinner served outside the high school. And, later Elm Creek residents paved the convoy's route with a carpet of hay, advertising the town's claim as the nation's "Alfalfa Capital."

...When the expedition pulled into the Dawson County Fairgrounds at Lexington that day, it had covered half the continent and 234 miles in Nebraska over three trouble-free days. But it would take six more days to move the truck train 225 miles from Lexington to Kimball. Slowed by deeply rutted roads, weak bridges and a curious quicksand, the convoy fell behind schedule. But as the hours and troubles increased, so did the convoy's learning curve about its equipment.

Rain and mud limited the train to 30 miles the next day. Even after stopping in Cozad to strap chains on every vehicle's back tires, 25 trucks skidded into ditches because they lacked front tire chains to improve steering. After an overnight in Gothenburg, they struggled 34 miles to North Platte, the first units arriving in the afternoon but others not until midnight. Exhausted, the convoy laid over one day to rest men and repair machines.

...It took nearly 17 hours and enormous effort for the expedition to move 53 miles August 5, to Ogallala. Colonel McClure's straightforward telegram to Washington the next

morning reported the arduous day.

"Departed North Platte 6:30 Tuesday morning. Road conditions necessitated detour around Hershey. Passed through Sutherland, Paxton and Roscoe. Halted in Ogallala which is 53 miles west of North Platte. Went into camp in Fairgrounds at 11



Photo courtesy of National Archives (156-TMC-64148)
The sandy gumbo conditions west of Gothenburg made a hard day's work for the crawler.

in the evening. Unable to make objective of Big Springs which is 22 miles distant. Weather threatening and clear and warm.

"Sand and sandy-gumbo roads prevailed during entire run. Many short sharp grades. Quicksand holes and ruts encountered which made roads normally impassable to heavy traffic. Fourteen miles west of North Platte a 200-foot stretch of surface crusted water soaked quicksand was encountered which would deflect under the weight of one man. Such conditions are not obvious through visual inspection but develop under heavy traffic. First heavy truck sunk into wheel tops burying transmission, housing, etc. ... Every heavy truck had to be hauled through requiring from 8:00 in the morning to 3:20 in the afternoon."

"Militor handled sixteen trucks and tractor [the crawler] ten, while eight instances the combined efforts of both the Militor and tractor were required in these operations ... Practically entire personnel engaged in work; including pushing trucks and road restoration work. In some instances, it was necessary to detour to fields as heavy trucks could not cross over summits of deep loose sand.

... "Personnel experiencing inconveniences incident to field service. Today's lunch which was limited to jam sandwiches and water could not be served until four in the afternoon while supper was not available until eleven-thirty in the evening. Entire personnel quite exhausted by severity of 17 hours continuous duty...

"Territory traversed is sparsely settled, very rugged and many of personnel have seen for the first time part of the wild west with sage, sunflowers, sand, cactus and rattlesnakes. Have been very fortunate in running away from heavy electrical storms and cloud bursts in past two days. Will

camp at Big Springs tonight. Am two days behind schedule."

... On August 7, they trekked 86 miles to Kimball on good gravel roads, stopping in Sidney for a lunch provided by the Union Pacific and Commercial Hotels... When the expedition left Nebraska the next morning, it was raining and cool... And in Cheyenne that night, the weather was so cold, the men broke out their overcoats.

The Lincoln Highway's challenges didn't stop at the Nebraska-Wyoming border. In the last month the expedition faced a nearly impassable route in Wyoming, serious food, water and fuel shortages in western Utah, and real danger on the arduous climb through King's Grade Pass in the Sierra Nevada Mountains before it crossed San Francisco Bay on ferries on September 6—five days behind schedule—and paraded through San Francisco to Lincoln Park.

The convoy was a success. There had been no deaths or serious injuries, 90 percent of the vehicles that started were running at the end and millions of Americans had seen and celebrated the effort along the way. Most important, the convoy helped make the case that improving cross-country roads was a federal, not just local, priority... ♦

Brown Bag Lecture

"The Khaki-Colored Caravan: 1919 Army Convoy"

by Tom White, editor, *NEBRASKA* and
Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

June 21, 2001

12 noon

Museum of Nebraska History
15th & "P" Sts., Lincoln

Free and open to the public

Please complete the following survey. Detach, fold, and return by July 15.
Survey results are confidential and will be used in planning future Roadrunners.

1. How would you rate the Roadrunner?

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor

Please explain.

2. How interested are you in reading the various articles?

Type of Article	Very Interested	Somewhat Interested	Not Very Interested	Not At All Interested
People - <i>Personal Profiles</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divisions & Districts - <i>News & Features</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awards & Recognition.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highway Construction & Maintenance Projects.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All in the Family.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We Get Letters.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Columns - <i>Health & Safety, Turf & Garden</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Are there other types of articles you would be interested in? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, please indicate.

4. How would you rate the overall layout?

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor

5. What do you like best about the Roadrunner?

6. What do you like least about the Roadrunner?

7. Have you read the Roadrunner posted on the Department's website? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. For us to better understand the responses to this survey, please indicate what best describes you.

☐ Current Department Employee O.E. Code: _____
☐ Retired Department Employee
☐ Other _____

Name (Optional) _____

(To return using inter office mail, fold with this panel showing)

Inter office

**Attn.: Linda Wilson
Nebraska Department of Roads
Communication Division**

2nd Graders Plant Trees on Bridgeport Project

District 5 Engineer, Tim Weander, was approached by the 2nd grade teachers at the Bridgeport Public Schools to determine if the students could help in the planting of trees on the Bridgeport North Landscaping project to commemorate Arbor Day. District 5 Project Manager, Russ Frickey, contacted the teachers and worked with the Prime Contractor, Gross Seed Company to make the request a reality. Through coordination with the teachers, and John Gross's willingness, Frickey laid the ground rules for this activity to occur. It was a huge success.

The Bridgeport 2nd grade classes, under the direction of Mrs. Tyree and Mrs. Pane, made a field trip to the Bridgeport North Landscaping project on April 26, 2001. Approximately thirty 2nd graders assisted in the planting of four hackberry trees.

All the children helped in the planting, which included placement, fertilizing and watering of the trees. During the entire process NDOR employees from District 5 explained to the children why certain steps were followed.

Once the planting was finished, NDOR personnel entertained a question and answer session. The children had many questions, ranging from "How high will this tree grow?"



Photo courtesy of Bridgeport Newsblade

Pictured with Bridgeport 2nd grade classes, front, l to r: Steve Roebuck, District 5 Construction Tech; Russ Frickey, District 5 Project Manager; and Tony Armer, District 5 Construction Tech.

to "What is the difference between coniferous and deciduous trees?"

The 2nd graders put their class names on wire flags to mark the trees they planted, and they plan on coming back at a later date to see how much the trees have progressed.

"This was a very memorable experience for the children," said Mrs. Tyree, "Thank you so much for allowing the children to participate."

Frickey and Steve Roebuck, Construction Tech, then met the children at the local city park to award them with some treats. Tony Armer, Construction Tech, also helped with the event.

A special thanks goes out to contractor John Gross for his

willingness to participate in the planting event with the students. "Due to John's interest in educating today's children, he deserves the recognition for making this event happen," said Frickey.

The Bridgeport North project, located at the junction of State Highways 385 and 26 at Bridgeport, was a beautification project involving the planting of over 150 trees and 187 shrubs on the State's right-of way. Other trees planted included Kentucky coffee, crab apple, choke cherry, blue spruce, juniper and scotch pine.

Gross Seed Company, Inc., had the \$46,997.13 contract for the landscaping project.◆

Book Review

By Don Robertson
NDOR Librarian

Ambrose, Stephen E. *Nothing Like It in the World: the Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad, 1863-1869.* New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000.

This is the history of two great companies, the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad, who combined their efforts to build a railroad across the western half of the United States. Before this time, a traveler who wanted to go to the West Coast had to either travel months by wagon train or take a ship to Panama,

cross the isthmus, and then take another ship to go north. Both were long, dangerous, time-consuming trips. With the completion of the railroad you could cross the entire country in relative comfort and do so in a matter of weeks, not months.

Unlike a lot of historical writers, Ambrose writes in a style that keeps the reader interested in the subject. He tells about the great men who financed the railroad and about the surveyors who laid out the routes that were followed. He tells about the Union Pacific laborers who were mostly Irish and the Central Pacific laborers who were mostly Chinese. Of special interest to Nebraskans, he tells

of Grenville Dodge who was an early settler on the Elkhorn River. Dodge became the chief engineer for the Union Pacific and, with the backing of President Abraham Lincoln, became one of the primary forces in the construction of the railroad. There is an entire chapter devoted to building the railroad across Nebraska as well.

If you like to read, but don't like a lot of dull, dry history books, this one may be for you. It is well written with lots of anecdotes to keep it interesting and yet factual without stretching things too far. It is available in the NDOR Library and if you would like to borrow it, please contact the librarian.◆

We Get Letters ...

March 30, 2001

Larry Peterson
NDOR - McCook

Mr. Peterson,

Thank you for assisting us with professional information and advice when we were trying to evaluate the merits of sending a bus to Kearney during the recent snowstorm.

Thanks to you, no one was injured or placed at risk.

Mr. Datus
McCook Public Schools

Editor's Note: Thanks to Larry Peterson, Hwy. Maintenance Superintendent at District 7 in McCook for his assessment on road conditions during the March 15 snowstorm.

April 18, 2001

Attn: John Jacobsen

A quick note of appreciation to be passed on for your "Moving the Metro" news bulletin.

As a resident of Sarpy County since '73, I want to let you know that I find the work of the Nebraska Department of Roads A-1, and I appreciate the way you have kept us informed on what is going on.

When I can see my gas taxes being spent to good use, it eases the pain of paying these taxes. At least what you folks are doing is worthwhile and usable—it is not Washington "pork."

Again, thanks for keeping us in the picture. Have a great summer.

Joe Gauthier
Bellevue, Nebraska

April 19, 2001

Thanks for the great job your department is doing on updating our roads and highways in the Omaha area. The projects on Interstate 80, 480 and 680 are well worth all the detours and extra commuting time we spent over the past several years. It's great to have a first-class road system in and around Omaha. Thanks also for keeping the public well-informed through the newspaper inserts and articles. Keep up the good work!

John Dingfield
Omaha, Nebraska

March 21, 2001

Dear Director,

I am writing to express my deep appreciation for the helping hand three of your employees gave to my daughter when she was stranded on I-80 near Kearney, due to car trouble. Jim Ferguson, Lee Burbach and Mitch Hendricks were returning to Lincoln from business in Kearney and stopped to help my seventeen-year-old daughter. They let her use a cell phone to call me, and then drove her to the Hastings interchange and waited with her until I could arrive. My daughter had very high praise for them, with many remarks about how friendly and helpful they were and how relieved she was to avoid trouble in what certainly could have been a dangerous situation.

Please recognize these men in some way—they obviously hold to those values that make Nebraska a place where we can enjoy "The Good Life," and certainly are the types of individuals that the State of Nebraska is proud to employ.

Gratefully,
Mark E. Schutter, PhD.
Hastings Regional Center

Editor's Note: Jim Ferguson, IT Business Systems Analyst, Construction Division was the driver. Also offering assistance were Mitch Hendricks, IT Applications Developer, and Lee Burbach, contract employee, both with Information Systems Division.

April 26, 2001

Kris Winters
District 8

I would like to commend the DOR in Cherry County for doing such an excellent job of cleaning the highways in and around Valentine. I travel from Mission, South Dakota to Valentine approximately four times a week. When traveling on the South Dakota side of Highway 83, the roads are terrible. When I get to the Nebraska state line, the roads are always clear and safe for travel. Keep up the good work.

William D. Hay
Rosebud, South Dakota

The Department of Roads receives numerous complimentary letters. The letters printed here are representative of those often sent praising the many fine and deserving employees of the Department of Roads.

News from the Highway Maintenance Front ...

03/14/01

To: tweander@dor.state.ne.us

Subject: GOOD JOB

Mr. Weander (and other DOR employees)

I want to take this opportunity to compliment you and your staff on a good job with snow, ice, etc. removal thus far this winter. I, for one, really appreciate it. As I live adjacent to #385, I notice the early/late hours when the DOR vehicles and crews are at work so we can make our destination.

Keep up the good work.

Edwin O. Harms
Bridgeport, NE

March 14, 2001

Gordon Journal

Card of Thanks

A big "thank you" is in order to Bob Mills and his crew at the State Department of Roads for the excellent job of keeping Hwy. 27 open for those of us living south of Gordon. We appreciate how you get out early so that when the school kids go in and those of us that come and go to work have a freshly plowed road to drive on. We all appreciate it very much!

Gordon & Jan Jones

Cash & Jecca Ostrander & sons

Malcolm & Cindy Nielson & girls

Roy & Jolyne Westover

Ross & Shirley Schmidt

Willis Orr

Dan & Donna Brennan

Charlie & Sue Hamilton

Paul & Karen Simmons & girls

February 13, 2001

Douglas Co. Post-Gazette

Letters to the Editor

Maintenance supervisor passes on the 'thanks'

Just wanted to thank the Adwers for their nice letter to the editor about the work that the state forces and others are doing in western Douglas County. It is very rewarding to just hear someone say that you have done a good job. Many times that is the reward that means the most.

As maintenance supervisor at the Elkhorn state yard, I hear many comments and some complaints about our highways during and after snow and ice storms. Everyone here at Elkhorn takes their job seriously, and snow and ice removal is at the top of the priority list.

This nice comment, (and we do get a few others), brought to my

attention that maybe I don't say thank you enough to the people who are helping me and making my job easier.

So, "thank you" to all of you at the Elkhorn maintenance yard who have worked to keep the roads as safe as possible and who have spent many sleepless nights and days doing just that! And "thank you" to all of the people that help in other ways to keep vehicles, supplies and other things going, before, during and after these storms!

Sincerely,

Todd Muehlich

Maintenance Supervisor
Nebraska Department of Roads

March 29, 2001

Norfolk Daily News

Thank you to the guys
on the snow plows
who have helped to
make our daily
commute safer. We
appreciate your very
early hours.

An Osmond to Norfolk 6 a.m.'er

Attaining Our Vision (Continued from page 3)

There are several other factors. Public service announcements aired on television as a result of a partnership between the department and the Associated General Contractors of Nebraska. Also, the implementation of the Provisional Operator's Permit (POP) makes it more difficult for 16-17 year-olds to get their final driver's license, since this age has inordinately high involvement in crashes with accidents and fatalities. As NDOR's director, I feel principally responsible for the safety of highways in the state. We'll continue to focus on safety.

Success Stories

We have many recent success stories, including NDOR's enhancement program, which involves projects off the mainline highway system, such as trails, landscaping, railroad depots, etc. NDOR won a

national award for having one of the best programs in the country. Money has been provided to more than 450 projects that have had an impact on more than 150 communities. That's one out of four communities in the state.

Another success story involves the Ogallala area, where several large bridge and highway projects had the potential for negative impact on businesses and the community. Because of the partnership between NDOR, the contractor, the consultant and the City of Ogallala, this turned into a positive project. An NDOR-produced documentary of the community's innovative promotional activities has been used by other communities in the state. Recently, NDOR received a national award from the American Road and Transportation Builders Association for these efforts.

A third success story involves the I-180 reconstruction in the Lincoln area. NDOR's project was one of six other projects nationwide to receive a national quality award for demonstrating dedication to teamwork, innovation, and creative cost and schedule management, which resulted in a quality highway project.

These next two years I want to focus especially on workforce development and growing our many programs. The many activities I've outlined are just highlights of NDOR's efforts to attain our vision: to be the premier transportation agency in the country. We've accomplished a great deal, but there's much more to do. By working together as a team, and through our continued efforts with our partners, I am convinced that it can be done. ♦

TURF & GARDEN

By Dick Gray
Agronomist



Timely Rains Aid Gardens

Turf - The rains return, is the drought really over? Let's hope so! Its time for grub control, either MERIT or MACH 2. Both chemicals offer season-long control and are very effective. Keep the mowing height at 2½ inches and go to 3 or 3½ inches in late June and July. Water at 1½ inches per week and factor in the rain in that amount. Keep the blade sharp to help prevent disease or buy a laser mower. A laser mower has been developed by WOLF-Garten of Germany and should be in production in 2002. Bring lots of cash, but no blade to sharpen. Log on to www.wolf-garten.com for a closer look.

Trees - Many of the evergreens that showed winter damage have recovered. Prune any dead branches and remove any dead trees to prevent insect problems. There are still some excellent planting stock in the nurseries and there is still time to plant balled and burlapped and container stock.

Garden - The garden should be looking great now. Tomatoes need an even supply of moisture to prevent blossom-end rot and a liquid calcium spray helps, also. Vine crops can be planted now. Treat for vine borer when the vines begin to run. Spray with Sevin once per week to help keep the vine borer at bay. Dipel and Sevin will keep the corn ear worm down. Start spraying when the silk emerges and continue to a few days from harvest.

Jerry Wray sends these tips for dividing daylilies and hostas. Jerry works in Rail and Public Transportation and is a noted Lincoln gardener. Daylilies are perennials that typically become overcrowded in 5 to 6 years. Divide daylilies in early spring before blooming or late summer to mid-fall after blooming. Dig the entire clump and trim foliage back to 6 or 8 inches. Wash dirt from roots and carefully pull plants apart. Trim roots slightly. Prepare the planting hole, mound soil in the bottom and spread roots over the mound. Adjust planting depth so the crown of the lily is just below the surface, add soil, tamp, and water—lots of water.

Hostas should be separated in spring or late summer. Dig the clump, wash roots, but do not trim foliage or roots. Carefully pull plants apart. Prepare the planting hole and spread the roots at the bottom of the hole. Adjust the crown to be level with the ground. Firm the soil and water well.

General - Chicory is not just for flowers and coffee any more. A \$2 million processing plant is being built in Scottsbluff, with 450 acres being planted in Banner County and another 450 acres being planted near Alliance. The processed chicory will be used in Alpo dog food. ♦

DOR Events Calendar

— June —

National Safety Month

- 2 National Trails Day**
- 7 Letting** 1:30 p.m. NDOR Auditorium
contact Karl Fredrickson @ 479-4528
- 8 Proj. Scheduling & Prog. Mgmt. Monthly Meeting**
8:30 - 11:30 a.m. NDOR Auditorium
contact Craig Anderson @ 479-4666
- 12 New Employee Orientation**
NDOR Auditorium - contact Steve Olson @ 479-3601
- 15 Bd. Public Rds. Class. & Stds.**
9:00 a.m. NDOR Auditorium, Lincoln
contact Andrew Cunningham @ 479-4569
- 21 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
10:00 a.m. Outstate Meeting - Gering
contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530
- 26 New Employee Orientation**
NDOR Auditorium - contact Steve Olson @ 479-3601

— July —

- 4 State Holiday - Independence Day**
- 10 New Employee Orientation**
NDOR Auditorium - contact Steve Olson @ 479-3601
- 12 Letting** 1:30 p.m. NDOR Auditorium
contact Karl Fredrickson @ 479-4528
- 13 Proj. Scheduling & Prog. Mgmt. Monthly Meeting**
8:30 - 11:30 a.m. NDOR Auditorium
contact Craig Anderson @ 479-4666

- 20 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
10:00 a.m. Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530
- 20 Bd. Public Rds. Class. & Stds.**
9:00 a.m. NDOR Auditorium, Lincoln
contact Andrew Cunningham @ 479-4569
- 24 New Employee Orientation**
NDOR Auditorium - contact Steve Olson @ 479-3601

— August —

- 10 Proj. Scheduling & Prog. Mgmt. Monthly Meeting**
8:30 - 11:30 a.m. NDOR Auditorium
contact Craig Anderson @ 479-4666
- 16 Letting** 1:30 p.m. NDOR Auditorium
contact Karl Fredrickson @ 479-4528
- 17 Bd. Public Rds. Class. & Stds.**
9:00 a.m. NDOR Auditorium, Lincoln
(subject to confirmation or cancellation)
contact Andrew Cunningham @ 479-4569
- 24 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**
10:00 a.m. Mat. & Research Conf. Rm., Lincoln
contact Andrew Cunningham @ 479-4569
- 24 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
10:00 a.m. Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530

If you have key events that you would like included on upcoming calendars, call the Communication office 479-4512 or e-mail lwilson@dor.state.ne.us. Event information for the August/September Roadrunner should be received by July 16.

Roadsides Get Spring Cleaning

By Denise Wallman
Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator

Beautiful green grass was not the only thing revealed when all that snow began to melt this spring. An excessive amount of roadside litter had accumulated over the winter months, and these members of the First Christian Church in Beatrice were anxious to get out and pick up litter along Highway 77 north of Beatrice. They were among approximately 4,500 volunteers that donned their orange safety vests and cleaned nearly 1,520 miles of right-of-way during the Great Nebraska Trash-Off during April. This annual event, sponsored by the Department of Roads, is an ideal opportunity for Adopt-a-Highway volunteers to do some "spring cleaning" along their selected sections of highway. ♦



Photo by Denise Wallman

Daring Duo

Does lightning strike in the same place twice? It does if you are Pat Boyle, District 3 Construction Engineer, and Dick Gray, NDOR Agronomist. Pat and Dick were en route to a project at Royal when an accident unfolded right in front of their eyes. A farm feed wagon pulled by a tractor was rear-ended by a flatbed semi loaded with heavy pipe. There was a cloud of dust, the semi careened across the road and the pipe rolled down the road. The semi ended up in a field. Pat dialed 911 on his cell phone

and the call was picked up immediately. Dick finished the conversation with the 911 operator, and Pat went to check on the tractor operator. The road was completely blocked with the feed wagon and what was left of the tractor and the pipe.

Pat called the NDOR maintenance office in Plainview, and Greg Blunck and company were on the way. Pat stayed with the tractor operator and Dick started flagging traffic. As EMS units arrived from both directions, Pat and Dick felt somewhat relieved. Greg arrived with a crew and the flagging duties were turned over. EMS personnel took both the

farmer and the semi driver to area facilities. John Prouty of Prouty Construction sent equipment to clear the road.

What about the twice part? The last time Pat and Dick were on a business trip together, about four years ago on Highway 35 north of Emerson, they were the first on the scene of a two-vehicle accident and made the call for assistance. Their quick thinking and composure during both incidents ensured speedy assistance for those involved and helped avert further accidents. ♦